



PRESS RELEASE

Pacific Northwest residents worried about electricity costs more than climate change, according to recent polling

New survey shows people concerned about rising energy costs and strongly support our region's hydroelectric system

VANCOUVER, Wash. December 8, 2025 – Pacific Northwest residents are feeling the pressure of rising energy costs, according to recent opinion polling commissioned by Northwest RiverPartners.

In a region with historically affordable energy, residents across Washington, Oregon, Montana and Idaho expressed concerns about electricity costs. Nearly nine in 10 residents, or 88 percent of those surveyed, reported that the cost of electricity is a serious or somewhat serious problem.

Affordability has now overtaken climate change as the top energy concern for Pacific Northwest residents for the second year in a row, according to this survey, challenging a widely held assumption that climate change is the most pressing energy worry. Northwest RiverPartners has partnered with the independent research firm DHM to administer this statistically significant survey since 2007.

“Rising energy costs are impacting folks around the country, but especially here in the Pacific Northwest. We need energy stability to help reduce financial uncertainty for our residents, small business owners and farmers. As the cornerstone of our region’s energy system, hydropower continues to stand out as the leading source of affordable, clean and reliable energy,” says Clark Mather, executive director of Northwest RiverPartners.

To underscore the growing concern about energy costs, according to the [U.S Energy Information Administration](#), between May 2024 and May 2025 the average energy price for retail electric customers in Washington state increased by 12.6 percent, compared to only a 6.5 percent increase nationally.

“When prices rise everywhere—from groceries to housing—energy bills don’t exist in a vacuum,” says LaTasha Wortham, Deputy Director of Customer Experience and External Affairs at Tacoma Public Utilities. “We are seeing a growing number of customers seeking

assistance with their energy bills for the first time. These economic pressures are having real impacts on our customers and communities.”

Despite growing concerns about cost, hydropower maintains broad bipartisan support in the Pacific Northwest. 77 percent of residents surveyed stated they support the use of hydroelectric dams. Hydropower is viewed by residents as a renewable and affordable source of energy, and when asked about removing dams on the lower Snake River, fewer than one in four support it. Half of residents cited rising electricity costs as one of their top concerns with dam removal.

“Right now, families are under intense pressure. We’re talking to parents, seniors and working people who are making impossible choices just to cover the basics like rent, food, childcare and keeping the lights on,” says Alan Walker, executive director of the Chelan Douglas Community Action Council. “When you’re worried about meeting your most fundamental needs, the day-to-day reality is focused on survival.”

To learn more about the residential polling on hydropower and the growing concern about energy costs, visit the Northwest RiverPartners [website](#).

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About Northwest RiverPartners

[Northwest RiverPartners](#) (NWRP) is a not-for-profit, member-driven organization. We represent not-for-profit, community-owned utilities across Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, Nevada, and Northern California. We also proudly represent farmers, ports and businesses across the region that support clean energy and low-carbon transportation.

NWRP is focused on raising awareness about how the Northwest’s hydropower system improves communities and the natural environment, and we encourage science-based solutions that help hydropower and salmon coexist and thrive.