

The Public Pulse: Data Centers & Nuclear Power Opinion Landscape

AxAdvocacy Research and Strategy
to Reclaiming the Narrative on Data
Centers, Nuclear Power, and Community
Impact.

We Connect. We Affect.

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The Digital Infrastructure Imperative

AxAdvocacy Research and Strategy
to Reclaiming the Narrative on Data
Centers and Community Impact.

We Connect. We Affect.



At a Glance

Data centers have become the visible face of the AI revolution, powering progress but testing community patience.

Public perception is shifting from curiosity to concern. AxAdvocacy polling shows there is room for a breakthrough, revealing opportunity to shape opinion as data centers break through the narrative.

The results show clear potential to gain ground - but only with the right playbook.

Without early, transparent engagement, companies risk moratoria, lawsuits, and reputational damage. The opportunity now is to build understanding, earn buy-in, and turn potential opposition into momentum.

Methodology

National online survey of **N=1,000 registered voters**

Margin of Error: **±3.1%**

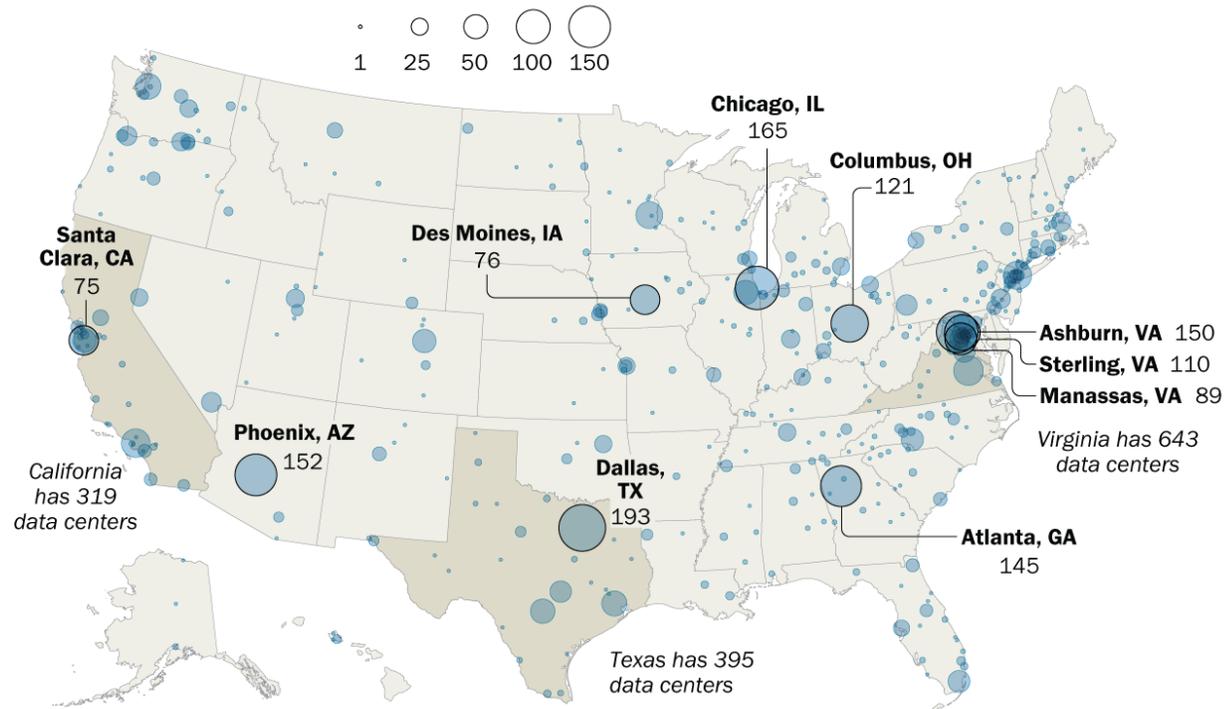
Fielded: October 23-27, 2025

Mapping the New Power Pull

Virginia, Texas and California lead in number of data centers

Number of data centers, by market

AXADVOACACY
THE BUSINESS OF WINNING



Data centers are no longer confined to tech corridors; they're spreading through power-rich regions in every corner of the country. These clusters are reshaping local economies and prompting new questions about energy reliability and resource planning.

Note: Includes operational data centers and those in development. Refer to the Data Center Map methodology for more details.
Source: Data Center Map, accessed Oct. 20, 2025.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

- 
Negative Coverage – 29%
 Focus on energy strain, water use, and community backlash
- 
Neutral Coverage – 66%
 Informational or economic reporting
- 
Positive Coverage – 5%
 Stories highlighting innovation, investment, or national competitiveness

Tracking the Conversation

Media coverage around data centers continues to intensify, with growing focus on energy strain, community backlash, and infrastructure costs.

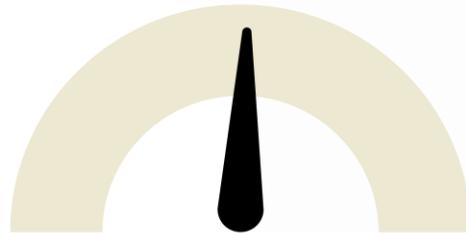
Across more than 30 national and regional stories since September, sentiment skews predominantly neutral to negative, with headlines centering on power use, ratepayer impact, and environmental concerns.

However, coverage also signals opportunity. Credible voices, like Pew Research and Bloomberg Law, with headlines centering on power use, ratepayer impact, and environmental concerns.

Don't Let the Headlines Fool You

Media coverage around data centers has turned sharply negative, focused on energy strain, water use, and local backlash. The narrative is being shaped without balance — and without most people even tuned in.

Polling shows 51% of voters have heard little or nothing about data centers, revealing a wide-open lane to define the story before opposition hardens.



BBC

**'I can't drink the water' -
life next to a US data centre**

July 10, 2025

npr

**Why more residents are saying 'No'
to AI data centers in their backyard**

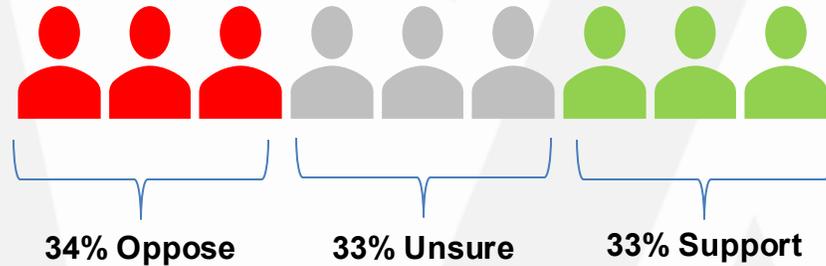
July 15, 2025

AP

**As data centers proliferate, conflict
with local communities follows**

December 5, 2024

Do you support or oppose data centers being build in or near your town?



Opinion is **Split** – and **Still Forming**

When asked about building data centers in or near their community, 33% support and 34% oppose, leaving the rest undecided or unaware.

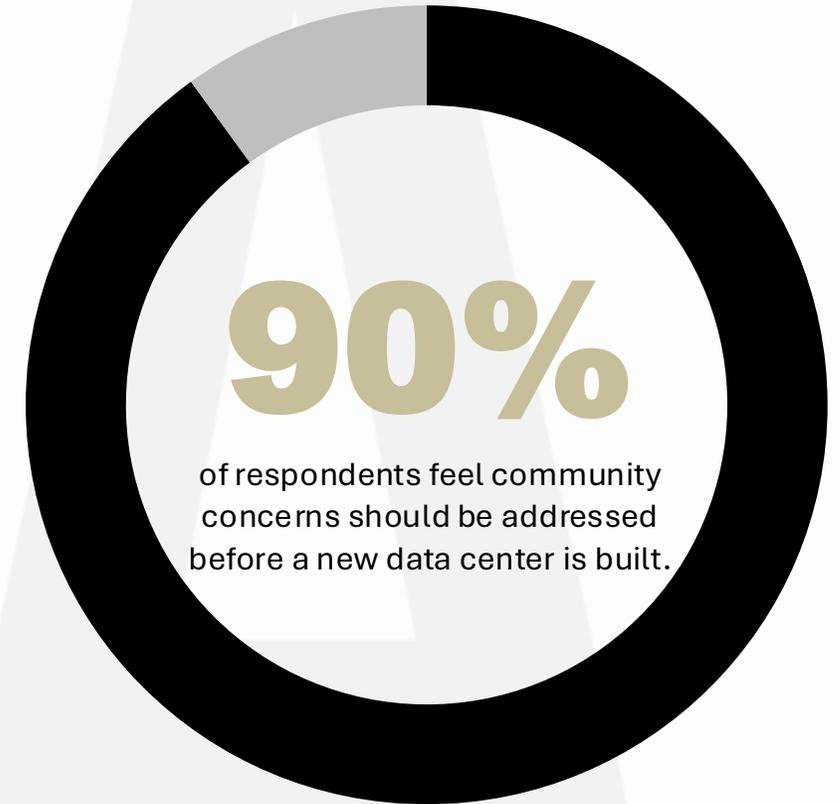
This near-even divide shows the narrative is far from settled. With limited awareness and mixed sentiment, there’s still significant room to shape how people perceive the value of data centers, before attitudes harden into opposition.

There is an opportunity to define the issue locally, promote the benefits (jobs, innovation, etc.) and connect them to community needs.

The PR Challenge

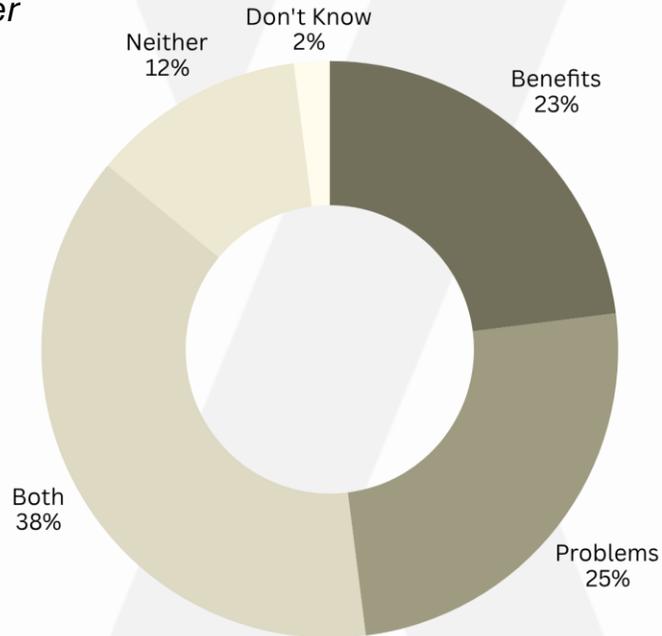
Data Centers = the physical backbone of modern technology. But they come at cost.

- **Power:** Surging electricity demand is driving record-high energy costs and forcing utilities to propose new generation projects just to keep up.
- **Water:** Constant high-demand for cooling to keep operational. Drought optics make even reclaimed-water systems controversial
- **Noise & Land:** Diesel generators, traffic, and light pollution drive backlash
- **Policy:** Moratoria and lawsuits, from Dublin to Virginia, are setting precedent and slowing growth.
- **Community Strain:** They can be seen as extractors, taking resources and giving little back to the communities.



Polling shows:

- 23% say data centers bring *benefits*
- 25% say they bring *problems*
- 38% say *both*
- 12% say *neither*
- 2% *don't know*



This balance reveals a clear opening: **most people see both sides and are looking for leadership to define what responsible growth looks like.**

Redefining the Narrative

When presented with both sides of the debate, the public isn't firmly aligned - they're open to persuasion.

By emphasizing transparency, community partnership, and shared local value, jobs, reliability, innovation, stakeholders can move the middle and rebuild trust before negative perceptions solidify.

The narrative will write itself.



**The sleeper issue that could play a huge role
in Virginia and New Jersey — and the
midterms**

Decide how you want the story to be told.

Final Thoughts

Polling shows clear opportunity to make ground, but we must add to the conversation already percolating. AI data centers are an indispensable reality of the modern world, yet their progress hinges on earning public and political buy-in. That starts with early, transparent communication and a clear “why” that connects innovation with community benefit.

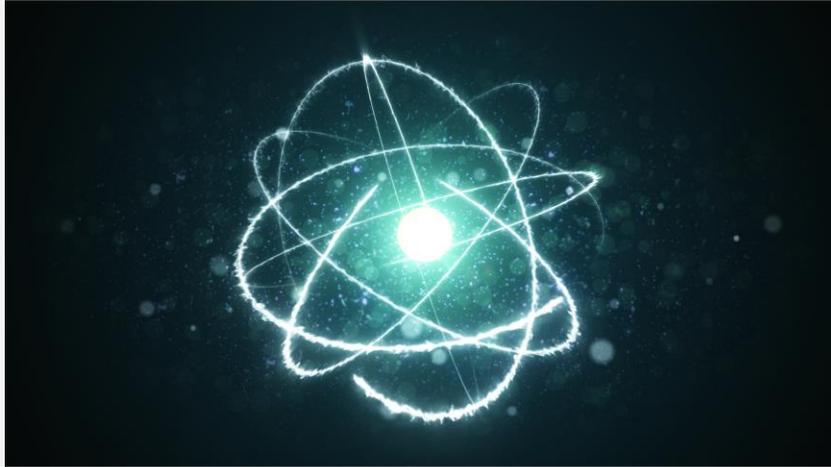
Our team knows how to roll up our sleeves in these types of battles, turning complex, high-stakes infrastructure fights into credible, community-backed wins.

Before the post-mid-term autopsy, AxAdvocacy can help make your position the victory story – not the cautionary tale.

Power.
Perception.
Progress.

AxAdvocacy Research and Strategy to
Redefine Nuclear Before the Headlines Do.

We Connect. We Affect.



Old Perceptions, New Power: Why the Moment for Nuclear Is Now

Nuclear power is reemerging as a cornerstone of America's clean energy future, but its public image is still tied to its misunderstood history.

While the technology has evolved, perception still lags behind. Polling shows there is room to move public opinion - a signal that with the right message, nuclear can be reframed as essential, safe, and local.

Our team looked deeper into public sentiment to help lead the narrative shift before outdated fears define the debate again.

Methodology

National online survey of **N=1,000 registered voters**

Margin of Error: **±3.1%**

Fielded: October 23-27, 2025

Tracking the Conversation

Coverage of nuclear power has accelerated in recent months, trending to neutral to positive, with growing attention, national security, and energy resilience.

Across top-tier outlets including the New York Times, Bloomberg, Reuters, and CNBC, the tone reflects a shift: from legacy skepticism to a recognition that modern nuclear is essential infrastructure in the clean energy transition.

Still, concerns persist around cost and safety, underscoring the need for credible, consistent messaging to sustain momentum and broaden support.

- 
Negative Coverage – 0%
 Virtually no recent coverage around risk or opposition
- 
Neutral Coverage – 77%
 Reporting framed on policy, research, and developments
- 
Positive Coverage – 23%
 Stories focused on innovation, energy security, and U.S. competitiveness

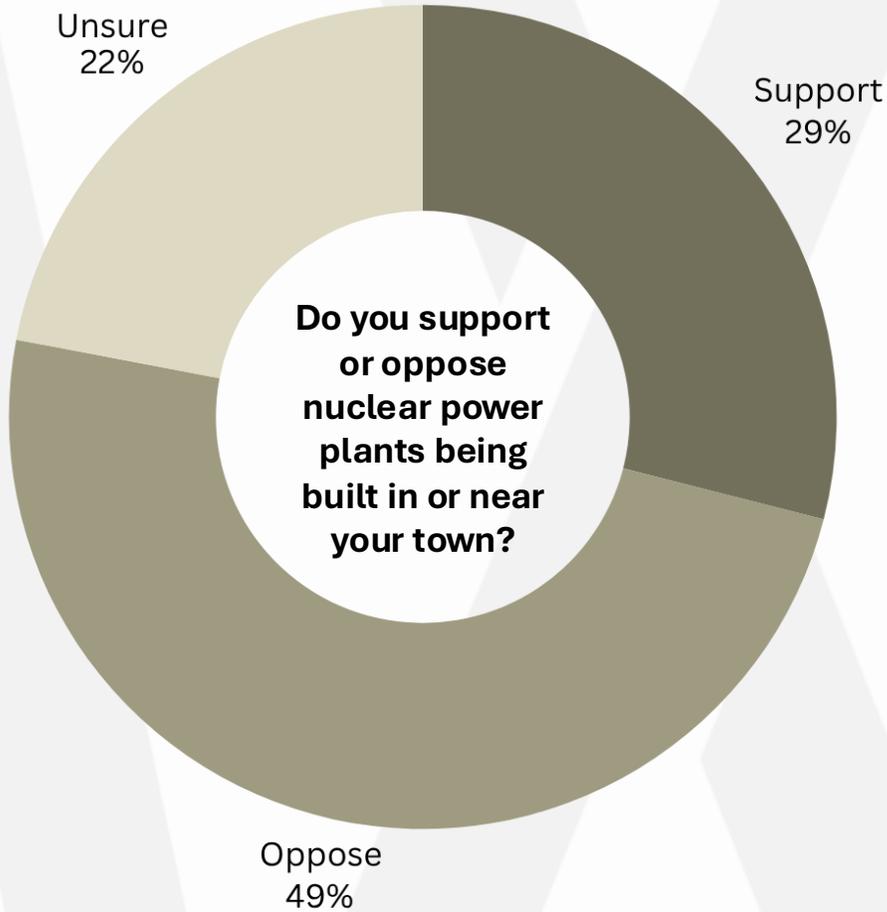
More Noise Than Knowledge

Energy demands are surging, and the path to decarbonization is narrowing. Nuclear is one of the few reliable, zero-emission sources that can meet growing needs, yet skepticism remains.

Headlines focus on legacy fears: safety, waste, and cost overruns as large corporations turn nuclear as the solution to their growth demands. But modern reactors, advanced technology, and new federal investments have changed the equation. **The public conversation just hasn't caught up yet, which can be a positive for those looking to define the issue and move the needle.**

66%

of respondents have heard little to nothing about the expansion of new nuclear energy.



Where Perception Lags Progress

When asked about building nuclear power facilities in or near their community, 49% oppose, while 29% support and the rest remain unsure.

Yet despite this hesitation, a vast majority of voters say they've heard much about nuclear power's recent growth, showing that attitudes are being shaped by outdated narratives, not current facts. Decades-old fears about safety and waste still dominate, even as modern nuclear technology has become cleaner, safer, and more efficient.

This is a narrative problem, not a technology one. With focused education, local engagement, and visible community benefits, there's room to reshape how people view nuclear.

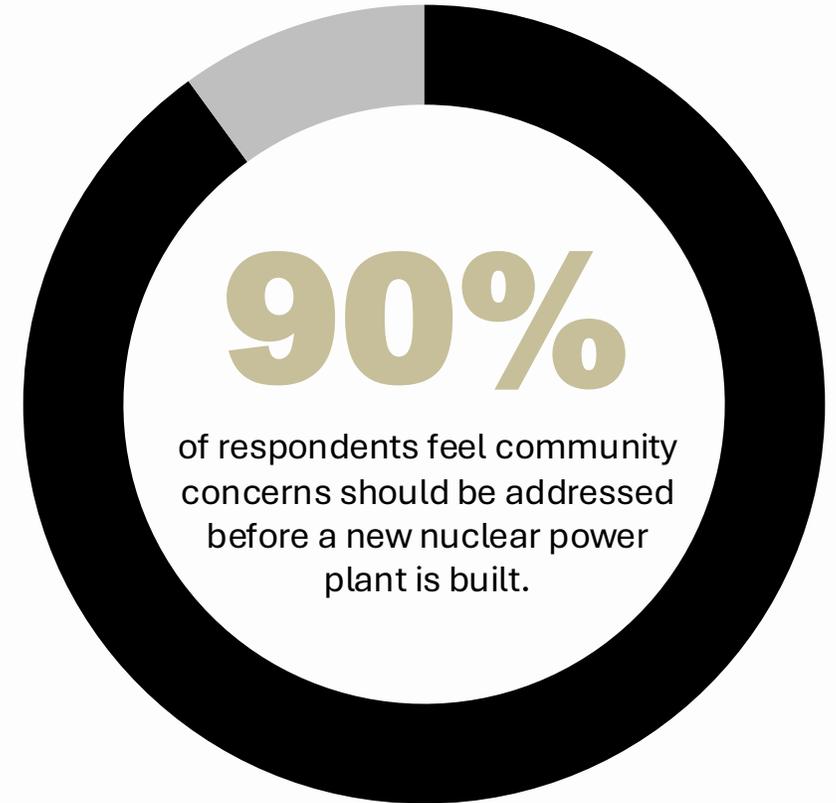
There is an opportunity to reframe nuclear as next-generation energy that powers reliability, jobs, and progress, not fear.

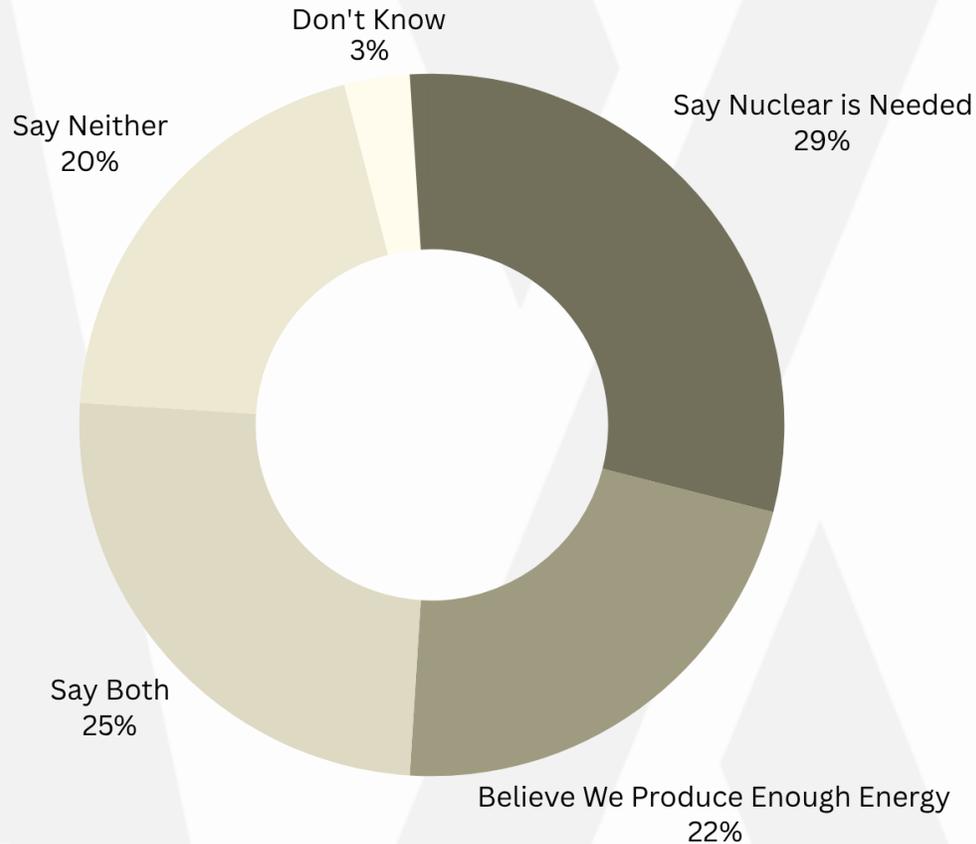
Rewriting the Story

90% of voters believe local concerns should be addressed before a nuclear project moves forward.

That overwhelming consensus isn't opposition, it's an invitation. People want to understand how projects will impact their community, and they expect transparency, accountability, and a real voice in the process.

Engaging early builds credibility and turns potential critics into partners. Leading with education and dialogue helps raise awareness, strengthen trust, and bring communities on board before the past sentiment can creep in.





Public Opinion is Fluid

When presented with competing views on nuclear power, the public remains open, and undecided.

Polling shows:

- 29%** say nuclear is needed to meet the nation’s growing energy demands
- 22%** believe we already produce enough energy from other sources
- 25%** say both
- 20%** say neither
- 3%** don’t know

These results reveal a public still forming its opinion. Voters are not rejecting nuclear, but unsure where it fits.

Opportunity: Position nuclear as the energy that powers what’s next, essential to meeting AI-driven demand, strengthening reliability, and ensuring America’s long-term energy security.

The narrative is already writing itself.

Bloomberg

The Risky Movement to Make America

Nuclear Again

October 30, 2025



REUTERS

**US strikes \$80 billion deal for new
nuclear power plants**

October 28, 2025

The New York Times

Trump Administration Backs Plan for

New Nuclear Plants

October 28, 2025

Decide how you want the story to be told.

Lead Early. Win Local.

To win hearts and headlines, the strategy must focus on:

- Education: Define nuclear's role in clean energy before others do.
- Local Trust-Building: Pair data with visible community benefit.
- Awareness: Position nuclear as necessary to innovation.
- Rapid Response: Counter misinformation quickly with credibility and consistency.

With coordinated messaging and proactive outreach, we can turn uncertainty into acceptance to help power America's energy future.

A Closer Look

AxAdvocacy Research Data Breakdown.

We Connect. We Affect.

Methodology

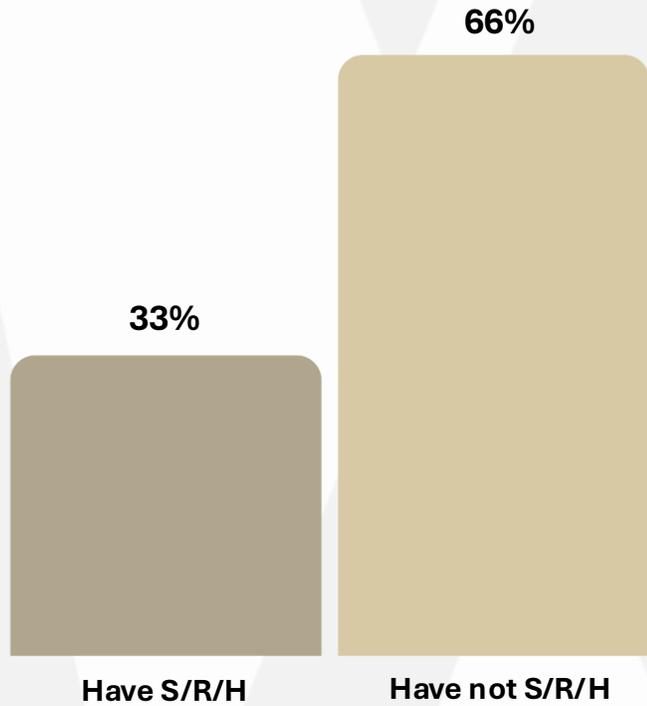
Pulse Decision Science conducted a study of Registered voters in the United States.

PDS selected a random sample of registered voters from the national voter file using Registration Based Sampling (RBS). The sample for this survey was stratified based on age, gender, ethnicity, modeled party, and geographical area. This methodology allows us to reduce the amount of post-survey “weighting” needed of the electorate.

Respondents were a part of a national online voter panel contacted October 23-27, 2025. The study has a sample size of n=1,000 Registered voters with a margin of error of $\pm 3.1\%$ in 95 out of 100 cases.

Low awareness across demographics of the expansion of nuclear power.

How much have you seen, read, or heard recently about the expansion of new nuclear power plants across the country? Would you say that you have heard a lot, just some, not too much, or nothing at all?



	Have S, R, H	Have not S/R/H
Republican	36%	64%
Democrat	36%	63%
Men 18-54	33%	67%
Men 55+	50%	49%
Women 18-54	29%	71%
Women 55+	22%	76%
Northeast	38%	61%
Midwest	37%	63%
South	32%	68%
West	29%	69%

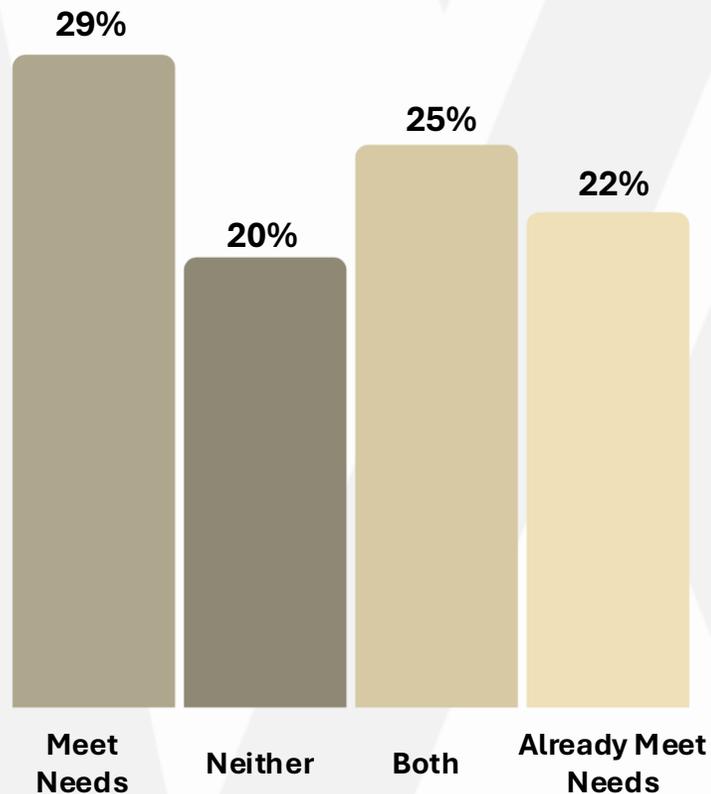
Voters are split on whether nuclear power is needed to meet our country's energy needs.

Please tell me which one you agree with more:

New nuclear power plants produce enough energy to meet our country's immediate needs and those on the horizon because of artificial intelligence.

OR

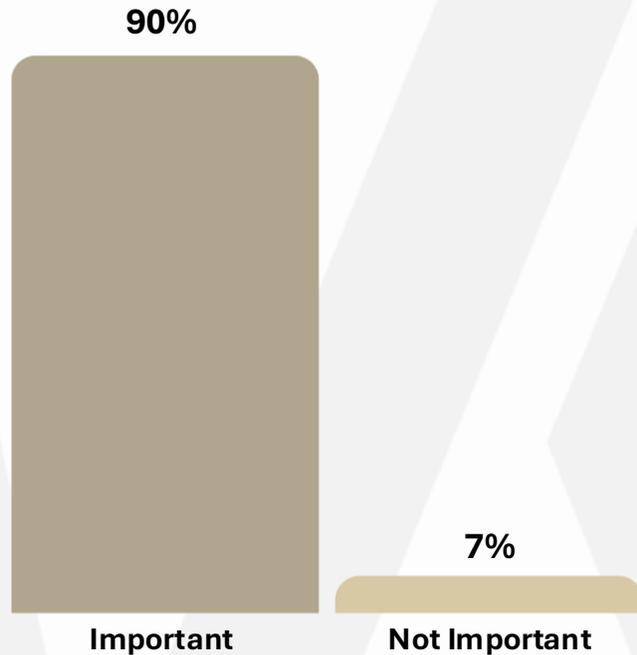
Our country produces enough energy from wind, solar, natural gas, coal, and other sources that we have more than enough to meet our current or future needs.



	Meet Needs	Neither	Both	Already meet needs
Republican	36%	15%	21%	26%
Democrat	22%	21%	34%	21%
Men 18-54	27%	12%	26%	32%
Men 55+	48%	14%	21%	24%
Women 18-54	18%	27%	25%	24%
Women 55+	26%	25%	28%	19%
Northeast	32%	23%	31%	12%
Midwest	25%	20%	27%	24%
South	28%	18%	24%	27%
West	32%	22%	19%	21%

An overwhelming number of voters across all demographics (~90%) believe community concerns should be addressed before a new power plant is built.

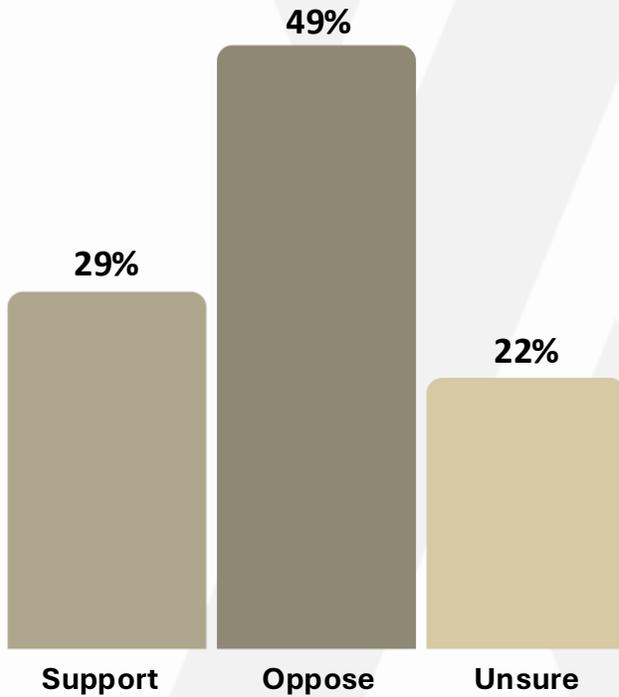
How important do you believe it is that community concerns like land use, energy use, and traffic are addressed before a new nuclear power plant is built? Would you say it is very important, somewhat important, not that important, or not important at all?



	Important	Not Important
Republican	89%	10%
Democrat	96%	1%
Men 18-54	92%	6%
Men 55+	84%	12%
Women 18-54	91%	5%
Women 55+	94%	3%
Northeast	93%	2%
Midwest	90%	6%
South	92%	6%
West	85%	12%

Voters are largely opposed when it comes to welcoming a nuclear power into their backyard.

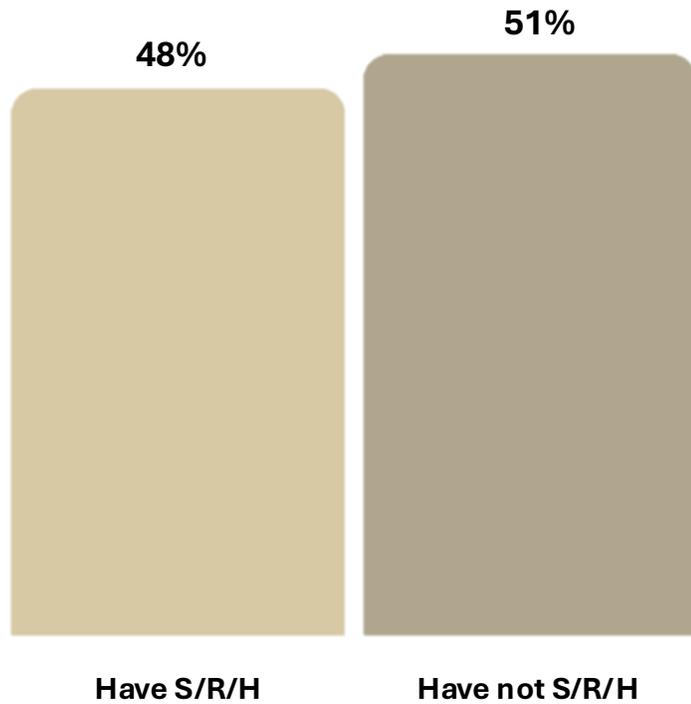
Do you support or oppose nuclear power plants being built in or near your town?



	Support	Oppose	Unsure
Republican	41%	44%	15%
Democrat	20%	54%	26%
Men 18-54	26%	57%	16%
Men 55+	51%	35%	14%
Women 18-54	16%	52%	32%
Women 55+	23%	54%	22%
Northeast	27%	48%	24%
Midwest	32%	47%	21%
South	25%	52%	23%
West	34%	47%	19%

Just under half (48%) report having an awareness of the recent data center surge.

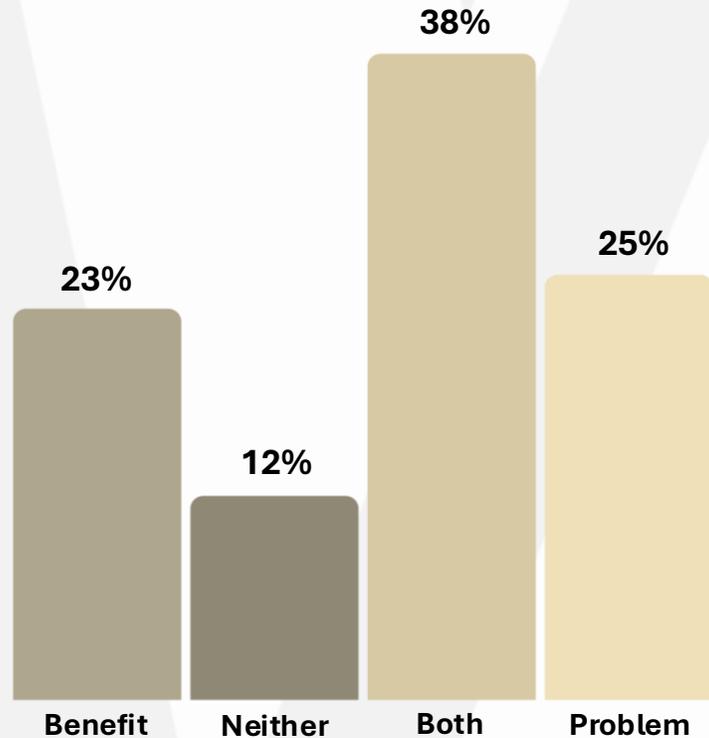
Would you say what you have seen, read, or heard recently about the expansion of new data centers across the country? Would you say that you have heard a lot, just some, not too much, or nothing at all?



	Have S, R, H	Have not S/R/H
Republican	54%	45%
Democrat	45%	54%
Men 18-54	59%	41%
Men 55+	52%	48%
Women 18-54	48%	50%
Women 55+	27%	70%
Northeast	52%	47%
Midwest	46%	54%
South	48%	50%
West	47%	52%

38% of voters think data centers bring benefits and problems to the communities they operate within.

Please tell me which one you agree with more:
 New data centers bring important benefits to local communities such as new jobs and tax revenue.
 or
 New data centers create problems for communities, such as higher energy and water use, noise, and traffic.

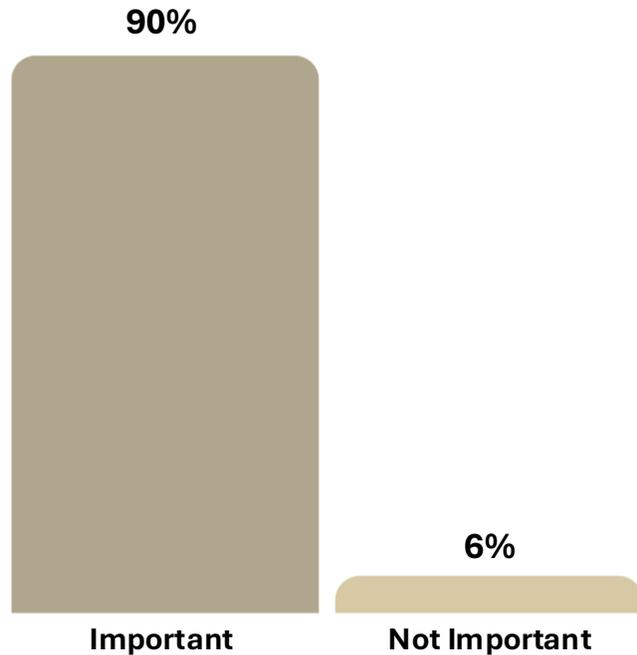


	Benefit	Neither	Both	Problem
Republican	27%	11%	38%	22%
Democrat	20%	13%	32%	30%
Men 18-54	29%	13%	35%	31%
Men 55+	27%	8%	46%	17%
Women 18-54	16%	15%	34%	32%
Women 55+	20%	13%	37%	28%
Northeast	24%	13%	28%	31%
Midwest	22%	12%	38%	23%
South	26%	12%	41%	20%
West	19%	12%	38%	29%

An overwhelming number of voters across all demographics (~90%) believe community concerns should be addressed before ground is broken on a data center.

How important do you believe it is that community concerns like land use, energy use, and traffic are addressed before a new data center is built?

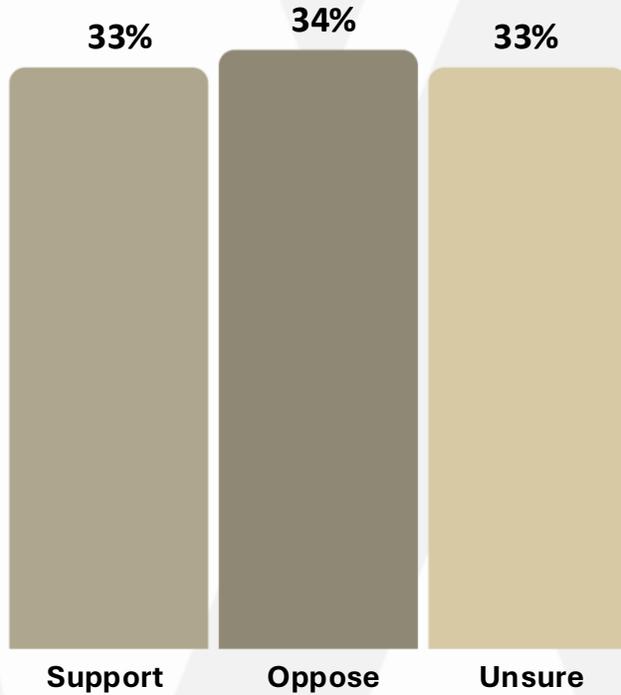
Would you say it is very important, somewhat important, not that important, or not important at all?



	Important	Not Important
Republican	91%	5%
Democrat	90%	5%
Men 18-54	92%	8%
Men 55+	90%	5%
Women 18-54	90%	3%
Women 55+	87%	7%
Northeast	86%	9%
Midwest	92%	5%
South	89%	6%
West	92%	4%

Voters are largely undecided when it comes to welcoming data centers into their backyard.

Do you support or oppose data centers being built in or near your town?



	Support	Oppose	Unsure
Republican	38%	33%	29%
Democrat	30%	38%	33%
Men 18-54	36%	35%	29%
Men 55+	39%	30%	31%
Women 18-54	24%	42%	35%
Women 55+	33%	29%	38%
Northeast	29%	39%	32%
Midwest	34%	33%	34%
South	35%	28%	36%
West	31%	41%	28%

Our Services

Government Relations

We Know How Power Works—And How to Move It. We don't just advocate—we command attention. Our team has deep ties across federal, state, and local governments, ensuring that your interests are not just heard but prioritized. Whether advancing a legislative agenda or neutralizing regulatory threats, we make government work for you.

Public Affairs

We Run Advocacy Like a War Room—Strategic, Relentless, and Built to Win. Our team develops and executes large-scale advocacy programs for our clients, with the ability to leverage all the tools of an aggressive presidential-level political campaign to achieve success.

Strategic Communications

We Don't Just Manage Narratives—We Own Them. We've been in the war room of the highest-stakes political fights, the boardroom battles that make front page news, and the green rooms of local and national news stations. All of these add up to multi-year campaigns that win over hearts and minds.

State & Local

AxAdvocacy's State & Local practice is built to win in every zip code. Whether it's shaping public opinion, mobilizing local support, or opening doors to decision-makers, we bring expertise that will amplify your cause.



Our Team



Ashlee Rich Stephenson
President



Bobby Babcock
Principal



Elizabeth Coit
Principal of Public Affairs



Alex Rahn
Pennsylvania Principal



Holly Thompson Rehder
Missouri Principal



Bob Salera
Principal of Communications



Marty Wilson
California Principal



Giancarlo Brizzi
Senior Advisor



Tom Killion
Senior Advisor Pennsylvania



Kelly McElhane
Senior Advisor



Jeff Billman
Senior Vice President of
Government Relations



Josh Harlow
Senior Vice President



Jack Ruddy
Senior Vice President of
Government Relations



John Shea IV
Senior Vice President of
Government Relations



Jonathan Dickerson
Vice President of Digital
Engagement



Drew Stephens
Senior Director



Sarah Williams
Senior Director



Fred Barnes
Director



Warren Scott
Director of Government
Relations



Leah Krecl
Digital Strategy & Ops
Manager



Zachary Hayes
Associate



Christina Zavala Ceja
Executive Assistant



Amy McGee
Pennsylvania Associate



William Shelby
Associate



Lauren Splett
Operation Associate

The strategy starts with a conversation.

Together we can build the strategy that powers
the future of American technology.



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We Connect. We Affect.