



# Energy & Environment

## Discussion Guide

### Let's review

*At the start of each discussion, review the conversation ground rules for returning and new members alike to set the stage for active participation by all. You may want to use a timer as you go around the room.*

*And don't forget to decide who will take notes and post a discussion recap.*

- **Be open and curious:** Everyone has a unique perspective, so listen and be prepared to hear a different point of view. Remember, you do not need to share your political affiliation; this is a discussion and exchange of ideas, not politics.
- **Be respectful and engaged:** Be sure that everyone has a chance to speak before adding a second comment or perspective. Encourage each other's participation.
- **Be focused and concise:** Keep the conversation centered on the issue and the brief.

**The "Table-it" Rule:** If the group has gone off-topic but the area is of interest, the group can table the conversation and save it for another time to be addressed in a different manner.

### Let's begin

- Take five minutes to review the [Executive Summary](#) for this brief. Highlight the main point of each section and key statistics.
- Each member is invited to answer the following questions in a **two-three minute reaction** to the brief:
  - Introduce yourself, and share what "lens of care" did you wear when reviewing this brief (e.g. personal, professional, community, state, nation, global)?
  - What did you find most interesting or surprising from reading the brief? What matters?

### Spread the word: facts to share during your discussion

- Fossil fuels accounted for 79% of [U.S. energy production](#) in 2020 (36% natural gas, 32% petroleum, 11% coal), renewable energy accounted for 12%, and nuclear power accounted for 9%. The following chart breaks down production (measured in units of energy).
- China accounts for 28% of [global emissions annually](#), followed by the United States with 15% of global emissions. In terms of per capita emissions, the U.S. ranks fourth with 16.56 metric tons per person and China ranks thirteenth with 7 metric tons per person.
- Total [U.S. fossil fuel subsidies](#) in 2018 amounted to \$592 billion: \$198 billion for gasoline, \$149 billion for coal, \$126 billion for natural gas, and \$119 billion for diesel.

## Let's discuss

*Below are questions for the group to consider and discuss, or choose your own.*

- **Community:** How has your energy consumption changed over the past few years (or not)? If you could choose your energy mix, what would it be?
- **Government:** Should the government subsidize energy development? Why or why not?
- **Business:** Does the private sector have the ability to lead energy transitions? If so, how?

## Let's act

1. **Take it local.** Talk to neighbors, friends, and family. Ask for their views and perspective on sources of energy and environmental impacts. Consider hosting another conversation with other community members.
2. **Explore the impact of legislation related to energy and environment in your community.** On your municipality's website you can find information pertaining to energy and the environment. You can search the various departments, agencies, and programs related to these areas on your municipality's or state's website.
3. **Investigate community programs** in your state or municipality. See what [your state's environmental council](#) is doing. Investigate whether your city or state has a climate action plan.
4. **Research your elected representatives' positions** on energy and the environment, and their vision for how to tackle related challenges. You can find contact information for federal, state, and local government officials [here](#). Your state or municipality's websites will also have information to contact leaders. Try looking at the drop-down menu for a *Government* tab.
5. **Establish a relationship with your legislators.** It's easy to establish a relationship with your legislators. Start by introducing yourself. You can also learn to write to your representatives or set up a meeting with a legislator on [The Policy Circle website](#).
6. **Consider writing a letter to the editor or an op-ed on your stance on energy policies and environmental regulations in your local paper.** Learn how on [The Policy Circle website](#).

## Next Steps for Your Circle

- **Post a Recap:** Summarize your discussion to share thoughts with members not present, and share planned actions from group members. Designate who will post a meeting recap on your circle page.
- **Decide your next meeting topic.** Want to discuss a related brief at your next meeting? Suggestions include:
  - [Government Regulation](#)
  - [Impact Investing](#)
- **Dive Deeper into the issues.** If this is an area you would like to pursue further, consider taking possible steps to influence policy. The Policy Circle offers resources for [developing a message about your issue](#) and [organizing a petition](#) to amplify your voice and raise awareness. Don't miss our [latest events](#) that help you dive deeper on this issue and more.