



# Renewable Energy: Americans Are Optimistic, But Not Quite Right

What do Americans know about energy?

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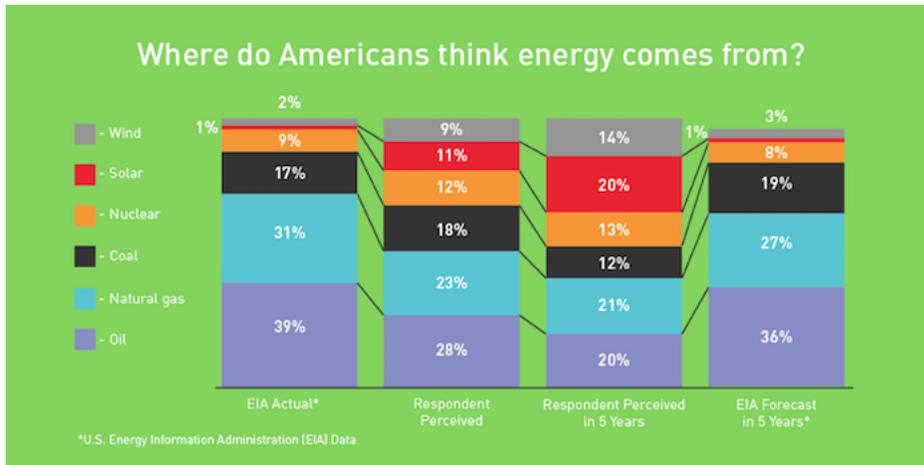
By Andy Beck



Not as much as they think they do, according to a [Makovsky survey](#) of more than 1,000 residents across the U.S.

Turns out that Americans are a bit overly optimistic about the role that renewable energy plays in the U.S. The average American believes that 20 percent of the country's energy use comes from renewables—11 percent from [solar](#) and 9 percent from [wind](#).

The reality is quite different. According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA), solar is at 1 percent and wind is at 2 percent.

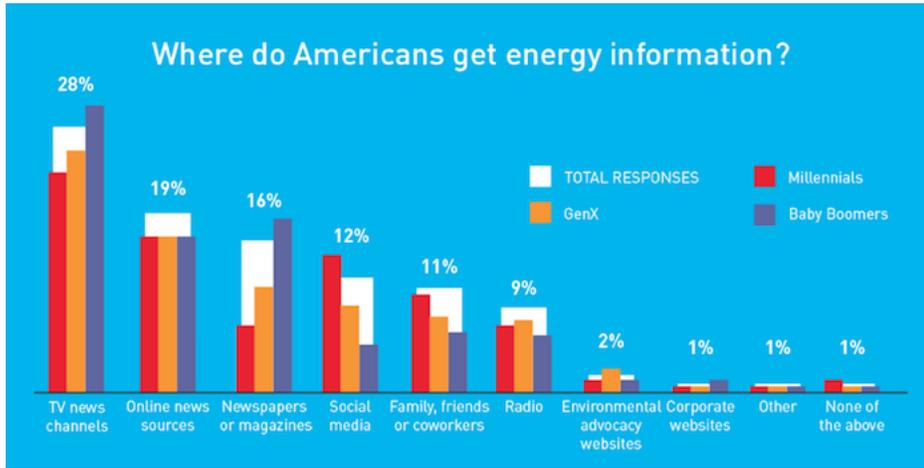


Looking five years out, Americans expect solar to be at 20 percent and wind at 14 percent. That's still optimistic. EIA forecasts that in five years solar will account for 3 percent and wind for 1 percent.

What does this disparity show? It shows that the renewables industry has done a really good job of highlighting its success and positioning itself as the energy source of choice in the American public's mind.

And where do consumers go for information on energy? Well, it's not corporate websites or environmental advocacy websites, according to the survey respondents.

Boomers trust TV news for information; while Millennials also opt for TV news, along with online news sites and social media — way more so than newspapers and magazines.



With more than half of those surveyed (57 percent) reporting that they hear about energy issues a few times a week, these results suggest energy companies across spectrum need to be aware of how Americans want to consume their energy information. And they need to think about strategies that convey trust, stewardship and innovation. A one-size-fits-all approach simply no longer works for any segment of the energy industry.

[There's more in our survey](#) — from what solutions are best to how Americans make energy choices. We'll cover those in another story.

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