



Third Way • 1025 Connecticut Ave NW, Suite 400 • Washington, D.C. 20036 • 202.384.1700 • 202.775.0430 fax

TO: Interested Parties

FROM: Emily Becker, Deputy Director of Communications for the Climate and Energy Program and Mary Sagatelova, Senior Advocacy Advisor for the Climate and Energy Program

RE: How to Talk About Clean Energy and China in 2024

In recent months, Republican lawmakers have intensified their rhetoric on clean energy, framing a shift to these technologies as anti-American and pro-China because Chinese firms currently dominate the marketplace. Third Way believes that Republicans will make these narratives central to their critique of Democrats' landmark clean energy achievements during this election cycle.

Without a strong response to Republican messaging, that pro-China label will stick. Our central legislative achievement will become a political liability.

What We Did: To understand this dynamic and help Democrats respond to Republican attacks, Third Way partnered with Impact Research to conduct a [nationwide quantitative survey](#) of 800 likely voters, with an oversample of 200 East Asian American voters.

What We Learned: Our polling shows that we have an electorate that views China as America's primary economic competitor and is predisposed to trust Republicans more to handle US-China relations. Voters want to see Democrats taking a tougher stance on our competition with China and ensuring that any deals with Chinese firms serve America's best interests.

Bottom Line: Respondents were more supportive of investing in clean energy when told it would make the US more competitive with China.

What Now: We've included structured talking points below for the two most effective messaging strategies that emerged from our public opinion research.

Talking Points

Strategy 1: Achieving Energy Independence

State Your Long-term Goal: I am committed to building an independent American energy sector, and the truest form of energy independence includes American-made clean energy.

Explain How You'll Do It: Every solar panel, wind turbine, and nuclear plant we install will generate clean and reliable American energy.

Explain Why This Goal is Important: That's critical to reducing our reliance on unpredictable global supply chains and volatile countries like Russia and China. Our vision is clear: more American-made energy to free us from reliance on foreign adversaries.

Acknowledge Any Risks: And let's be clear—we're not walking into the clean energy transition blind. We're making sure that our energy security, safety, and US economic interests are protected in every interaction with foreign firms and in every new project.

Proof Point (customizable depending on the speaker): That's why I have [INSERT ACTION TAKEN].

Strategy 2: Competing to Lead a Key Industry

State Your Long-term Goal: China currently dominates much of the global clean energy sector, posing a critical challenge to our energy and economic security. To safeguard our interests, it is critical that we bring these industries home to the US.

Explain How You'll Do It: Every step we take to further the clean energy transition, from manufacturing components here in the US to deploying clean energy in your community, closes the gap between the US and China.

Explain Why This Goal is Important: When we invest in clean energy manufacturing and deployment, we're building America's future economy and putting American manufacturers in the driver's seat. That protects this country's prosperity and influence for future generations.

Acknowledge Any Risks: We're reducing China's influence in clean energy supply chains, but it won't happen overnight. If a Chinese company has any involvement in a tax-payer-supported energy project, we can and must make sure Americans get the better end of the deal.

Proof Point (customizable depending on the speaker): To make sure of that, I have [INSERT ACTION TAKEN].

Proof Points

Proof points should be tailored to each speaker and emphasize steps they have taken to stick up for America's interests and challenge China's economic dominance. Here are some examples:

- Supporting the work of the House Select Committee on China to step up investigations of Chinese companies investing in the US to make sure these investments don't jeopardize US national security or give the Chinese government greater influence over our economy.
- Voting to steer government support to energy projects with domestic suppliers and severely limit the role China can play in some of our most important supply chains.
- Pushing the Biden Administration to adopt measures that ensure any federal investments in the semiconductor industry prioritize American interests.