STATE & LOCAL CLEAN ENERGY ECONOMY

MESSAGING GUIDE

Combating Attacks on Clean Energy Programs

AMERICA IS ALL IN

COMBATING ATTACKS ON CLEAN ENERGY PROGRAMS

This section dives into how to talk about threats to clean energy investments in the current media landscape and how to combat common clean energy false narratives.

HOW TO TALK ABOUT THREATS

In the last few months, many clean energy programs and regulations at the state and federal levels have been frozen, cut, or come under attack and the threat of elimination. We know that rollbacks of these programs will result in ***rising energy costs for consumers and businesses, loss of over 1 million American jobs,*** and will ***cede millions of industry investments to competing nations***. We also know that states have a ***constitutional right*** to continue to advance solutions that make sense for them.

YOU CAN DEFEND CLEAN ENERGY INVESTMENTS IN YOUR COMMUNITY. Now that you know what projects and investments are being made, be on the lookout for threats to their continued efficacy. It's important to ***BE SPECIFIC, USE LOCAL EXAMPLES,*** and ***INCLUDE AN APPEAL TO ACTION:***

- ***BE SPECIFIC:*** How many jobs are on the line if funding for this program is halted? What industry would your community lose if tax credits are repealed? Will ***energy costs go up*** without support for cheap, clean energy? How does ***increasing climate disaster affect your community***?
- ***USE LOCAL EXAMPLES:*** What businesses or residents in your area have benefited from federal and state clean energy programs? How are schools, religious institutions, community development financial institutions (CDFIs) and Credit Unions, or local businesses affected by the loss of grant funding? Make examples specific and human. (i.e. Jane Doe's energy cost will increase by $403 a year without the planned solar facility in my state.)
  - Federal ***Attacks on Clean Energy Impact Tracker Cheat Sheet:*** This resource is a one-stop shop to access Climate Powers' extensive tracking, talking points, and resources related to the impact of the administration's actions on climate and clean energy.
- ***INCLUDE AN APPEAL TO ACTION:*** Ask your local storytellers to talk about their concerns with their representatives, local press, or community groups they are engaged in. Harness digital tools to mobilize support for clean energy policies and encourage constituents to take action by signing petitions, writing letters to relevant stakeholders, and participating in campaigns aimed at maintaining and advancing clean energy goals at the local and state levels. Whether they are worried about the increasing effects of natural disasters, rising energy costs, pollution, or job stability - everyone has something at stake if clean energy and climate programs are threatened.

Polling continues to find that attacks on clean energy programs are unpopular with everyday Americans. You can find *the most up-to-date polling and messaging guides to combat these attacks here*. It is so important to focus on costs to make a proactive case for American-made cheaper, cleaner energy. Lowering costs continues to be voters' top priority—and we should position American-made clean energy as the path forward. Use economic growth and jobs as supporting frames. ***START BY NAMING WHAT VOTERS ALREADY FEEL—THAT ENERGY COSTS ARE TOO HIGH—FOCUS ON REAL-LIFE IMPACTS, AND POSITION CLEAN ENERGY AS THE FIX***. We do NOT need to overexplain economic theory—Americans understand that clean energy creates competition and drives prices down.

Compelling bottom lines from recent reports and polling include:

ENERGY COST HIKES DUE TO ATTACKS ON CLEAN ENERGY:

- *Americans are concerned* that cuts to clean energy investments could translate to higher energy costs—and a higher cost of living— for them and their families.
- Nearly 6-in-10 Americans say they expect the administration's actions - like suspending energy permits, repealing environmental programs, threatening to repeal energy tax credits - to cause inflation and the cost of living to go up.
- Electricity prices are *on track to be the highest they have been since the 1990s*.
- According to a report by the nonpartisan group Energy Innovation, repealing critical clean energy investments would ***INCREASE ANNUAL ENERGY COSTS BY $240 FOR EVERY FAMILY*** — that's ***$32 BILLION*** more in total household energy costs.

60K+ CLEAN ENERGY MANUFACTURING AND CONSTRUCTION JOBS LOST:

- ***57%*** of American voters believe the administration's actions so far – suspending permits to wind projects under construction, terminating grants to clean energy projects, threatening to repeal energy tax credits – are having either ***A NEGATIVE IMPACT OR NO IMPACT AT ALL,*** versus only 29% who say it is having positive impacts.
- Voters were promised lower prices. ***INSTEAD, THE ECONOMY IS SUFFERING,*** and planned investments in manufacturing and construction projects in clean energy are being paused or cancelled due to uncertainty.
- Since the election, *more than 60,000 good-paying clean energy jobs have been lost or stalled.* American families are losing jobs and dealing with higher prices – and attacks on clean energy manufacturing are to blame.

AMERICANS WANT AN ACCOUNTABLE GOVERNMENT:

- ***Congress has the clear support of the American public to reject clean energy rollbacks***. For example, the administrations irresponsible actions on the tariffs could increase gas prices by 15 cents per gallon
- ***the majority of Americans strongly oppose*** proposals to eliminate protections for clean air and water from toxic pollution and cut government support for communities impacted by extreme weather events

BOTTOM LINE:

The clean energy boom is benefiting communities at the local, state, and federal level. Clean energy projects and programs are bringing economies back to your cities and states, and lowering energy bills for families and businesses. You have a unique role defending the programs in your locality or state.

Examples of defense in action:

- ***OHIO:*** Mayor Mims of Dayton, Ohio, ***emphasized the importance of a $500m investment*** made possible by clean energy programs in the state and federal government. He ***outlined jobs, economic impact***, and called out the harm the Administration rollbacks would cause.
- ***PENNSYLVANIA:*** Governor Shapiro ***outlined a state 'lightning plan'*** that encourages clean energy build out and calls out rollbacks in the framework of lowering energy costs.
- ***MICHIGAN:*** Facing an increase of attacks from the State legislature, Lt. Gov. Garlin Gilchrist ***emphasized the importance of climate efforts at the state and community level*** by highlighting the impact of specific programs.
- ***GEORGIA:*** ***This brief press article*** outlines how the Administration's policies would affect farmers and rural business in Georgia.

TRYING TO TRACK HOW FEDERAL POLICIES MAY BE AFFECTING YOUR COMMUNITY? You can find information on the impacts of federal funding ***cuts by City, State, and Congressional District*** here. This map shows funding cuts by congressional district, city, and state to make it easier to assess their impacts on American communities.

FACING MISCONCEPTION ON LOCAL CLEAN ENERGY PROJECTS? We know that local opposition is now ***a major reason*** that planned clean energy projects are being cancelled. A few things to consider:

- ***Research has shown*** that state and local officials are not the most effective messengers in combating local opposition. Instead - we encourage you to arm trusted local messengers with factual information to combat misinformation, and project details that outline the benefits to the community.
- Trusted messengers (like farmers who are benefitting from a wind project, local small business owners, or school representatives who are benefiting from the project revenue) should be encouraged to participate in town halls, go on local radio, and engage with the press to uplift the positive impacts of the project.
- Trust at the local level starts with engagement. As a state and local leader you should consider ways in which you can encourage projects that utilize ***community benefit agreements*** (through policy or otherwise).

HOW TO COMBAT COMMON FALSE NARRATIVES ON CLEAN ENERGY

Opponents of clean energy progress are unrelenting in their attacks and they have launched multiple well-funded disinformation campaigns to deceive the public. The best defense is a good offense.

WE RECOMMEND PAIRING A STRONG DENIAL OR REFUTATION WITH AFFIRMATIVE STATEMENTS about how clean energy progress can, and has already, help lower energy costs, make the grid more reliable, and end our dependence on dirty, dangerous and costly fossil fuels. It's important to keep any responses to false narratives based in facts, and to utilize trusted and credible surrogates for messaging when possible.

HERE ARE SOME EXAMPLES OF COMMON CLEAN ENERGY FALSE NARRATIVES:

MISCONCEPTIONS: Federal and state-supported clean energy projects are fraudulent, wasteful, and not a good use of my tax dollars.

RESPONSE: The clean energy investments made in the past three years have enabled ***$1 trillion in private investment***. In fact, for every $1 of federal investment, between $5 to $6 of private investment is being brought in and over 400,000 clean energy jobs have been created. These programs are revitalizing American industries and communities, and growing our competitive edge against foreign competitors like China.

Federal and state investments, like all other investments made by federal and state governments, undergo intense review and oversight before being approved. They also have to meet regular milestones (often yearly) that ensure they are meeting the purpose of the program, as directed by Congress.

MISCONCEPTIONS: Clean energy is unreliable.

RESPONSE: Technological improvements in grid management, clean firm baseload power like nuclear and hydropower, and energy storage have made ***renewable energy a dependable and consistent source of energy for America***. In fact, with growing pressure on the grid due to data centers, AI, and electrification - clean energy is the only energy source fast and cheap enough to meet these demand needs.

Solar and wind energy are plentiful, and when paired with energy storage solutions, they can deliver a steady supply of electricity. Although the sun isn't always shining and the wind isn't always blowing, we can capture energy during optimal conditions and store it for future use.

MISCONCEPTIONS: Clean energy is more expensive than oil and gas.

RESPONSE: Clean energy is the cheapest, fastest, and safest form of energy production we have available to us. Clean energy projects don't release polluting toxins into the air around them - and these projects provide jobs, lower energy bills for consumers, and have allowed America to increase its energy independence.

The cost of solar and wind energy has fallen significantly over the last ten years. For example, solar panel prices have decreased by ***65% for residential systems, 77% for commercial systems, and 83% for utility-scale systems***, and in many areas, ***wind power is now more affordable than coal*** or gas.

MISCONCEPTIONS: Clean energy infrastructure takes up too much space.

RESPONSE: Although energy infrastructure of any kind requires some space, clean energy does not take up an excessive amount. For example, the footprint of a wind turbine is relatively small, allowing the surrounding land to remain available for other purposes, like farming and ranching. When comparing land use, the overall footprint of clean energy is often smaller than fossil sources, especially when factoring in the extraction, transportation, and processing activities required for fossil fuels.

MISCONCEPTIONS: Electric vehicles are unreliable and not safe.

RESPONSE: EVs boast ***one of the highest reliability ratings*** of any car on the market, and drivers report loving the ability to charge at home and not worry about fueling up EVs

A FEW FAST FACTS:

- ***Electric vehicle (EV) batteries are built to last decades.***
- All light-duty cars and trucks sold in the U.S. must comply with Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards, which require a rigorous and well-established testing process, whether the vehicle runs on gasoline or electricity. Additionally, EV battery packs are subject to their own set of testing standards.
- EVs are also equipped with extra safety features that shut down the electrical system if a collision or short circuit is detected.

MISCONCEPTIONS: Electric vehicles have nowhere to charge.

RESPONSE: You can charge your vehicle anywhere there's a basic plug - and save money while doing it. Most drivers can meet their day-to-day driving needs by charging at home with the same plug they use to power their toaster, and ***the monthly cost of electricity to do so are significantly lower than filling up your tank with gasoline*** to go the same distances. If you live in an apartment or need to charge on the road, you'll find ***over 75,000 stations and 207,000 EV charging ports*** (and counting!) in the U.S. available to the public.