

Even as data centers grow more unpopular, Americans remain twice as likely to support ones powered by renewables

New YouGov polling for clean energy think tank EnergyTag, finds this gap holds even as broader anxiety about AI's energy footprint deepens — and that trust in companies' clean energy claims is collapsing

WASHINGTON, Sept. 16, 2026 — Data centers appear to be facing growing public resistance in America according to Heatmap Pro research. But new polling commissioned by [EnergyTag](#) and conducted by YouGov finds one factor still moves the needle sharply: how they are powered.

Americans are **twice as likely to support a data center powered by renewable energy as one powered by fossil fuels** — 34% support versus 16%. Even among Trump 2024 voters, 40% support a renewable-powered data center compared to just 25% for a fossil-fueled one. A rare point of cross-party alignment as public unease about AI's growth and reach continues to build.

The goodwill has limits. 61% of Americans expect data centers to raise their household electricity bills regardless of what powers them. Clean, non-polluting power changes whether people are more likely to accept a data center. It does not yet convince them it will be cheaper.

The polling also finds a trust problem the industry has largely created for itself. **If a technology company claims a data center runs entirely on renewable electricity, 51% of Americans say they don't believe it, compared to just 30% who do.** That distrust is not fixed: companies that proactively disclose gaps in their clean power usage see meaningfully less trust damage than companies caught hiding the same gap behind on-paper credits — a 28% decrease in trust versus a 41% decrease.

"While there are many concerns over data center development, the way they are powered and their impacts on our energy system remain critical issues for communities everywhere." said Alex Piper, Head of US Policy and Markets at EnergyTag. "The fact that support for a data center doubles the moment it brings its own clean power, and that this holds up across party lines, tells you exactly what's fixable here. AI companies have spent their public goodwill on vague claims, and that's run out. Strong, verifiable clean energy standards aren't a threat to AI's growth or US economic development. They're the only way it keeps its license to grow at all."

EnergyTag's [Electron Accelerator](#) policy mechanism, which requires data centers to match clean power to actual hours of use or face penalties for their pollution, was recently named a leading model for sustainable AI development by the House Sustainable Energy and Environment Coalition's (SEEC) [Thriving Economy project](#).

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Editor's notes: All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc. Total sample size was 1,292 adults. Fieldwork was undertaken between 3rd - 4th September 2026. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all adults in the US (aged 18+).

Previous polling data on growing public resistance to data centers from [Heatmap Pro](#).

About EnergyTag

EnergyTag is an independent non-profit dedicated to accelerating the global transition to a truly decarbonized, affordable, and secure energy system by championing clean power delivered round-the-clock. To achieve this, EnergyTag advocates for energy markets and carbon accounting frameworks that reward clean power when and where it is needed. Rooted in our foundational expertise in granular accounting and next-generation energy certificates, we provide evidence-based thought leadership on the integration of round-the-clock renewables, clean-firm power, storage, and flexible demand. By convening a global network of energy buyers, producers, grid operators, and policymakers, EnergyTag drives the market incentives and technical insights required to deliver clean power every hour, everywhere.