



Opinion Poll

Ohio Small Businesses Support Energy Efficiency Measures

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Executive Summary

In the wake of the Great Recession, small businesses nationwide and in Ohio are doing all they can to strengthen and grow their businesses. In order to be competitive in the current economic climate, small business owners are constantly looking for innovative ways to help their businesses run more efficiently. As part of these efforts, recent scientific opinion polling conducted by Small Business Majority shows that Ohio's entrepreneurs want utilities to offer renewable energy sources that will help them improve their energy intensity and reduce utility costs, and believe the use of renewable energy can have economic benefits for their businesses.

Small business owners in Ohio believe the state's current energy efficiency and renewable energy standard is good for businesses because it spurs innovation and creates market opportunities, and that Ohio's utility providers and regulatory agencies can and should help small businesses implement energy efficiency measures, promote renewable technologies and generally support a competitive clean energy-based economy. As the drivers of the economy, small business owners want pragmatic, inventive policies that help them utilize clean energy measures so they can streamline their operations.

Polling found the majority of small businesses agree Ohio's current energy efficiency and renewable energy standard is good for businesses because it spurs innovation and creates market opportunities, and two-thirds believe clean energy sources can help their bottom line by lowering their utility bills and providing new business opportunities. Entrepreneurs also agree electricity providers should be required to offer services that help small businesses become more energy-efficient and save money, with things like energy audits and rebates for installing energy-efficient products. Many small business owners across the state have already realized these benefits for themselves. Nearly one-third of those polled stated they've had an energy audit conducted at their place of business; almost 6 in 10 of these audits resulted in energy savings, thereby lowering their utility costs.

What's more, small businesses in the Buckeye State agree Ohio's clean energy standard requiring electric companies to reduce state electricity consumption by 22% by 2025 and have 12.5% of all energy come from renewable sources such as wind and solar power helps businesses reduce energy costs and creates market opportunities.

In order to navigate these clean energy standards, the majority of small employers believe the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO) should formally establish a small business committee to raise awareness, provide consultation and issue guidance on energy matters facing small businesses in Ohio.

It's important to note that Ohio business owners have not made these decisions based on party lines. The political breakdown of the poll shows that it was a Republican majority, with 51% identifying as Republican, 31% as Democrats and 18% as independent.

Small business owners know that clean energy services help them strengthen their businesses by reducing their energy intensity and cutting their utility costs. Renewable energy sources and clean energy standards aren't just good for the environment, they help small employers contribute to the economy by improving their bottom line and creating new business opportunities.

Main Findings

- **Small business owners agree Ohio's state energy efficiency and renewable energy standard reduces energy costs, spurs innovation and creates market opportunities:** Fifty-three percent of small businesses support Ohio's energy efficiency and renewable energy standard for electric companies, which requires electric companies by 2025 to reduce state electricity consumption by 22% and have 12.5% of all energy come from renewable sources such as wind and solar power. Owners agree this standard helps their businesses by reducing energy costs, spurring innovation and creating market opportunities.
- **Small businesses believe electricity providers should be required to offer services to help small businesses become more energy-efficient and save money:** More than half (51%) of small businesses agree that electricity providers should offer services, such as energy audits and rebates for installing energy-efficient products, to help small businesses reduce costs and become more energy-efficient.
- **Small businesses believe the use of renewable energy sources can have economic benefits for small businesses:** A vast 65% of small businesses believe renewable energy sources, such as solar and wind power, can have positive economic impacts for small businesses, such as lowering utility bills and providing new business opportunities for entrepreneurs.
- **Small business owners believe the PUCO should formally establish a small business committee to raise awareness, provide consultation, and issue guidance on energy matters facing small businesses in Ohio:** Sixty-three percent of owners agree that as the regulatory agency that oversees energy utilities in Ohio, PUCO should be responsible for helping small business owners understand how energy matters affect their businesses.
- **Respondents were politically diverse:** 51% identified as Republican, 31% as Democrat and 18% as independent or other.

Methodology

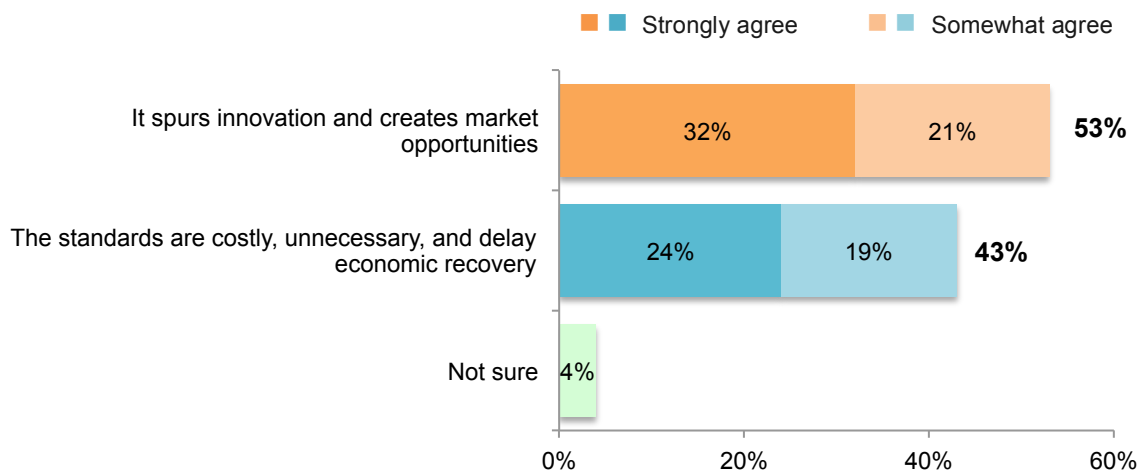
This poll reflects a telephone survey of 300 Ohio small business owners conducted by Public Policy Polling for Small Business Majority with a margin of error of +/- 5.66%. The survey was conducted from October 10-17, 2013.

Owners Agree State Clean Energy Standards Help Businesses, Create Opportunities

Small businesses demonstrated support for Ohio's state clean energy standard, which requires electric companies by 2025 to reduce state electricity consumption by 22% and have 12.5% of all energy come from renewable sources, such as wind and solar power. More than half (53%) support this approach, including 32% of respondents who *strongly* support it. Small business owners agree with proponents of this standard who say this will help businesses by reducing energy costs, spurring innovation and creating market opportunities.

■ **Figure 1: Small businesses agree Ohio's state energy efficiency and renewable energy standard spurs innovation and creates market opportunities**

Ohio's state energy efficiency and renewable energy standard requires electric companies by 2025 to reduce state electricity consumption by 22% and have 12.5% of all energy come from renewable sources, such as wind and solar power. Supporters say this standard helps businesses by reducing energy costs, spurring innovation and creating market opportunities. Opponents say the standards are costly, unnecessary and are delaying the state's economic recovery.

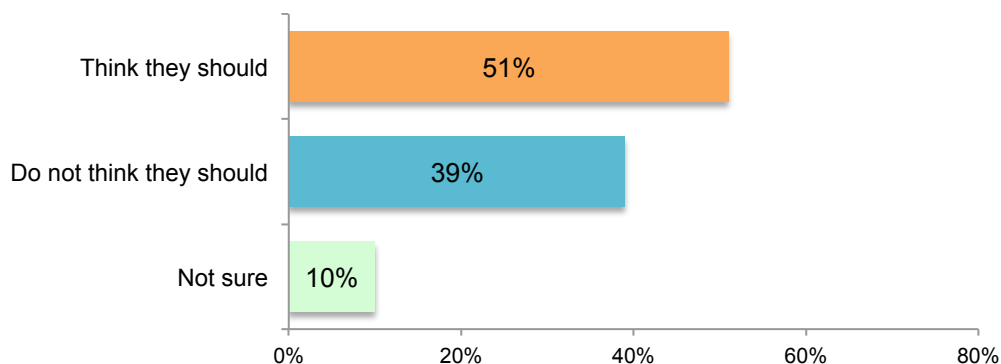


Small Businesses Believe Electricity Providers Should Be Required to Offer Services to Help Small Businesses Become More Energy-Efficient and Save Money

Small business owners know that clean energy measures, such as installing energy-efficient light bulbs, appliances, windows and insulation, and reducing heat during the winter and air conditioning in the summer, can help them reduce their energy costs, which is good for their bottom line. Entrepreneurs think it's important for their energy providers to help them reduce their energy costs further through the use of renewable energy sources. In fact, the majority believe that electricity providers should be required to offer energy-saving services like energy audits and rebates for installing energy-efficient products to help businesses reduce their energy costs.

■ **Figure 2: Owners believe electricity providers should be required to offer services to help small businesses become more energy-efficient and save money**

Do you think electricity providers should be required to offer services to help small businesses become more energy-efficient and save money, with things like energy audits and rebates for installing energy-efficient products, or not?



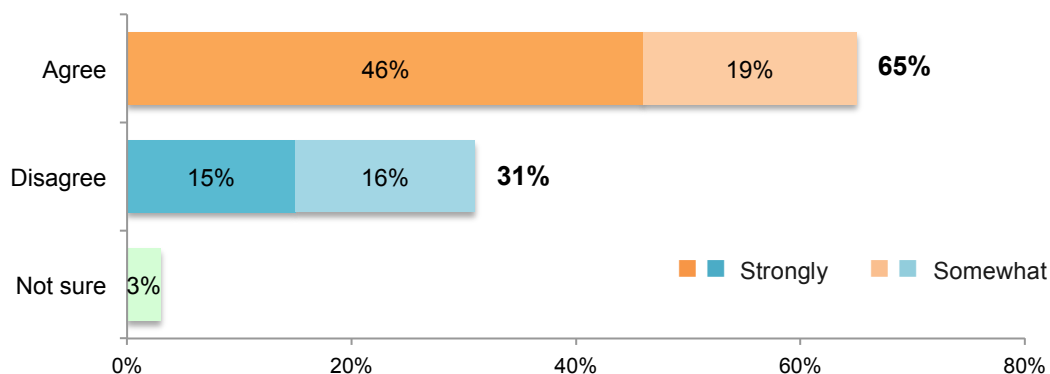
When asked who they use as their utility provider, 26% responded that AEP provides their energy. The remaining top energy providers are as follows: 16% percent receive their energy from FirstEnergy, 14% from Duke Energy, 13% from Ohio Edison, 7% from Dayton Power and Light, 2% from Illuminating and another 2% receive energy from Toledo Edison. The remaining 20% responded as someone else/not sure.

Majority of Owners Support Strong Clean Energy Standards

Poll results revealed particularly strong support for the use of renewable energy sources like solar and wind power. A vast 65% of small businesses believe renewable energy sources can benefit their businesses by lowering their utility bills and creating new market opportunities.

■ **Figure 3: Small firms agree the expanded use of renewable energy sources can have economic benefits for small business owners**

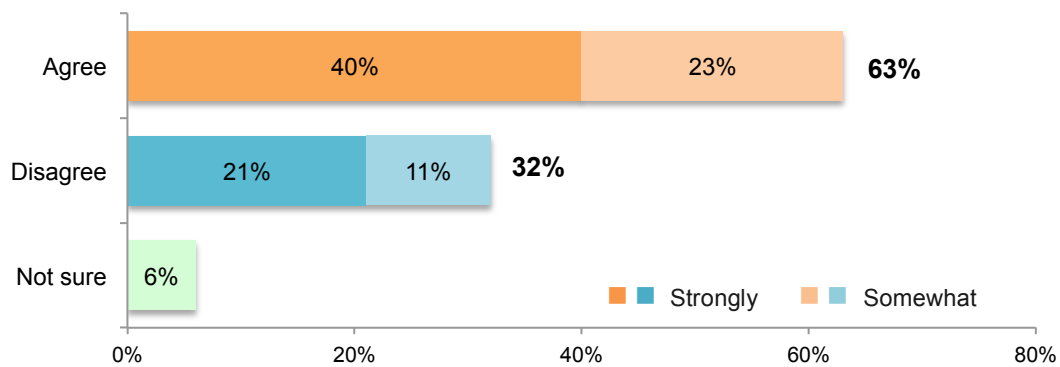
Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: the use of renewable energy sources, such as solar and wind power, can have economic benefits for small business owners, such as lowering utility bills and providing new business opportunities for entrepreneurs?



Small business owners also believe the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO) should help them understand energy matters in Ohio and how they affect their businesses. In fact, 63% agree PUCO should formally establish a small business committee to help them navigate these issues, with 40% who *strongly agree*. As the regulatory agency that oversees public utility services in Ohio to assure services at a fair price, PUCO should ensure that small businesses can utilize energy efficiency services that help them improve their energy intensity, cut utility costs and create new business opportunities.

■ **Figure 4: Small business owners strongly believe the PUCO should formally establish a small business committee to help them understand energy matters facing small businesses in Ohio**

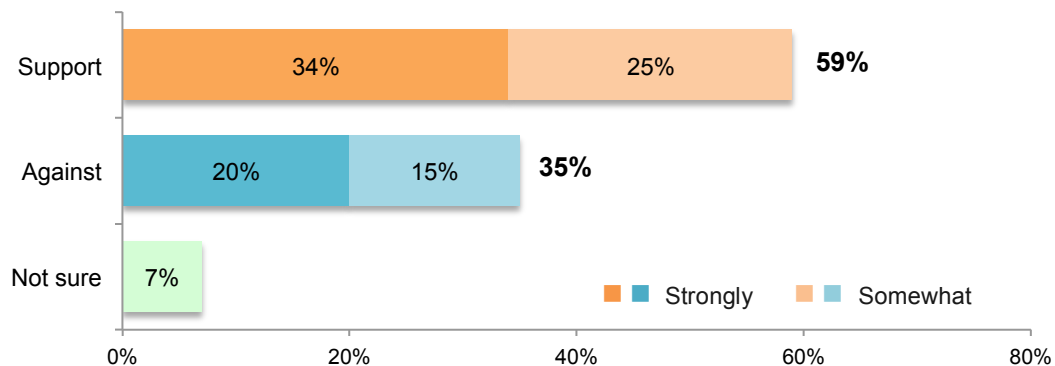
The PUCO is a regulatory agency that oversees utility services in Ohio, such as electric companies, to assure safe and reliable public utility services at a fair price. Do you believe the PUCO should formally establish a small business committee to raise awareness, provide consultation, and issue guidance on energy matters facing small businesses in Ohio?



Fifty-nine percent of small businesses support a state policy that offers small businesses upfront financing options for energy efficiency improvements that are paid back in small increments as an assessment on your utility bill. Small businesses are eager to implement cost-saving energy efficiency measures, and many small business owners across the state have already benefitted from the results of energy assessments. Nearly one-third of those polled stated they've had an energy audit conducted at their place of business; almost 6 in 10 of these audits resulted in energy savings, thereby lowering their utility costs and improving their bottom line.

■ **Figure 5: Owners support a state policy that offers upfront financing options for energy efficiency improvements**

Would you support a state policy that offers small businesses upfront financing options for energy efficiency improvements that are paid back in small increments as an assessment on your utility bill?



Conclusion

In order to survive this tough economic climate, small business owners in Ohio have to be adept at finding innovative ways to strengthen and grow their businesses. It's not surprising then that the vast majority of entrepreneurs see opportunities available to them through clean energy resources. Ohio small business owners view renewable energy resources and clean energy standards as a way for them to cut energy costs, streamline their businesses and help improve the environment. What's more, they agree Ohio's current clean energy standards help save money and create market opportunities and believe utility providers should be required to provide services that help businesses become more energy-efficient and save money.

Many business owners in Ohio have already reduced their utility costs by conducting energy audits and implementing energy-saving recommendations. Small businesses also know that clean energy sources, such as solar and wind power, can help them streamline their businesses and cut their energy costs. Ohio's utility providers and regulatory agencies should help support small businesses in their efforts to become more energy-efficient by offering renewable energy services and guidance on how energy matters affect entrepreneurs.

Methodology

This poll reflects a telephone survey of 300 Ohio small business owners, conducted by Public Policy Polling for Small Business Majority with a margin of error of +/- 5.66%. The survey was conducted from October 10-17, 2013.

Poll Toplines

October 10 – October 17, 2013

300 Ohio small business owners of 100 or less employees

1. Are you the owner of a small business?

Yes.....100%

No0%

2. How many people are directly employed by your business, including yourself?

1..... 25%

2-539%

6-1016%

11-25..... 8%

26-50 9%

51-100..... 3%

More than 100.....0%

3. As a small business owner, do you shop around for your electricity rates, or not?

Do 32%

Do not..... 68%

4. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: The use of renewable energy sources, such as solar and wind power, can have economic benefits for small business owners, such as lowering utility bills and providing new business opportunities for entrepreneurs?

Strongly agree 46%

Somewhat agree..... 19%

Somewhat disagree 16%

Strongly disagree..... 15%

Not sure 3%

5. Has your business or your landlord taken any energy-saving measures, such as installing energy-efficient light bulbs, appliances, windows and insulation, reducing heat during the winter and air conditioning in the summer, or some other energy-saving measure?

Have taken at least one of the above..... 79%

None has been taken..... 20%

Not sure..... 1%

6. Have you had an energy audit or assessment done at your place of business?

Yes..... 30%

No 66%

Not sure..... 3%

7. (Asked only of those who said 'yes' to Q6:) Did the audit result in energy savings for your place of business?

Yes..... 58%

No..... 39%

Didn't implement the suggestions..... 0%

Not sure..... 3%

8. Would you support a state policy that offers small businesses upfront financing options for energy efficiency improvements that are paid back in small increments as an assessment on your utility bill?

Strongly support..... 34%
Somewhat support..... 25%
Somewhat against 15%
Strongly against 20%
Not sure..... 7%

9. Do you think electricity providers should be required to offer services to help small businesses become more energy-efficient and save money, with things like energy audits and rebates for installing energy-efficient products, or not?

Think they should..... 51%
Do not think they should 39%
Not sure 10%

10. Ohio's state energy efficiency and renewable energy standard requires electric companies by 2025 to reduce state electricity consumption by 22% and have 12.5% of all energy come from renewable sources such as wind and solar power. Supporters say this standard helps businesses by reducing energy costs, spurring innovation and creating market opportunities. Opponents say the standards are costly, unnecessary, and are delaying the state's economic recovery.

Strongly agree that it spurs innovation and creates market opportunities..... 32%
Somewhat agree..... 21%
Somewhat agree that the standards are costly, unnecessary, and delay economic recovery 19%
Strongly agree 24%
Not sure 4%

11. Are you familiar with the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio, also called the PUCO?

Yes..... 80%
No 14%
Not sure..... 5%

12. The PUCO is a regulatory agency that oversees utility services in Ohio, such as electric companies, to assure safe and reliable public utility services at a fair price. Do you believe the PUCO should formally establish a small business committee to raise awareness, provide consultation, and issue guidance on energy matters facing small businesses in Ohio?

Strongly agree 40%
Somewhat agree..... 23%
Somewhat disagree 11%
Strongly disagree..... 21%
Not sure..... 6%

13. Who is your energy provider? Is it Duke Energy, Ohio Edison, AEP, FirstEnergy, Dayton Power and Light, Illuminating Company, Toledo Edison, or someone else?

Duke 14%
Ohio Edison..... 13%
AEP 26%
FirstEnergy16%
Dayton P&L.....7%
Illuminating.....2%
Toledo Edison2%
Someone else/Not sure 20%

14. If you are a woman, press 1. If a man, press 2.

Woman 47%
Man.....53%

15. If you are a Democrat, press 1. If a Republican, press 2. If you are an independent or identify with another party, press 3.

Democrat 28%
Republican 38%
Independent/Other 35%

16. (Asked only of independents:) Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican or Democratic Party?

Democrat 11%
Republican 39%
Neither 50%

17. Combined Party ID

Democrat 31%
Republican 51%
Independent/Other 18%

18. If you are Hispanic, press 1. If white, press 2.
If African-American, press 3. If other, press 4.

Hispanic 14%
White 73%
African-American..... 7%
Other..... 6%

19. If you are 18 to 29 years old, press 1. If 30 to 45, press 2. If 46 to 65, press 3. If you are older than 65, press 4.

18 to 29..... 12%
30 to 45..... 21%
46 to 65..... 51%
Older than 65 16%