

# VOTERS SUPPORT THE CONSTRUCTION OF NEW OFFSHORE WIND FARMS

A photograph of several offshore wind turbines in the ocean, with a large turbine in the foreground and others in the distance. The sky is a deep blue, and the water is a darker blue. The turbines are white with yellow accents.

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Danielle Deiseroth  
Ethan Winter  
Julian Brave NoiseCat  
Marcela Mulholland  
Ayana Elizabeth Johnson

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- ▶ Voters support the construction of new offshore wind farms by a 48-point margin
- ▶ Voters support speeding up the permitting process for building offshore wind farms by a 43-point margin.
- ▶ Voters support federal investments in research to improve offshore wind technologies by a 34-point margin

Recently, Democrats have unveiled plans to invest in new clean energy infrastructure projects, including new offshore wind farms. [The House Select Committee on the Climate Crisis report](#) proposes incentives for the construction of new offshore wind farms and for ongoing research in offshore wind technologies. Democratic presidential nominee, former Vice President Joe Biden, calls for [doubling offshore wind energy by the year 2030](#) in his climate plan. That said, as [POLITICO](#) reported in June of this year, offshore wind farms in the Northeast [are facing stricter conditions](#) around new construction projects.

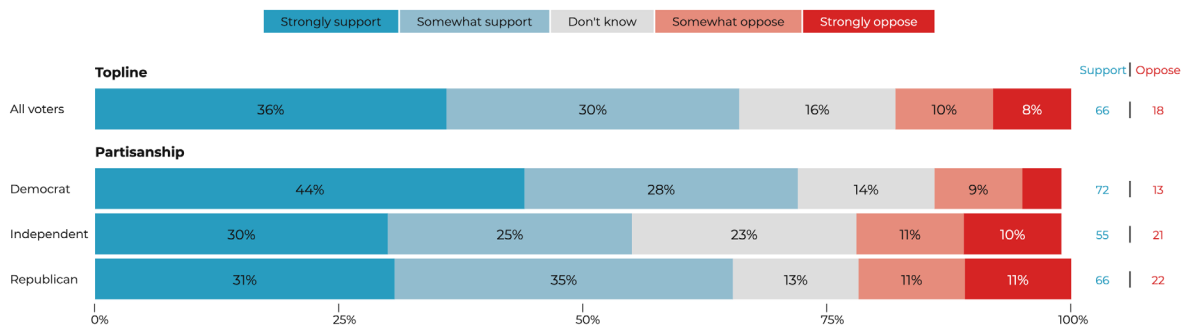
While offshore wind could play an important role in promoting a clean energy sector and providing good jobs, these projects face strong political headwinds. As our policy memo ([Advancing Offshore Wind Energy in the U.S.](#)) co-written with [Urban Ocean Lab](#) and [Evergreen Action](#) argues, the next presidential administration and Congress need to step in to kickstart a just, clean energy transition that includes offshore wind.

As part of a July survey, Data for Progress sought to test support among voters regarding the construction of new offshore wind farms, reforms to expedite and expand offshore wind farm construction, and government investments in new offshore wind technologies.

First, we asked voters whether or not they would support the construction of new offshore wind farms. We found that voters do so by a 48-percentage-point margin (66 percent support, 18 percent oppose). Voters who self-identify as Democrats support the construction of offshore wind farms by a 49-point margin, voters who self-identify as Independents support it by a 34 point margin, and voters who self-identify as Republicans support it by a 44-point margin.

## Voters Support the Construction of Offshore Wind Farms

Offshore wind farms are collections of wind turbines that stand on the ocean and generate clean, renewable energy. The turbines harvest energy from wind blowing over the ocean that is then transmitted and used for electricity on land. Would you support or oppose building offshore wind farms off the coast of the United States?



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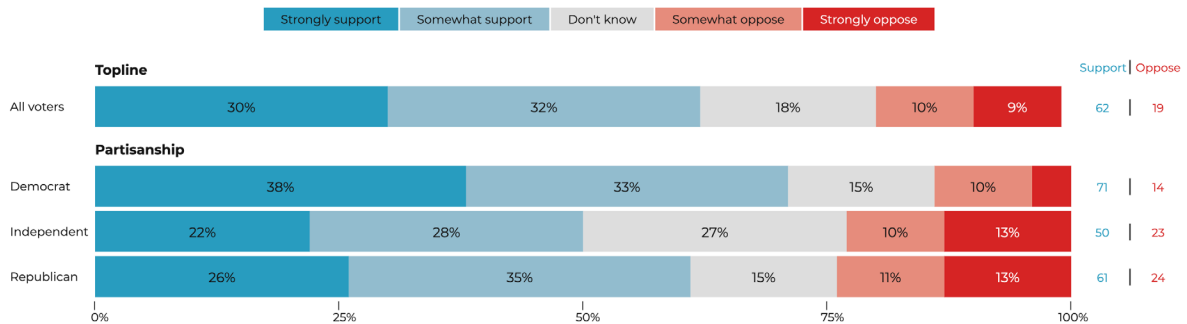
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Next, we asked voters whether or not they would support reforms that expedite the permitting process for new wind farm construction. We found that voters support reforms to expedite the permitting process for new wind farms by a 43-point margin (62 percent support, 19 percent oppose). Support for this proposal is also bipartisan, with the majority of all voters in support of it: Democrats support the construction of new offshore wind farms by a 57-point margin, Independents by a 27-point margin, and Republicans by a 37-point margin.

We then asked voters whether they would support reforms that would make it harder for the owners of coastal properties to block the construction of new wind farms. We found that, overall, voters support this proposal by a 38-point margin (58 percent support, 20 percent oppose). Support for this proposal is, again, bipartisan with Democrats supporting it by a 46-point margin, Independents by a 27-point margin, and Republicans by a 36-point margin.

### Voters Support Speeding Up the Permitting Process for Offshore Wind Farms

Offshore wind farms are collections of wind turbines that stand on the ocean and generate clean, renewable energy. The turbines harvest energy from wind blowing over the ocean that is then transmitted and used for electricity on land. One of the main barriers to quickly building more wind farms in the United States is a government permitting process that takes years to complete. Would you support or oppose allocating additional resources to speed up the permitting process for building offshore wind farms?

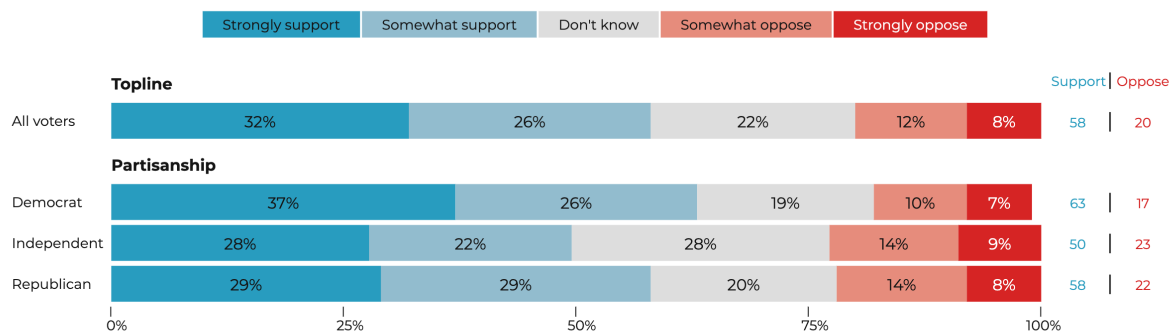


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### Voters Support Restricting the Influence of Coastal Homeowners on Wind Permitting Decisions

Offshore wind farms are collections of wind turbines that stand on the ocean and generate clean, renewable energy. The turbines harvest energy from wind blowing over the ocean that is then transmitted and used for electricity on land. Wealthy coastal homeowners often oppose the construction of offshore wind because they expect the turbines to negatively impact coastal views and property values, and because they don't want transmission lines to come ashore near their house. Would you support or oppose reforms that would make it more difficult for wealthy coastal homeowners to stop the construction of offshore wind farms?



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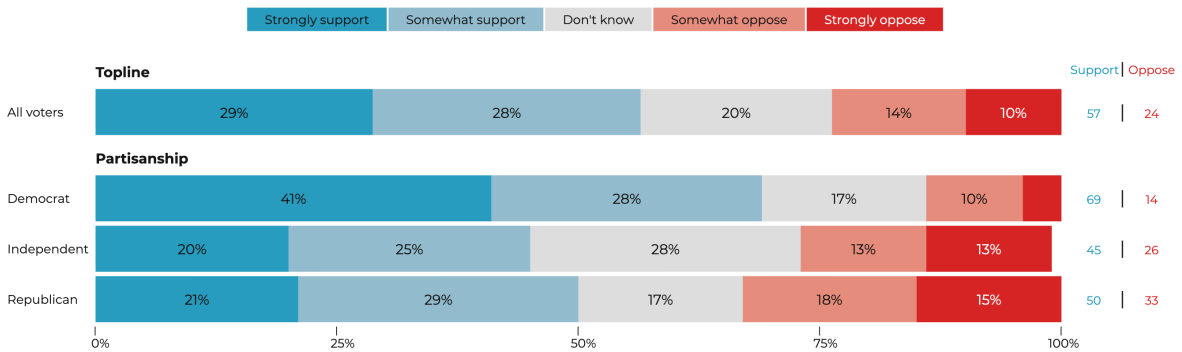
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We also asked voters if they would support or oppose government investments in new offshore wind farms, and included partisan arguments for and against this proposal. Voters support government investments in new offshore wind farms by a 38-point margin (58 percent support, 20 percent oppose). This proposal enjoys high support across party lines: Democrats support it by a 46-point margin, Independents by a 27-point margin, and Republicans by a 36-point margin.

Lastly, we asked voters if they would support government investments in research to improve offshore wind technologies, and included partisan arguments for and against this proposal. Voters support the federal government funding research to improve offshore wind technologies by a 34-point margin (57 percent support, 23 percent oppose). Democrats support this proposal by a 58-point margin, Independents by a 22-point margin, and Republicans by a 13-point margin.

### Voters Support Government Investments in New Offshore Wind Farm Construction

Lawmakers are proposing investments in new offshore wind farms, collections of wind turbines that stand on the ocean and generate clean, renewable energy. The turbines harvest energy from wind blowing over the ocean that is then transmitted and used for electricity on land. Democrats say that the investment will increase clean energy production and will pay for itself by creating new jobs. Republicans say that the investment is too expensive and will raise energy costs compared to cheaper fossil fuels. Do you support or oppose government investments in new offshore wind farms?

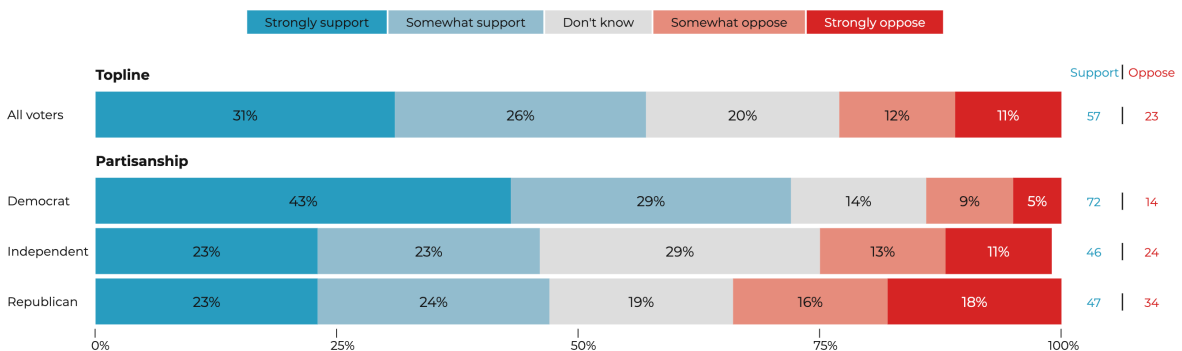


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### Voters Support Government Investments to Improve Offshore Wind Technology

Offshore wind farms are collections of wind turbines that stand on the ocean and generate clean, renewable energy. The turbines harvest energy from wind blowing over the ocean that is then transmitted and used for electricity on land. Some lawmakers are proposing to fund research that will grow and improve offshore wind technologies. Democrats say that we must invest in developing new technologies that will let the United States move away from fossil fuels and towards renewables. Republicans say that the investment is too expensive and is just another example of wasteful government spending. Do you support or oppose this investment?



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Offshore wind farms offer a key way to expand our renewable energy capacity and production, especially in coastal areas close to major cities. Our findings show that not only constructing more offshore wind farms is popular with voters, but also that reforms to help speed along new construction projects enjoy high levels of bipartisan support. A majority of all voters support federal investments in the construction of new offshore wind farms and research to improve offshore wind technologies, despite seeing partisan arguments against these proposals. To build a more sustainable future, policymakers should lean into and invest in offshore wind infrastructure with confidence that voters across the partisan spectrum support these policies.

## AUTHORSHIP AND METHODOLOGY

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From July 24 through July 25, 2020, Data for Progress conducted a survey of 1,318 likely voters nationally using web-panel respondents. The sample was weighted to be representative of likely voters by age, gender, education, race, and voting history. The survey was conducted in English. The margin of error is  $\pm 2.7$  percentage points.

*Offshore wind farms are collections of wind turbines that stand on the ocean and generate clean, renewable energy. The turbines harvest energy from*

*wind blowing over the ocean that is then transmitted and used for electricity on land. Would you support or oppose building offshore wind farms off the coast of the United States?*

- ▶ Strongly support
- ▶ Somewhat support
- ▶ Somewhat oppose
- ▶ Strongly oppose
- ▶ Don't know

*Offshore wind farms are collections of wind turbines that stand on the ocean and generate clean, renewable energy. The turbines harvest energy from wind blowing over the ocean that is then transmitted and used for electricity on land. One of the main barriers to quickly building more wind farms in the United States is a government permitting process that takes years to complete. Would you support or oppose allocating additional resources to speed up the permitting process for building offshore wind farms?*

- ▶ Strongly support
- ▶ Somewhat support
- ▶ Somewhat oppose
- ▶ Strongly oppose
- ▶ Don't know

*Offshore wind farms are collections of wind turbines that stand on the ocean and generate clean, renewable energy. The turbines harvest energy from wind blowing over the ocean that is then transmitted and used for electricity on land. Wealthy coastal homeowners often oppose the construction of offshore wind because they expect the turbines to negatively impact coastal views and property values, and because they don't want transmission lines to come ashore near their house. Would you support or oppose reforms that would make it more difficult for wealthy coastal homeowners to stop the construction of offshore wind farms?*

- ▶ Strongly support
- ▶ Somewhat support
- ▶ Somewhat oppose
- ▶ Strongly oppose
- ▶ Don't know

*Lawmakers are proposing investments in new offshore wind farms, collections of wind turbines that stand on the ocean and generate clean, renewable energy. The turbines harvest energy from wind blowing over the ocean that is then transmitted and used for electricity on land.*

*Democrats say that the investment will increase clean energy production and will pay for itself by creating new jobs.*

*Republicans say that the investment is too expensive and will raise energy costs compared to cheaper fossil fuels.*

*Do you support or oppose government investments in new offshore wind farms?*

- ▶ Strongly support
- ▶ Somewhat support
- ▶ Somewhat oppose
- ▶ Strongly oppose
- ▶ Don't know

*Offshore wind farms are collections of wind turbines that stand on the ocean and generate clean, renewable energy. The turbines harvest energy from wind blowing over the ocean that is then transmitted and used for electricity on land. Some lawmakers are proposing to fund research that will grow and improve offshore wind technologies.*

*Democrats say that we must invest in developing new technologies that will let the United States move away from fossil fuels and towards renewables.*

*Republicans say that the investment is too expensive and is just another example of wasteful government spending.*

*Do you support or oppose this investment?*

- ▶ Strongly support
- ▶ Somewhat support
- ▶ Somewhat oppose
- ▶ Strongly oppose
- ▶ Don't know