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active in setting a vision and path for energy strategy, it is the private sector that is advancing the cause to manage resources for cleaner, more resilient, secure and ...

May. 20, 2018



Spurred by consumer demand for eco-friendly practices, many businesses across the U.S. are moving aggressively to reduce their carbon footprint, including a major embrace of renewable energy and alternative-fueled vehicles, according to Deloitte's "[Resources 2018 Study – Businesses Drive, Households Strive.](#)"

The annual survey shows that businesses see addressing climate change as key to

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“Businesses are not waiting for government to act on addressing climate change. They have picked up the gauntlet,” said [Marlene Motyka](#), Deloitte U.S. and global renewable energy leader and principal, Deloitte Transactions and Business Analytics LLP. “They are now driven to double down on their energy management efforts as they view their long-term viability through the climate lens.”

Among the key findings:

- Of the 87 percent of businesses familiar with the U.S. pulling out of the Paris climate agreement, 4 in 10 are reviewing or changing their energy management policies in response, with 75 percent of those increasing their commitment and investment in energy management.
- About 70 percent of customers are demanding companies procure a certain percentage of electricity from renewable sources.
- The number of companies with carbon footprint goals has jumped to 61 percent in 2018, from just over half the year before.
- Sixty-eight percent of residential consumers say they are concerned about climate change and their personal carbon footprints, outpacing the previous high of 65 percent in 2016.
- Nearly three-fourths (74 percent) of residential consumers stated that climate change is caused by human action, up six percentage points from 2017.

### **Renewables rated key to energy independence, millennials tip the scale**

More than three-fourths (76 percent) of survey respondents cited renewables as key for achieving energy independence, jumping five percentage points from 2017. This seems to represent a change in mindset with many respondents now seeing a connection that was once widely thought to be implausible.

In addition, many millennials – greener and “techier” than other generations – see renewables as the answer to their environmental concerns. In fact, 64 percent rank

utilizing clean energy sources among their top three most important energy-related

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Business respondents expect gasoline or diesel vehicles will make up less than half (49 percent) of their transportation fleets by 2020. If so, it would mark the first-time vehicles powered by alternative fuels will constitute a majority of corporate fleets. In fact, businesses are accelerating their efforts to support employees who drive electric vehicles, with well over half (56 percent), offering EV charging stations. Fifty-two percent of these businesses own the charging stations themselves, while 41 percent belong to the building owner.

### **Businesses Turn to Self-Generation for Greater Control Over Energy**

On-site generation also is on the rise as distributed resources are increasingly viewed as being realistic and cost-effective, and as businesses desire greater control over their energy supplies in terms of price, quality and reliability. Fifty-nine percent of businesses now generate some portion of their electricity supply on-site, and of those businesses, 13 percent are using renewables, 13 percent use on-site co-generation and 10 percent are using on-site battery storage.

Nearly half of business respondents are working to procure more electricity from renewable sources, and nearly two-thirds (61 percent) said combining battery storage with renewable sources would motivate them to do more. Additionally, businesses are responding to increased power outages by purchasing backup generators, adding battery storage units, and expanding the amount of electricity they self-generate.

### **Smart home apps not catching on, cyber concerns cooling interest**

Despite support for more innovative energy savings, only 20 percent of respondents have automated home functions, such as smart thermostats. In fact, amid growing reports of hacked home devices, 21 percent of respondents cited privacy and security concerns as a barrier to upgrading their thermostats, compared to 15 percent last year. In addition, penetration of smart thermostats and automation systems remains

very low with only 4 percent using a home automation system and just 8 percent

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industry has a long way to go,” said [Andrew Slaughter](#), executive director, Deloitte Center for Energy Solutions, Deloitte Services LP. “What appears clear is that the electric utility sector’s transformation will likely be one of decentralization, digitalization, and decarbonization driven by business and residential consumer demand for a cleaner, more resilient, secure and affordable energy supply.”

Small Business

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