

# NEW ENGLAND COALITION FOR **AFFORDABLE ENERGY**

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## **Survey Finds New England Consumers Concerned About Energy Affordability Majority support energy infrastructure development**

**Boston, MA** – 5/24/16 – A warm winter and sharp drops in oil and natural gas prices have not dampened concerns among New England consumers about the affordability of energy, according to a survey conducted by the [New England Coalition for Affordable Energy](#), whose members include major business and labor groups.

The region-wide telephone survey of registered voters conducted earlier this month found that about 80 percent were either very concerned or somewhat concerned about the affordability of energy in New England. Only six percent said they were not at all concerned. Despite widely noted efforts by New England governors and actions in most legislatures to address energy issues, fewer than half believe their governor and legislature are doing enough to make energy more affordable.

Respondents also voiced support for the construction of new energy infrastructure. New electricity infrastructure, including electricity generating facilities and transmission lines, was favored by 73 percent of those responding, while natural gas infrastructure, including natural gas pipelines and storage facilities, to fuel electricity generating plants and homes and businesses in New England was favored by 64 percent.

Almost 90 percent surveyed said they were concerned about the findings of a [study](#) commissioned by the Coalition last August, which found that if energy infrastructure is not built in the region by 2020, energy costs could increase by \$5.4 billion.

To avoid this consequence, three out of four agreed the region should pursue an all-resource strategy that includes new natural gas power plants, pipelines, transmission lines, large-scale wind projects, imported hydropower from Canada, and solar power.

“The survey results offer important guideposts as the region balances energy reliability and affordability with environmental goals,” said Carl Gustin, Coalition consultant and former utility and US DOE executive. “The findings show solid support for an all-resource approach to meet the needs of the region’s businesses and institutions that depend on reliable power with prices that are affordable, predictable and stable,” Gustin added. “All resources includes natural gas, which is critical to ensure round-the-clock reliability, serves as back-up for intermittent renewable resources and guards against the electricity price volatility seen in recent years.”

The Coalition's mission is to advocate for the expansion of energy infrastructure to facilitate lower energy costs, project jobs, and grow the economy. Coalition members represent thousands of employers in the region that depend on affordable and reliable energy to maintain competitiveness.

The telephone survey was performed for the Coalition by Public Opinion Strategies. Interviewing was conducted May 1 –5 of 1,650 registered voters in New England. The margin of error is +/- 2.4%.

A PowerPoint of survey results (New England, state-by-state) is available on the Coalition's website. A brief summary by state is provided below.

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### **Summary of State-by-State Survey Results**

#### **Massachusetts**

*Energy Affordability* – Seventy-seven percent were concerned about the affordability of energy (38% very concerned, 39% somewhat). Less than half (45%) believe Governor Baker and the state legislature are doing something about making energy more affordable. (According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, MA households currently pay 63 percent more than the national average for electricity and 43 percent more for natural gas.)

*Electricity Infrastructure* – Seventy-two percent favor (32% strongly, 40% somewhat) the construction of additional electricity generating facilities and transmission lines in New England.

*Natural Gas Infrastructure* – Sixty percent favor (28% strongly, 32% somewhat) the construction of additional natural gas infrastructure to fuel electricity generating plants and homes and businesses in New England.

#### **Connecticut**

*Energy Affordability* – Eighty-two percent were concerned about the affordability of energy (36% very concerned, 46% somewhat). About one-third (34%) believe Governor Malloy and the state legislature are doing something about making energy more affordable. (According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, CT households currently pay 70 percent more than the national average for electricity and 27 percent more for natural gas.)

*Electricity Infrastructure* – Eighty percent favor (35% strongly, 45% somewhat) the construction of additional electricity generating facilities and transmission lines in New England.

*Natural Gas Infrastructure* – Seventy-two percent favor (30% strongly, 42% somewhat) the construction of additional natural gas infrastructure to fuel electricity generating plants and homes and businesses in New England.

## **Rhode Island**

*Energy Affordability* – About eighty percent were concerned about the affordability of energy (38% very concerned, 42% somewhat). About one-third (35%) believe Governor Raimondo and the state legislature are doing something about making energy more affordable. (According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, RI households currently pay 55 percent more than the national average for electricity and 47 percent more for natural gas.)

*Electricity Infrastructure* – Seventy-two percent favor (32% strongly, 40% somewhat) the construction of additional electricity generating facilities and transmission lines in New England.

*Natural Gas Infrastructure* – Sixty-five percent favor (28% strongly, 37% somewhat) the construction of additional natural gas infrastructure to fuel electricity generating plants and homes and businesses in New England.

## **New Hampshire**

*Energy Affordability* – Seventy-four percent were concerned about the affordability of energy (32% very concerned, 42% somewhat). Forty-five percent believe Governor Hassan and the state legislature are doing something about making energy more affordable. (According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, NH households currently pay 51 percent more than the national average for both electricity and natural gas.)

*Electricity Infrastructure* – Sixty-eight percent favor (30% strongly, 38% somewhat) the construction of additional electricity generating facilities and transmission lines in New England.

*Natural Gas Infrastructure* – Sixty-two percent favor (32% strongly, 30% somewhat) the construction of additional natural gas infrastructure to fuel electricity generating plants and homes and businesses in New England.

## **Maine**

*Energy Affordability* – Seventy-eight percent were concerned about the affordability of energy (29% very concerned, 49% somewhat). Forty-one percent believe Governor LePage and the state legislature are doing something about making energy more affordable. (According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, ME households currently pay 47 percent more than the national average for electricity and 56% more for natural gas.)

*Electricity Infrastructure* – Seventy-seven percent favor (34% strongly, 43% somewhat) the construction of additional electricity generating facilities and transmission lines in New England.

*Natural Gas Infrastructure* – Sixty-eight percent favor (34% strongly, 34% somewhat) the construction of additional natural gas infrastructure to fuel electricity generating plants and homes and businesses in New England.

## **Vermont**

*Energy Affordability* – Eighty-one percent were concerned about the affordability of energy (35% very concerned, 46% somewhat). Forty-nine percent believe Governor Shumlin and the state legislature are doing something about making energy more affordable. (According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, VT households currently pay 39% more than the national average for electricity and 49% more for natural gas.)

*Electricity Infrastructure* – Sixty-eight percent favor (23% strongly, 45% somewhat) the construction of additional electricity generating facilities and transmission lines in New England.

*Natural Gas Infrastructure* – About fifty percent favor (21% strongly, 29% somewhat) the construction of additional natural gas infrastructure to fuel electricity generating plants and homes and businesses in New England.