



2024 SEPA Snapshots Series

POLICY



Introduction

The 2024 SEPA Snapshots Series presents a series of focused, stand-alone chapters (Snapshots) aligned with SEPA’s six focus areas: resilience, transportation, energy storage, emerging technology, policy, and energy equity. Each Snapshot offers a unique perspective on these critical topics within the energy industry. The series draws on insights from two key surveys—one targeting utilities and the other capturing input from broader energy industry participants—as well as project nominations to the 2024 Power Player Awards. With response rates varying across chapters, each section highlights findings and trends. Whether exploring a single Snapshot or engaging with the series as a whole, SEPA Snapshots delivers a versatile and insightful resource built on data-driven perspectives.

Policies and Initiatives to Support the Clean Energy Transition

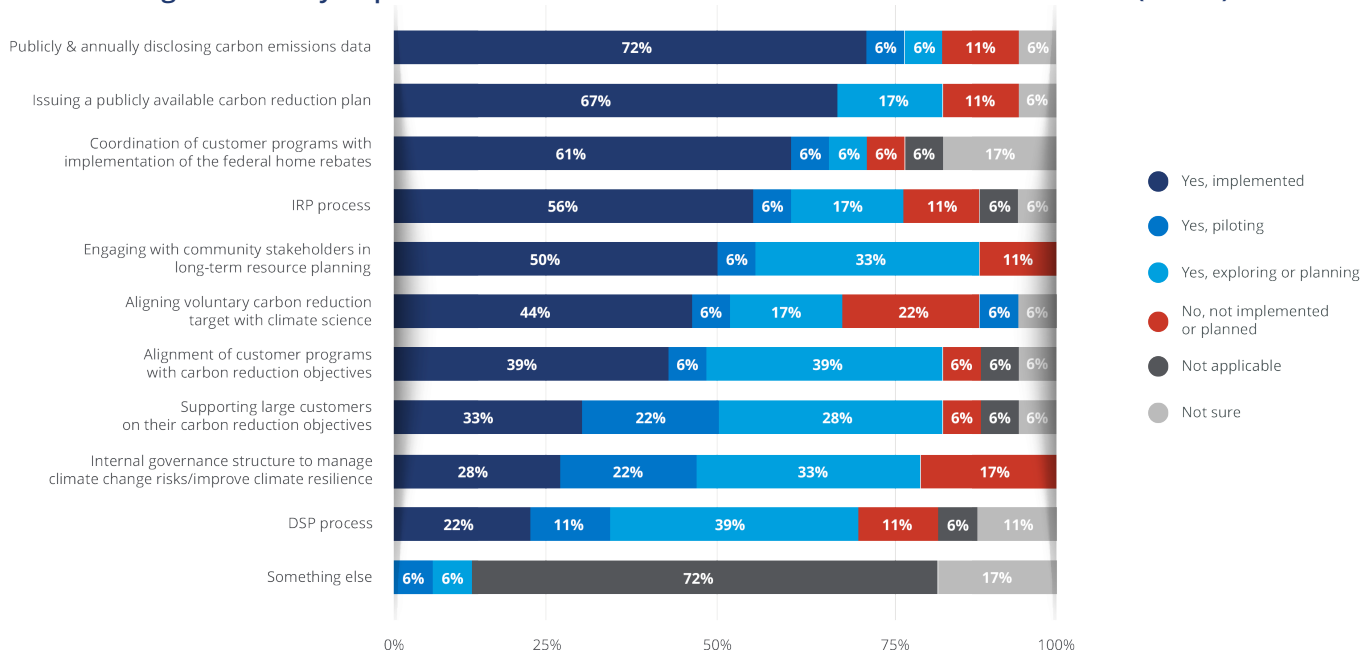
One hundred twenty-seven respondents across the clean energy industry, representing 118 distinct organizations,¹ provided their perspectives on policies and initiatives that can support and accelerate the clean energy transition. For more information about the respondents and methods used, please refer to the Snapshots addendum, which explains the data collection process.

Carbon Reduction Policies & Frameworks

Best Practices

The most widely adopted policy for surveyed utilities is public and annual disclosure of carbon emissions, with 72% of respondents making such disclosures (Figure 1). The second most common practice is making public carbon reduction strategies and goals, with two-thirds of surveyed utilities engaging in this practice. Over half of surveyed utilities incorporate carbon reduction measures into their Integrated Resource Planning (IRP) or other long-term planning processes.

Figure 1. Utility implementation of carbon-reduction frameworks and actions (n=18*)



*The results presented should be considered directional rather than statistically significant due to the sample size.

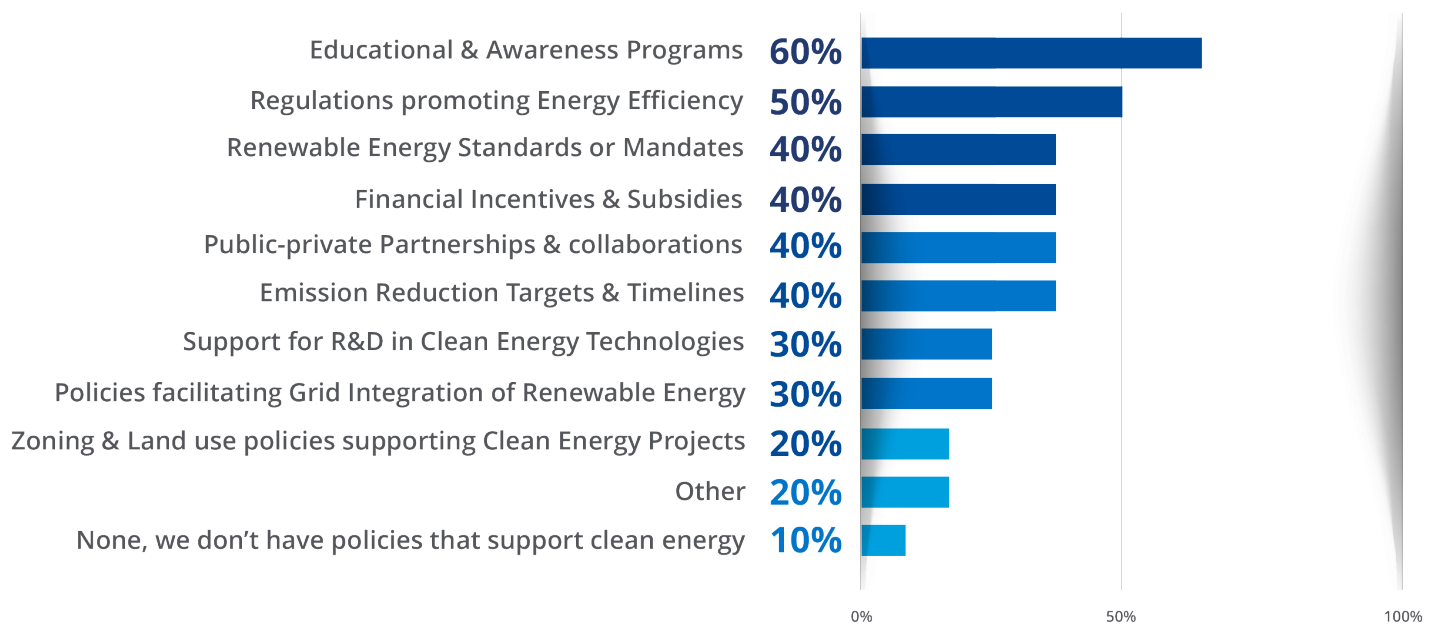
¹ Individual sample sizes from the various audiences and data collection activities will vary in the results sections below.

Some electric utilities surveyed (39%) are also aligning customer programs with carbon reduction goals through various strategies focused on energy efficiency, renewable energy, and electrification. Key initiatives among surveyed utilities include energy efficiency and demand response (DR) programs, community solar offerings, rebates, and voluntary renewable energy subscriptions. About 28% of utilities have established internal governance structures to manage climate-related actions. Similarly, just 22% of utilities reported integrating carbon reduction considerations into their distribution system planning (DSP) process.

On the corporation and industry side, over half (57%) of respondents report internal or corporate policies, processes, or other actions to reduce carbon. These organizations, which include businesses, nonprofits, government agencies, and educational institutions, commonly focus on tracking and reducing their greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by setting targets and goals, making energy-efficient upgrades in their workplace, or purchasing carbon offsets. Many also prioritize sustainable transportation initiatives, such as providing workplace EV charging for their employees or transitioning to green fleets. Other policies and frameworks relate to materials and resource management efforts, work-from-home policies, collaborating with customers or partners on emissions tracking, and having dedicated sustainability teams.

Externally, government agencies primarily focus on educational programs and creating regulations to support clean energy. Renewable energy, financial incentives, public-private partnerships, and emission policies also play significant roles (Figure 2).

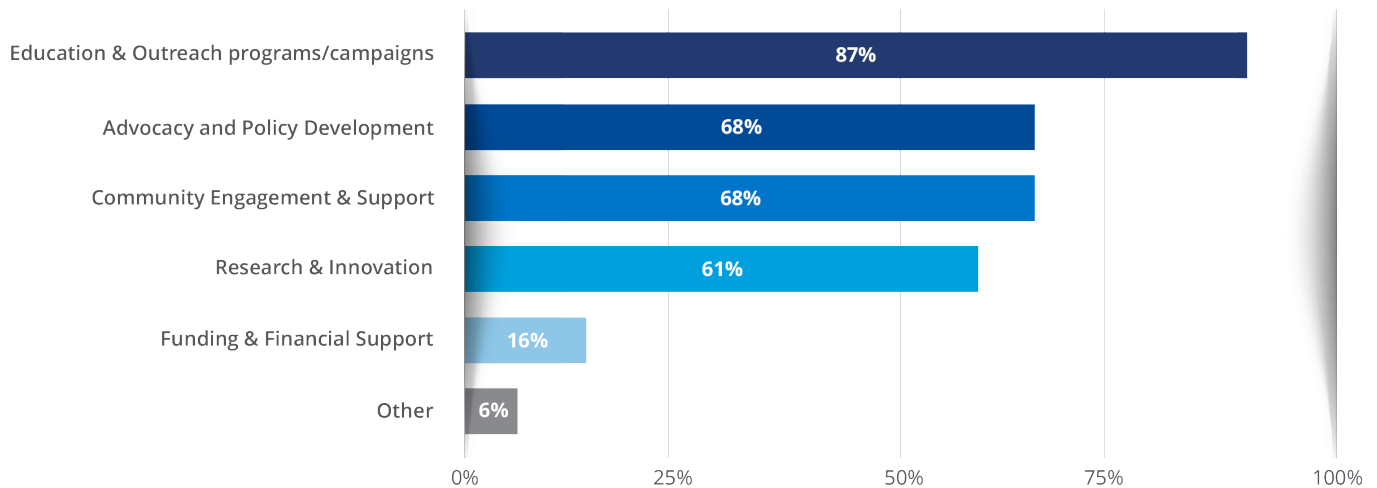
Figure 2. Government implementation or adoption of clean energy policies and regulations (n=10*)



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Nonprofits and educational institutions contribute significantly to advancing clean energy policy and the clean energy transition, with 87% of surveyed representatives reporting a focus on education and outreach programs, similar to government, indicating a strong commitment to raising awareness and influencing public opinion. Just over two-thirds are engaged in advocacy and policy development, while an equal response percentage work on community engagement and support, showing that many organizations play a key role in shaping policies and mobilizing local communities.

Figure 3. Non-profit and educational contributions to advancing clean energy policy (n=31*)



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Impactful Policies, Processes, & Programs

Among the most impactful policies reported among survey respondents is the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), which has enabled direct pay provisions for capital investments and created new opportunities for clean energy infrastructure development. One utility respondent noted, “The IRA has enhanced our progress by allowing direct pay for capital investments.” However, there is a consensus that while the IRA has made a difference, more policy action is needed, as a utility mentioned:



“Policy has enhanced progress, but more policy is needed to remove barriers and to appropriate funds for this transition.”

Utility energy efficiency programs have also played a significant role in supporting carbon reduction. Based on survey results, customized energy audits and incentives for commercial and industrial customers, along with deep retrofits and weatherization programs for low-to-moderate income households, appear to be successful. Respondents emphasized the importance of beneficial electrification, such as switching from propane and natural gas to electricity as being important to aiding in carbon reduction.

Moving Forward

Policies, programs, and initiatives are helping to drive transformative change in the clean energy transition. From carbon reduction frameworks to groundbreaking legislation like the Inflation Reduction Act, these efforts highlight the collective impact of utilities, corporations, nonprofits, and government agencies. Now is the time to accelerate this momentum. Explore SEPA’s research and collaboration efforts to gain actionable insights into policy and programs and join others in shaping a resilient, equitable, and sustainable energy future. Together, we can power progress.



For more information on
Policy projects, initiatives, and
partners please visit:

sepapower.org/our-focus/policy