

TO Interested Parties

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Summary of West Virginia Energy-Economy Survey Results

Research America Inc. conducted this survey online and by telephone among 500 registered voters in West Virginia from June 21 to July 2, 2021 to investigate public sentiment around the state’s changing energy-economy. The survey included an oversample of respondents from heavy coal producing areas within the state.

The primary objectives of this research were to understand how West Virginia voters think, feel and communicate about energy and economic issues; assess public opinion, attitudes, and perceptions about economic diversification within West Virginia and the future role it can play in local communities and the state’s economy; and assess acceptance of various programs and policies designed to help communities throughout West Virginia.

This memo highlights select preliminary results relevant to the bipartisan infrastructure bill released in the Senate in late July 2021.

Summary of Survey Results

- Voters across West Virginia overwhelmingly (90%) identify benefits that may result from shifting the focus of West Virginia’s energy industry away from historic coal uses and towards the production of clean energy (such as carbon capture and renewables). Agreement is even higher within Coal Country (95%).

Statewide, voters ranked cleaner air and water as the top benefit (20%).

Coal Country voters ranked new jobs and clean and water the top benefits (each at 18%).

Which of the following would you consider to be the most beneficial?

Statewide		Coal Country	
Cleaner air and water	20%	New jobs	18%
New jobs	15%	Cleaner air and water	18%
Preserve and protect natural spaces and resources	14%	Economic growth	15%
More opportunities for future generations	14%	Improved quality of life	14%
Economic growth	13%	Preserve and protect natural spaces and resources	12%
Improved quality of life	12%	New businesses coming into the state	12%
New businesses coming into the state	9%	More opportunities for future generations	9%

Expanded tourism

3%

Expanded tourism

2%

Q. Which of the following would you consider to be the most beneficial?

- In looking at potential elements of a broad infrastructure improvement plan, across the state people saw the most benefit in high-speed broadband and securing electricity grids.

Benefit of Infrastructure Improvements in West Virginia

(0 = No benefit at all, 10 = Very beneficial, indexed to 100)

	Statewide Mean
Build high-speed broadband infrastructure to reach 100 percent coverage across the nation and reduce the cost of broadband internet service	83
Make the nation's electricity grids more modern, secure and reliable	83
Improve the health of our forests and expanding access to our natural lands	79
Clean up abandoned and unused energy sites such as old mines and industrial properties, which would create jobs, and reduce blight and pollution	78
Invest in energy efficiency and incentives to bring clean technology manufacturing to West Virginia	77
Incentives to build clean energy on former mine sites	73
Support pilot projects for next generation clean energy technologies such as carbon capture facilities, carbon storage, hydrogen hubs and other technologies that are not yet widely available.	69
Provide startup funds for companies that utilize coal in advanced manufacturing such as computer chips and building materials	67
Expand the American electric-vehicle market and make electric-vehicle charging stations widely available across the nation	58

Q. For the following proposals, rate how beneficial each would be for people in West Virginia.