



New Poll: Pennsylvanians Oppose Bailouts That Will Increase Electricity Bills

An overwhelming majority of Pennsylvanians are against state intervention to upend Pennsylvania's competitive electricity markets by bailing out the state's aging nuclear power plants, according to results from a recent statewide poll.

The poll, commissioned by Citizens Against Nuclear Bailouts, revealed that while consumers support energy diversity, they are not willing to pay higher electricity bills to prop up uneconomical nuclear plants. Additionally, a vast majority of Pennsylvanians believe that competition and consumers should determine the state's electricity markets.

The issue has caught the attention of voters as focus shifts to several midterm elections this fall. More than half of poll respondents said they would be less likely to vote for an elected official who supports any legislation to subsidize nuclear power generators. By comparison, only 12 percent of voters said they would be more likely to support an elected official who supports a bailout.

'AARP Pennsylvania: It's Inappropriate'

"The results are in, and it's clear that Pennsylvanians don't want — and cannot afford — to subsidize certain power plants," said William Johnston-Walsh, State Director, AARP Pennsylvania. "Older people on fixed or low incomes already struggle just to make ends meet. It's plainly inappropriate to ask them to unnecessarily hand over more of their hard-earned money to large, already profitable power companies."

Pennsylvania's Manufacturing Advantage

"More efficient and affordable power generating resources have lowered energy costs and are providing a new life-line to Pennsylvania's manufacturers," said Rod Williamson, Executive Director, Industrial Energy Consumers of Pennsylvania. "Consequently, the nuclear generation owners now seek to saddle Pennsylvania's energy consumers with subsidy payments for units that we no longer need and that cannot compete under rules that they helped design. Now that Pennsylvania's manufacturers are experiencing a competitive advantage based upon energy costs, we cannot afford subsidies to nuclear generation owners that will risk tens of thousands of good manufacturing jobs."

The Cost to PA

The cost of a nuclear bailout in Pennsylvania would be largely dependent on the mechanism by which the federal or state government approaches the issue. For comparison, recent bailouts in Illinois are projected to cost ratepayers \$2.3 billion over 10 years and in New York, the nuclear industry will receive a projected \$7 billion over 12 years. The recently enacted bailout in New Jersey will cost ratepayers an estimated \$300 million per year.

Poll Results

Question 1: There are five nuclear power generation facilities in Pennsylvania producing electricity. How strongly do you agree or disagree that nuclear power is a safe, clean and reliable source of electricity?		
Strongly Agree	228	38%
Somewhat Agree	173	28%
Somewhat Disagree	72	12%
Strongly Disagree	64	11%
Not Sure/Other	65	12%
Question 2: How strongly do you agree or disagree that competition and consumers should determine Pennsylvania's electricity markets?		
Strongly Agree	266	44%
Somewhat Agree	181	29%
Somewhat Disagree	56	10%
Strongly Disagree	30	6%
Not Sure/Other	69	11%
Question 3: Have you heard about a plan to give nuclear energy plant owners in Pennsylvania financial support in the form of subsidies paid for by ratepayers that may increase all electricity bills?		
Yes, I've heard of it	87	14%
No, I haven't heard of it	472	79%
Not Sure/Don't Recall	43	7%

Question 4: Nuclear power operators say they need financial assistance to keep plants profitable and in operation. Are you willing to pay more for electricity to keep certain nuclear plants profitable and in operation?

Yes	73	12%
No	392	63%
Not Sure/Other	137	25%

Question 5: Do you agree or disagree that, because the nuclear power industry supports jobs in the state, a required amount of power must come from nuclear generation, even if it results in higher consumer energy bills?

Strongly Agree	222	36%
Somewhat Agree	160	26%
Somewhat Disagree	82	14%
Strongly Disagree	20	3%
Not Sure/Other	118	20%

Question 6: Do you agree or disagree that, because nuclear power plants generate cleaner electricity, a required amount of power must come from nuclear generation, even if it results in higher consumer energy bills?

Strongly Agree	228	38%
Somewhat Agree	144	23%
Somewhat Disagree	104	17%
Strongly Disagree	40	7%
Not Sure/Other	86	15%

Question 7: Would you be more likely or less likely to vote for a candidate for governor, state senator or state representative if they supported legislation requiring ratepayers to subsidize nuclear power generators?

More Likely	70	12%
Less Likely	330	52%
Not Sure/Other	202	36%

Question 8: What is your gender?		
Male	290	49%
Female	312	51%
Question 9: What is your age?		
Under 18	8	0%
18-24	16	7%
25-34	25	18%
35-44	67	15%
45-54	156	15%
55-64	157	17%
65 or Older	173	29%
Question 10: Which political party do you identify with?		
Republican	257	41%
Democratic	270	43%
Independent	52	11%
Other/Not Registered	23	5%