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Utilities Lobbying to Slow Energy Transition in United States

New analysis indicates which states could face the most resistance to climate policy

Almost half of the 25 largest investor-owned utilities in the United States are actively pushing back against Paris-aligned climate policy according to a *new report* from climate think tank InfluenceMap, which indicates there is a clear correlation between these companies and a lack of meaningful climate legislation at a state level.

The research shows just four utilities - **Edison International**, **Exelon**, **Public Service Enterprise Group**, and **Pacific Gas and Electric Company** – broadly support robust climate policy. A further ten utilities demonstrate mixed engagement, while the remaining 11 are considered obstructive to Paris-aligned climate policy.

Of these 11 negatively-engaging companies, 9 are the dominant power provider in 14 states, suggesting policymakers in these jurisdictions would likely face “high levels of resistance” to efforts to pass climate policy.

The report notes that the country is at a “crossroads for climate policy,” with the electric power sector currently experiencing an increase in carbon pollution in the post-Covid economic recovery due to a return to coal.

The utilities analyzed in this research operate in at least 42 states – either directly or through a subsidiary. They account for 80% of the total market capitalization of publicly listed utilities in the US.

Key findings from the report include:

- **CenterPoint Energy** (Texas), **Southern Company** (Georgia), and **FirstEnergy Corporation** (Ohio) are among the lowest scoring utilities. These utilities have opposed climate-related policies and/or supported anti-climate measures in recent years. For example, in 2021, **CenterPoint Energy** and **Southern Company** both supported state anti-electrification bills preempting municipal gas bans.
- Many states that have failed to deliver meaningful climate policy have a dominant utility that has lobbied negatively on climate. This is the case particularly in **Alabama**, **Arkansas**, **Georgia**, **Indiana**, **Kansas**, **Kentucky**, **Mississippi**, **Missouri**, and **West Virginia**. Conversely, states where the largest utility is positive on climate have generally seen more success in passing climate policy.
- Industry associations generally score lower than the utilities they represent. For example, the **US Chamber of Commerce**, which represents 11 utilities covered in the report, is considered broadly obstructive towards Paris-aligned policy. At the same time, some of its members are among the highest scoring utilities. The **American Gas Association** (AGA) is similarly out of step with some of its major utility members, some of which even hold board-level positions in the organization.
- Most US utilities follow a strong pattern of advocating for the **long-term role of unabated fossil gas** at all levels of government and, in some cases, opposing governmental interventions to retire coal in the energy mix - positions which starkly contrast with the recommendations of the IPCC.
- Compared with the European power utilities sector, those in the United States are significantly more obstructive towards climate policy. Notably, European utilities which have subsidiary operations in the US - **National Grid** (UK) and **Iberdrola** (Spain) - are both more positive than their US-based operations **National Grid USA** and **Avangrid**, respectively.

Leah Stokes, Associate Professor at the University of California, said in response to the report: *"To rapidly make progress on cutting carbon, we must clean up the power sector. But too many utilities are still delaying acting. This new report from InfluenceMap names names, showing which utilities are leaders and which are laggards."*

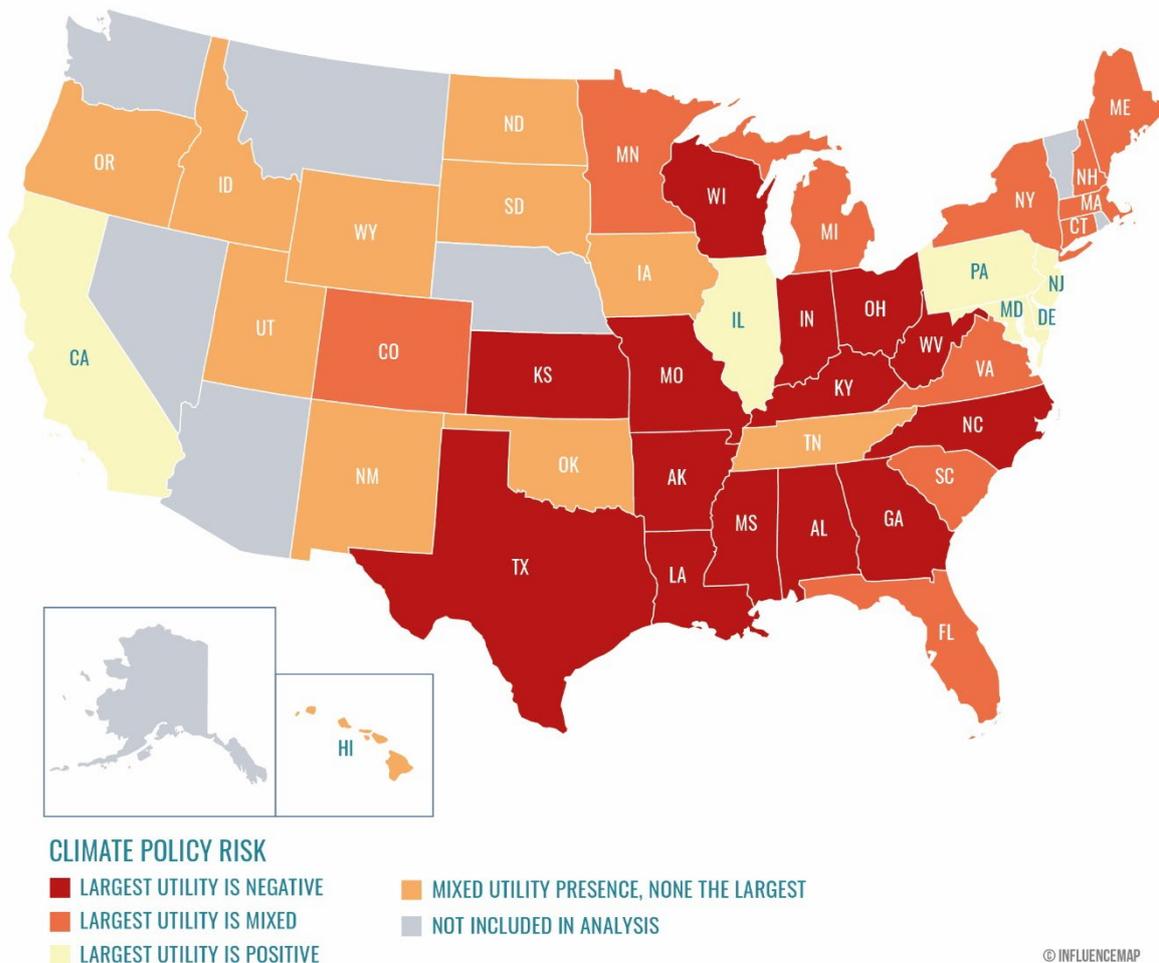
Each of the 25 utilities named in this report were offered the chance to review the analysis relating to their operations and provide feedback prior to release.

InfluenceMap Analyst Emilia Piziak said: *"The power sector in the United States holds immense power when it comes to the direction of climate policy, but it is also very divided over what that direction should be."*

"This research maps out the extensive policy engagement undertaken at all levels of government, showing that some of the most influential voices in this space are opposed to Paris-aligned climate policy."

"While it's impossible to prove absolute causation in this case, it's telling that the states in which the most negative utilities operate are also the states with the lowest levels of climate legislation."

"Understanding how this sector engages with climate policy is therefore critical for how the country responds to the climate crisis – both at a state and national level."



Full report and graphics are available [here](#).

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About InfluenceMap

InfluenceMap is a London-based think tank providing data driven analysis to investors, corporations and the media on issues related to energy and climate change. Our metrics for measuring corporate influence over climate policy are used by investors, including the global Climate Action 100+ investor engagement process.