



DATA FOR **PROGRESS**

To: Interested Parties
From: Data for Progress
Date: May 2023
Re: Vermont Climate Superfund

Intro

As Vermont reckons with the cost of climate change, lawmakers are debating how to pay for the hefty price of both rapidly reducing greenhouse gas emissions and also building infrastructure to mitigate the damage of extreme weather and natural disasters.

In light of recent legislation in Maryland, Massachusetts and New York for a climate change adaptation cost recovery program, or “climate superfund,” Data for Progress [conducted research](#) into Vermont likely voters' attitudes toward a climate superfund, which would require companies that have contributed significantly to greenhouse gas emissions to bear a share of the costs of climate resilient infrastructure investments.

Issue Environment

Vermont voters are not happy with the direction the country is headed, with 82 percent saying the country has gotten off on the wrong track. Sentiments towards Vermont specifically are mixed, with 48 percent saying Vermont is headed in the right direction and 47 percent saying the state is off on the wrong track. Given the current economic environment, it is no surprise that the top issues for likely Vermont voters are **the cost and availability of housing** (25 percent), **inflation and the cost of living** (18 percent), and **taxes in Vermont** (10 percent). Democratic voters and voters under 45 in Vermont are very concerned about **the cost and availability of housing** (37 percent and 36 percent, respectively), while Republican voters are most concerned about **inflation and the cost of living** (27 percent).

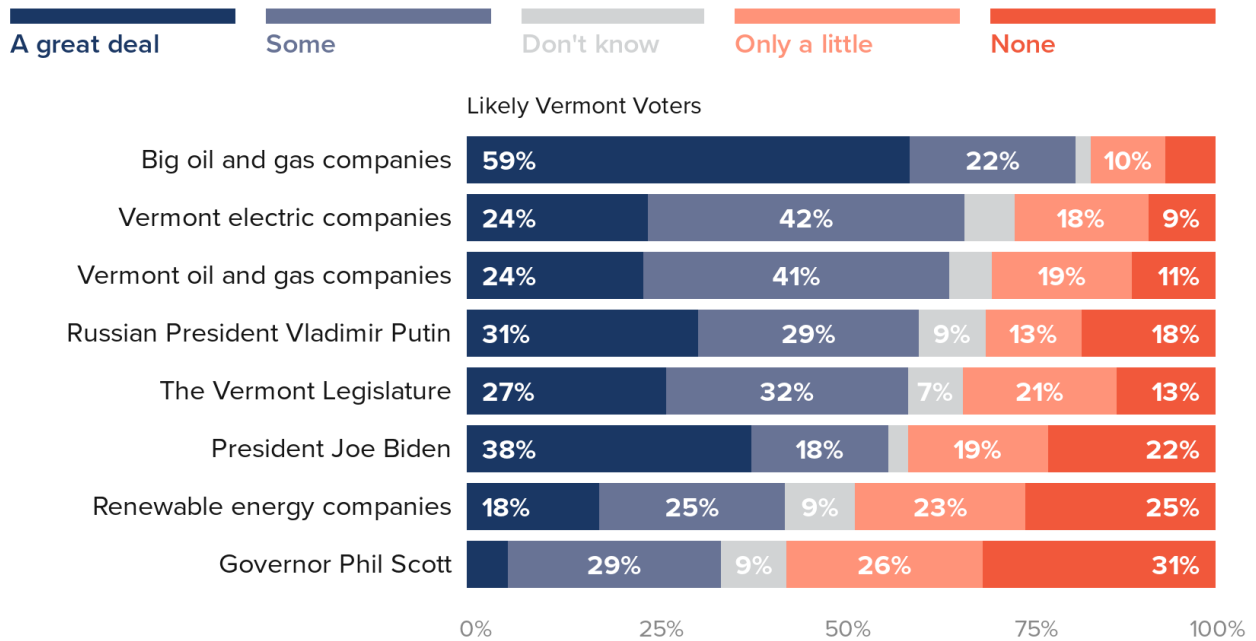


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When asked who to blame for today’s high energy prices, Vermont voters **place a great deal of blame on big oil and gas companies (59 percent)**.

Vermont Voters Blame Big Oil and Gas Companies for High Energy Prices

Thinking about **energy prices** in Vermont – how much blame do you attribute to each of the following for high energy prices today?



April 17 to 24, 2023 survey of 598 likely voters in Vermont

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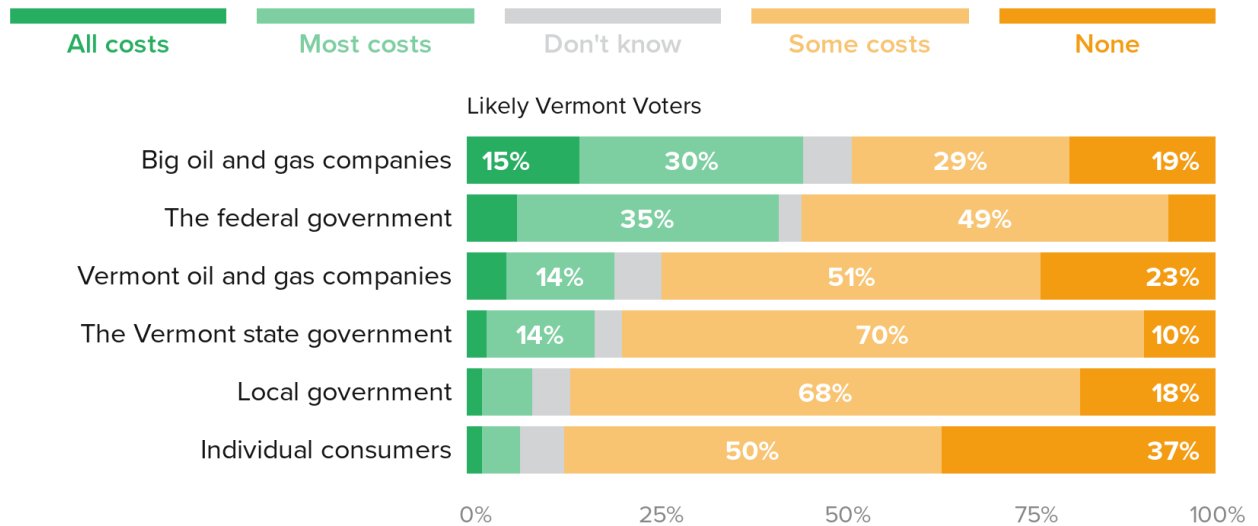


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Overall, Vermont voters think that climate costs should be shared among the various stakeholders, but 45 percent believe that **big oil and gas companies** should be responsible for “all” or “most costs” associated with climate change. Over a third of Vermont voters believe that individuals should not be responsible for any costs associated with climate change, while 50 percent think individuals should be responsible for “some costs.”

Vermont Voters Think Climate Costs Should be Shared, But Many Believe Big Oil and the Federal Government Should be Responsible for All or Most Costs

Thinking about paying for climate change damage from floods and tropical storms in Vermont – what portion of costs do you think each of the following should be responsible for?



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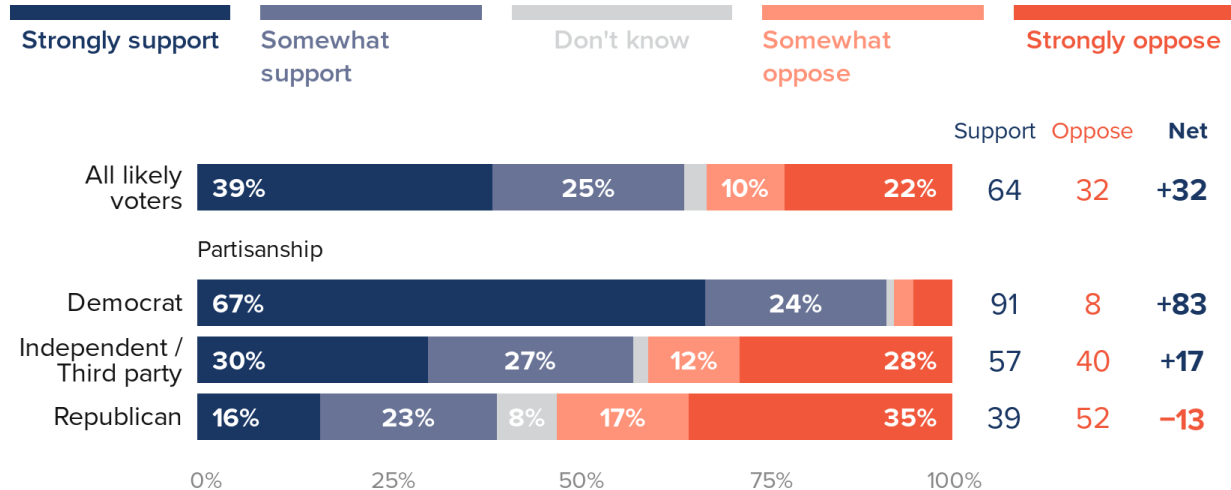
Policy Support

Vermont voters widely support a proposal which would require big oil and gas companies to pay a share of the cost for climate resilient infrastructure projects by a **+32-point margin (64 percent support vs. 32 percent oppose)**. The proposal is incredibly popular among Democrats (91 percent total support), but **also enjoys support from a majority of Independents (57 percent)**. Women (80 percent support), and college voters (72 percent) are more likely to support a proposal for a one time fee on big oil and gas companies.

Vermont Voters Support a One Time Fee on Big Oil and Gas Companies to Pay for Climate Infrastructure

Some state lawmakers in Vermont are considering a bill that would assess a one time fee on big oil and gas companies like ExxonMobil and Chevron to pay a share of the costs for making Vermont's infrastructure better able to withstand the impacts of climate change.

Would you support or oppose this bill?



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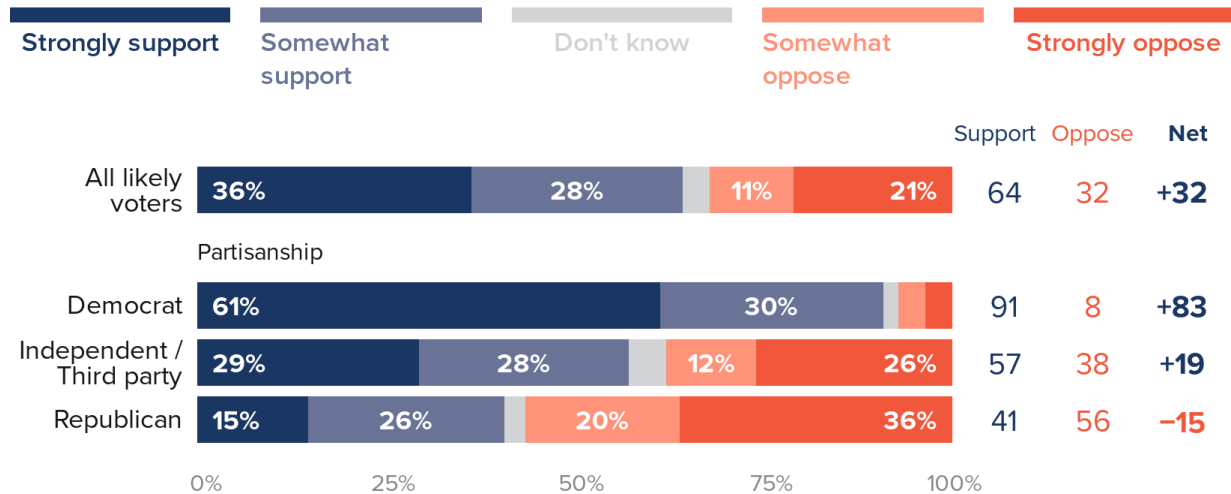
After viewing messaging from supporters and opponents of a fee on oil and gas companies, Vermont voters were asked again about their support for the proposal. Support remains remarkably consistent with a +32-point margin.



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After Hearing Arguments from Both Sides of the Debate, Vermont Voters Remain Supportive of a One Time Fee on Big Oil and Gas Companies to Pay for Climate Infrastructure

Now, having heard arguments for and against the bill, would you support or oppose a bill that would require big oil and gas companies like ExxonMobil and Chevron to pay a share of the costs for making Vermont's infrastructure better able to withstand the impacts of climate change?



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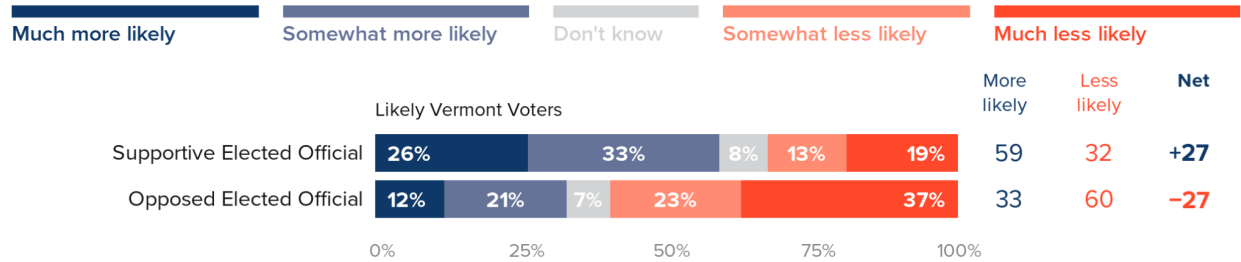


And finally, Vermont voters were asked if they would be more or less likely to support both an elected official who **supports** the one time fee, and an elected official who **opposes** the one time fee. The findings are stark and mirror each other almost exactly: fifty-nine percent of voters said they would be **more likely** to support an elected official who **supports** the one time fee, while 60 percent said they would be **less likely** to support an elected official who **opposes** the one time fee.



Vermont Voters are More Likely to Vote for an Elected Official Who Supports a One Time Fee on Big Oil and Gas Companies, And Less Likely to Vote for an Elected Official in Opposition

If a candidate for elected office were to **support/oppose** a policy that would require big oil and gas companies like ExxonMobil and Chevron to pay a share of Vermont's climate infrastructure costs, would this make you more or less likely to vote for them?



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Conclusion

In the coming years, Vermont will have to deal with the cost of climate change, and essential to this issue is the question of how to pay for infrastructure to mitigate the damage of extreme weather and natural disasters. The data is clear: **Vermont voters support a proposal to make big oil and gas companies pay their fair share to address climate change.**

Survey Methodology

From April 17 to 24, 2023, Data for Progress conducted a [survey](#) of 598 likely voters in Vermont using SMS and web panel respondents. The sample was weighted to be representative of likely voters by age, gender, education, race, geography, and voting history. The survey was conducted in English. The margin of error is ± 4 percentage points.