As the wind industry strives to achieve 20% wind energy by 2030, maintaining high levels of social acceptance for wind energy will become increasingly important. Wind Powering America is currently researching stakeholder perspectives in the U.S. market and reviewing findings from wind energy projects around the world to better understand social acceptance barriers. Results from European studies show that acceptance varies widely depending on local community values. A preliminary survey shows similar results in the United States. Further research will be conducted to refine our understanding of key social acceptance barriers and evaluate the best ways to mitigate negative perspectives on wind power.

WPA conducted a preliminary survey to assess stakeholder priorities on the following social acceptance issues:

- Aesthetics and property values
- Contribution to local economy
- Cost of energy
- Environmental considerations
- Energy security
- Human health and safety
- Land use
- Noise
- Reliability
- Wildlife.

Community Perspectives Vary Depending on Stakeholder Priorities

Support for offshore wind:
- 78% of Delaware residents
- 25% of Cape Cod residents.

Justifications:
- Delaware: Electricity rates, climate change, and air quality outweigh aesthetics. 
- Cape Cod: Marine life, aesthetics, and recreational use are more important than electricity rates and energy independence.

Attachment to place is important in both contexts.


Further Research: Improving Understanding of Social Acceptance

- Create a database of existing surveys
- Implement additional survey work to fill knowledge gaps
- Evaluate the role of state and local planning in facilitating new development
- Support proactive planning processes through State Wind Working Groups
- Assess current developer strategies for facilitating social acceptance
- Evaluate the distribution of benefits from wind energy projects and how local ownership or community payments can reduce local opposition to projects.

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