

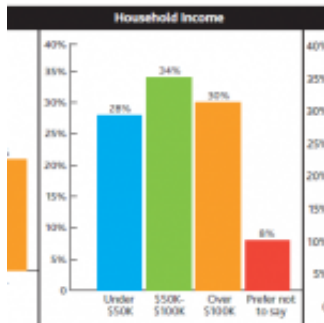
Saving Green the Main Driver for Consumers to Go Green

October 21, 2009

While there are many motivating factors behind the green energy movement, for the average American “saving money” topped the list according to The Nielsen Company’s latest [Energy Trends](#) ^[1] report. Eighty percent of the 32,000 respondents polled cited cutting costs as their main motivation for conserving energy.

Overall, the study shows that many consumers have adopted more environmentally friendly habits, while others have not acted as quickly. “The current momentum surrounding green initiatives and reduced energy consumption presents utilities and home improvement companies with a golden opportunity,” says Jonathan Drost, Account Executive, Energy for The Nielsen Company. “When going green is cost effective, such as opting for Energy Star appliances or government incentive programs, customers migrate in that direction.

The biggest hurdle for energy companies is educating the consumer on things like [Smart Grids](#) ^[2], Energy Efficiency programs and Renewable Green Energy.”

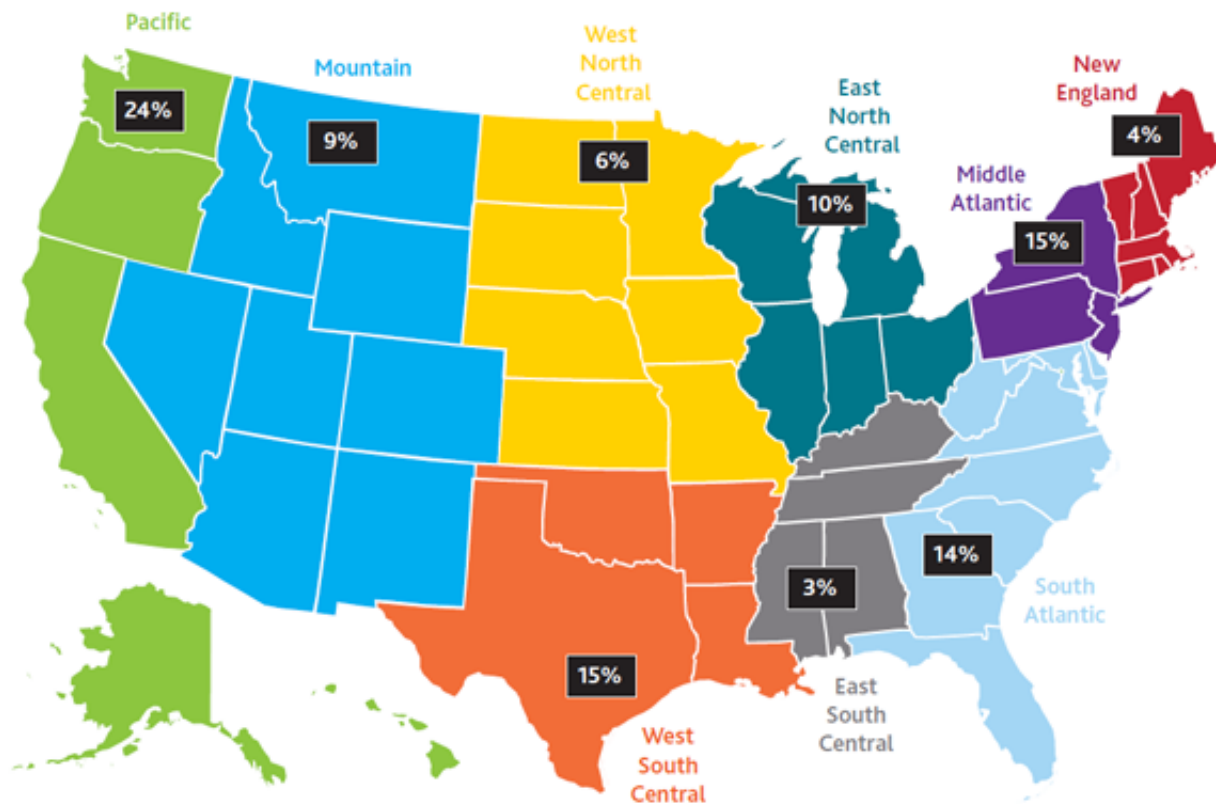


^[3] **Red State, Blue State, Green State, Clean State**

While clean energy and conservation seem like topics on which everyone can agree, consumers participating in green energy programs, like Energy Star tax credits or green pricing programs offered by utility companies, show party line splits. With roughly 3 percent of households participating in these programs, homes identifying as “liberal” or “moderate” are more likely to take part than conservatives.

The level of participation varies widely by region. The west (consisting of California, Oregon and Washington) has embraced green energy programs far more than any other region, comprising 24 percent of all participation. This is due largely to the fact that California has had green pricing programs in place for many years.

Green Energy Program Participation by Region*



*This distribution represents 3% of U.S. households participating in green energy programs.

Source: The Nielsen Company

[4]

Demographically the responses indicate that green energy program participation was greatest among the higher educated and those making over \$50,000. But, surprisingly, a higher proportion of those making between \$50,000-\$100,000 (34 percent) participated compared to those making more than \$100,000 (30 percent). Participants also skewed younger, with 40 percent falling between the ages of 18-34 and 39 percent in the 35-54 year age range. Those above 55 make up 20 percent of those taking part in green programs.

Here Comes The Sun

Renewable energy sources are at the heart of the emerging green economy, and if consumers have any say, solar would be their carbon neutral source of choice. “I believe solar came out on top as a preference because it is a technology that consumers can identify with,” Drost offers. “Not only can a consumer place solar panels on their home or purchase solar water heaters, but also they see retailers installing solar panels on their roof and hybrid cars with solar roof options. It’s been a media hot topic as well.”

Preference for Renewable and Carbon Neutral Sources

Source	%
Solar	37%
No Preference	32%
Wind	16%
Nuclear	6%
Geo-Thermal	5%
Hydro-Electric	4%
Other	> 1%

Source: The Nielsen Company

The Drive for Plug-ins

Plug-in hybrids may help push consumers away from their oil-centricity. While only 3 percent of households

say they plan on buying a plug-in hybrid, an additional 24 percent said they would purchase once the technology becomes more widely used.

Fifty-eight percent of respondents said they would wait until their current vehicle needs to be replaced before running out to purchase a plug-in. Still, there is a core group that remains pro-gas-guzzler. Fifteen percent of those polled said that they would keep buying gas cars until they are no longer available.

“This is an exciting and challenging time in the industry,” says Drost. “We are past the ‘early adopter’ stage in many areas of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy. It will require an increase in education, consumer targeting, and messaging to bring the next wave in. When you consider 95% of Households say they are willing to change the way they consume energy, the next wave could be very, very large.”

- Download The Nielsen Company’s [Energy Trends](#) ^[1] report.

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