

## New Poll: 9 out of 10 Americans Support Solar, Across Political Spectrum

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Americans overwhelmingly support the use and development of solar energy as well as federal investments for solar, according to a new national poll. These and other findings were reported today in the 2011 SCHOTT Solar Barometer(TM), a nationally representative survey conducted annually by independent polling firm Kelton Research.

For the fourth consecutive year, the survey found that about nine out of 10 Americans (89 percent) think it is important for the United States to develop and use solar energy. Support for solar is strong across the political spectrum with 80 percent of Republicans, 90 percent of Independents and 94 percent of Democrats agreeing that it is important for the United States to develop and use solar.

The survey also found that Americans want federal incentives for solar. More than eight out of 10 Americans (82 percent) support federal tax credits and grants for the solar industry similar to those that traditional sources of energy like oil, natural gas and coal have received for decades. Seventy-one percent of Republicans agree, as well as 82 percent of Independents and 87 percent of Democrats.

Furthermore, when asked to select an energy source they would financially support if they were in charge of U.S. energy policy, 39 percent of Americans chose solar over other sources such as natural gas (21 percent), wind (12 percent), nuclear (9 percent) and coal (3 percent). Among Independents, solar is more than twice as popular as any other energy source (43 percent for solar compared to 20 percent for natural gas).

"In this tough economy, Americans want to see solutions coming from Washington," said Rhone Resch, president and CEO of the Solar Energy Industries Association. "For members of Congress trying to find ways to create jobs, solar is a win-win. Thanks in part to proven policy successes like the 1603 Treasury Program, the solar industry has doubled its workforce in the last two years and now employs more than 100,000 Americans at 5,000 businesses spanning every state. And solar enjoys overwhelming support across all political affiliations - Republicans, Democrats and Independents. It's clear that solar has the strong support of the American people. Now it needs the support of U.S. policymakers in extending job-creating policies like the 1603 program to make sure solar continues to work for America."

Despite weeks of news coverage about the bankruptcy of solar panel manufacturer Solyndra, the survey shows that Americans' support for solar remains strong. In fact, the vast majority of Americans support solar manufacturing in the United States. Eight out of 10 (82 percent) think it is important for the federal government to support U.S. solar manufacturing, and a majority of Independent voters (51 percent) think it is "extremely important."

The poll also found that Americans prefer to buy solar-made products. A majority of Americans (51 percent) said they would be more likely to purchase a product if they knew it was made using solar energy. Consumers in the key age demographic of 18 to 44 years old are even more likely to buy solar-made products (61 percent).

One challenge that the solar industry faces is educating the public about how they can become consumers of solar power. Despite the cost of solar modules decreasing by 30 percent since the beginning of 2010 and residential solar leasing models that allow consumers to go solar with no upfront cost, 48 percent of Americans cited cost as their biggest concern with choosing solar energy.

"The fourth annual Solar Barometer shows that Americans overwhelmingly understand the benefits and continue to support solar energy for our country," said Tom Hecht, President, Sales, Marketing and Business Development, SCHOTT Solar PV, Inc. "What I find especially encouraging is that eight out of ten people support American solar manufacturing. A growing domestic solar industry will create more jobs and make solar more attractive as a clean energy source. Prices for solar continue to decline and those who currently own solar systems are earning a strong return on their investment. High quality solar energy systems are also extremely reliable, which is why companies like SCHOTT Solar back their modules with warranties of up to 25 years."

"For the fourth year in a row, an overwhelming majority of Americans agree on the importance of solar power," said Rachel Bonsignore, Associate Director, Kelton Research. "This year's survey continues the trend of remarkably consistent support for solar."

Key Survey Findings:

<http://seia.us/sERklb>

Question 1: If you were in charge of U.S. energy policy and could choose to provide financial support in one of the following energy sources during your term in office, which would you choose?

Thirty-nine percent chose solar, compared to 21 percent for natural gas, 12 percent for wind, 9 percent for nuclear and 3 percent for coal. Among Independents, solar is more than twice as popular as any other energy source (43 percent to 20 percent for natural gas).

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Question 2: How important do you think it is for the U.S. to develop and use solar power?

Nine out of 10 Americans (89 percent) think it is "extremely important" or "somewhat important."

Eighty percent of Republicans, 90 percent of Independents, and 94 percent of Democrats agree with this statement.

Question 3: How important do you think it is for the federal government to support U.S. solar manufacturing right now?

Eight out of 10 Americans (82 percent) think it is "extremely important" or "somewhat important."

A majority of Independent voters (51 percent) think it is "extremely important."

Question 4: Would you be more, less or about as likely to buy a product that you knew was made using solar energy?

A majority of Americans (51 percent) would be more likely to buy products produced with solar energy.

Sixty-one percent of consumers in the key age demographic of 18 to 44 years old would be more likely.

Question 5: Which of the following best describes the biggest concern you would have with choosing solar energy?

Cost was the most common concern (48 percent), followed by reliability (25 percent), uncertainty about the benefits (9 percent) and aesthetics (3 percent).

Question 6: The federal government currently gives subsidies, such as federal tax credits and grants, to traditional sources of energy, such as oil, natural gas and coal. How likely would you be to support similar subsidies for solar energy?

More than eight out of 10 Americans (82 percent) would be "extremely likely" or "somewhat likely" to support federal investments in solar. Seventy-two percent of Republicans support federal investments, as well as 87 percent of Democrats and 82 percent of Independents.

Seventy-one percent of Republicans support federal incentives, as well as 82 percent of Independents, and 87 percent of Democrats.

Methodology:

Background Resources:

<http://seia.us/sERklb>

Public Opinion Strategies/FM3 poll on voter awareness of Solyndra and its implications on the clean energy debate (Sept. 26, 2011): [www.eenews.net/assets/2011/10/03/document\\_daily\\_01.pdf](http://www.eenews.net/assets/2011/10/03/document_daily_01.pdf)

Public Perceptions of Solar Water Heating Systems report (Oct. 17, 2011): [www.seia.org/cs/news\\_detail?pressrelease.id=1670](http://www.seia.org/cs/news_detail?pressrelease.id=1670)

See how solar is working for America in all 50 states: [www.SolarWorksforAmerica.org](http://www.SolarWorksforAmerica.org)

The solar industry is on pace for a record growth year in 2011. Learn about the industry's dynamic growth through the first half of the year (Sept. 20, 2011): [www.seia.org/galleries/pdf/Solar\\_Energy\\_Facts\\_Q2\\_2011.pdf](http://www.seia.org/galleries/pdf/Solar_Energy_Facts_Q2_2011.pdf)

Find out solar energy's real story: [www.seia.org/galleries/pdf/Behind\\_The\\_Solyndra\\_Headlines.pdf](http://www.seia.org/galleries/pdf/Behind_The_Solyndra_Headlines.pdf)

About SEIA:

Established in 1974, the Solar Energy Industries Association is the national trade association of the U.S. solar energy industry. Through advocacy and education, SEIA and its 1,100 member companies are building a strong solar industry to power America. As the voice of the industry, SEIA works to make solar a mainstream and significant energy source by expanding markets, removing market barriers, strengthening the industry and educating the public on the benefits of solar energy. [www.seia.org](http://www.seia.org)

About SCHOTT Solar:

SCHOTT Solar, with its high quality products, enables the potential of the sun as a nearly inexhaustible source of energy to be utilized. SCHOTT Solar produces important components for photovoltaic applications and solar energy power plants. In the production of receivers for solar power plants, SCHOTT Solar sees itself as a market and technology leader. Receivers from SCHOTT Solar are key components in large-scale power plants that generate electricity from solar energy centrally on the basis of parabolic trough technology and are able to supply entire cities with power. SCHOTT Solar has production facilities in the USA, Germany, the Czech Republic, and Spain. The innovative power and technological competence of the company date back to the late 1950s. SCHOTT Solar is a wholly owned subsidiary of the international SCHOTT group. SCHOTT develops special materials, components and systems for the household appliance, pharmaceutical, solar energy, electronics, optical and automotive industries. With its workforce of approximately 17,500 employees, the SCHOTT Group generated worldwide sales of approximately \$4 billion (\$2.9 billion Euros) for fiscal year 2009/2010. In North America, SCHOTT's holding company SCHOTT Corporation and its subsidiary SCHOTT North America, Inc. and their affiliates employ about 3,000 people in 14 production operations with 6 sales offices.

The company's technological and economic expertise is closely linked with its social and ecological responsibilities.