

# Counter Clean Energy Misinformation with Expert Strategies & Insights

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# Speakers



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# Countering Clean Energy Disinformation

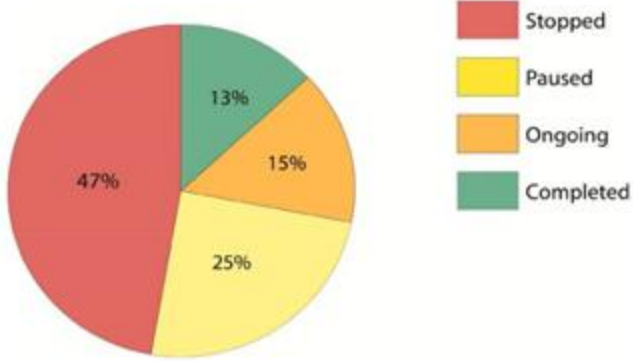


# Clean energy projects are facing local obstacles and delays

**Alex Trembath**    
@atrembath

Sample analysis finds that roughly half of renewable energy projects in the US “ended up being canceled in full after years of delay and stoppage.”

[sciencedirect.com/science/articl...](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/...)



Status	Percentage
Stopped	47%
Paused	25%
Ongoing	15%
Completed	13%

Fig. 7. Current project status as percent of total sample.

12:06 PM · Apr 27, 2022

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## Local opposition to renewable energy projects ‘widespread and growing’: Columbia University report

The report tracks 395 local restrictions on renewable energy development, with 55 of those emerging in the last year.

# Terms to Know

## Misinformation

Information that is **believed to be true** by those disseminating it, and is disseminated **without intention to cause harm**

## Disinformation

Information that is **false** and is **disseminated intentionally** to cause harm

## Malinformation

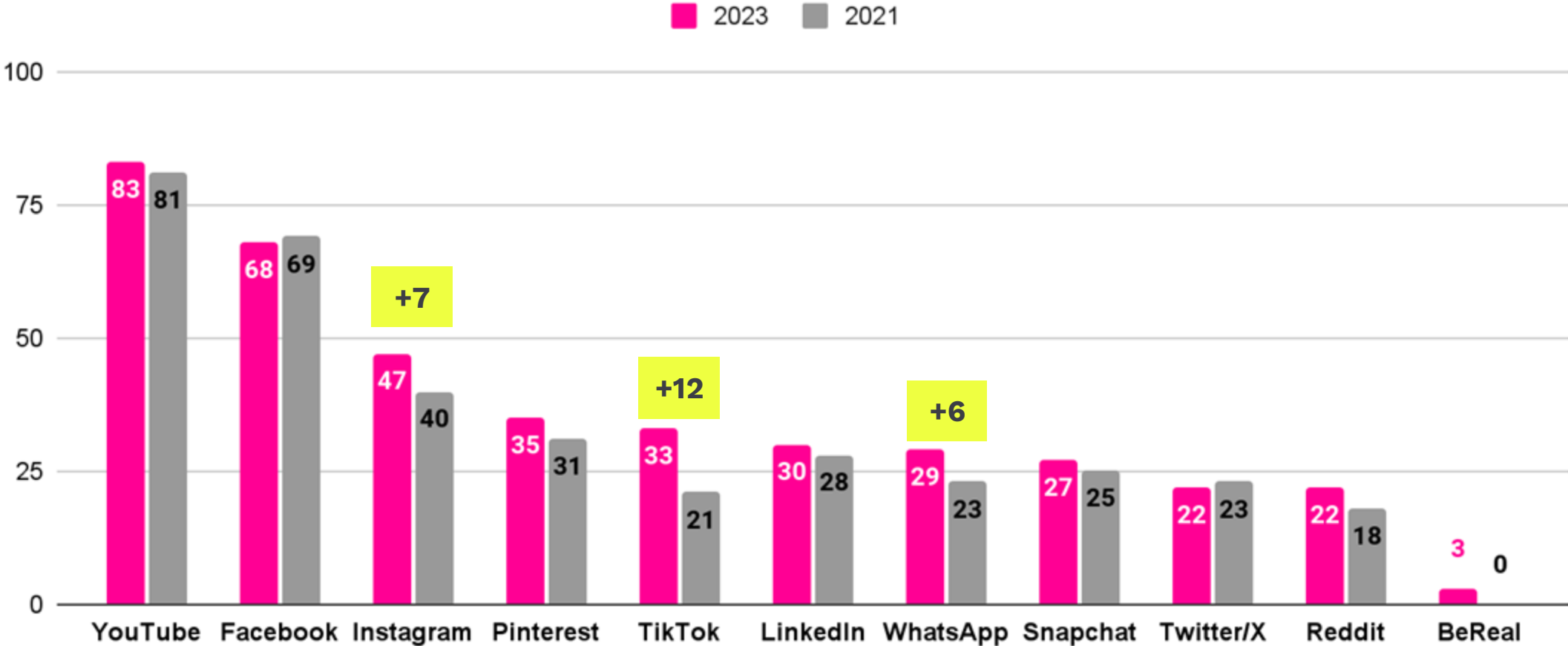
Information that is **based on reality** but is **used to harm or threaten** a person, an organization, or a country

## Propaganda

**True or false information** spread to **persuade** an audience, which is often politically connoted. May use accurate, but selectively presented, information and identified sources.

# Which social media platforms are Americans using?

% of adults who say they ever use...



9 Source: Pew, [Social Media Use in 2023](#)



# Social media is powered by surveillance capitalism

**Social media companies don't make money by selling ads to you...  
They make money by selling YOU to advertisers.**

Includes:

- extensively tracking and profiling users
- targeting ads at us based on our behavior, relationships, and identity

The more time we spend online, the more platforms learn about us and advertise to us.



# Which social media platforms emphasize news/political content?

**Platform updates means more “social” and less “political” content.**

- **Meta** no longer proactively recommends “political” content to users on Facebook, Instagram and Threads.
- **X/Twitter** allows political content, but becoming more extreme
- **YouTube** continues to recommend political content and Is used by many as a primary news source
- **TikTok** will continue to actively recommend new content to users, including political content.



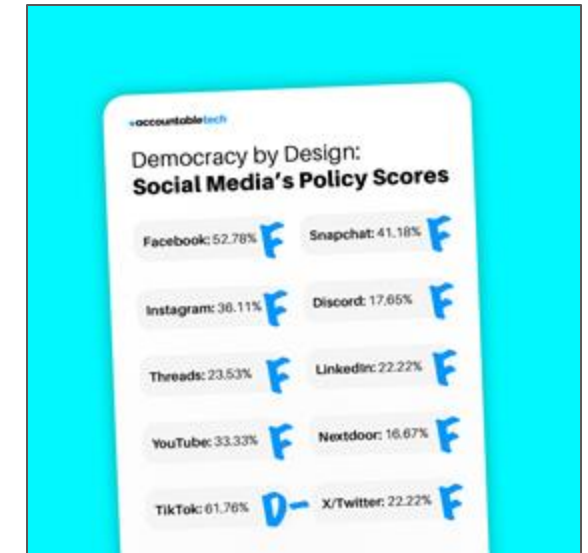


# Social media moderation is poor— and getting worse

**Platforms were already making it easy to evade moderation - it's even worse after tech company budget cuts, which affected content moderation teams.**

Issues with social media enforcement of its policies:

- Inconsistent labeling/removal
- Removal is slow, happens after content has spread widely
- Does not apply to new accounts that repost content after removal
- Algorithms recommend more harmful content to users based on behavior
- Basic efforts like misspellings/symbols can evade detection
- Content is often suspended or labeled rather than removed
- Users are not told that they have interacted with false or harmful content
- Platform policies only cover the most egregious, provably false content
- Moderation is even worse in languages outside English



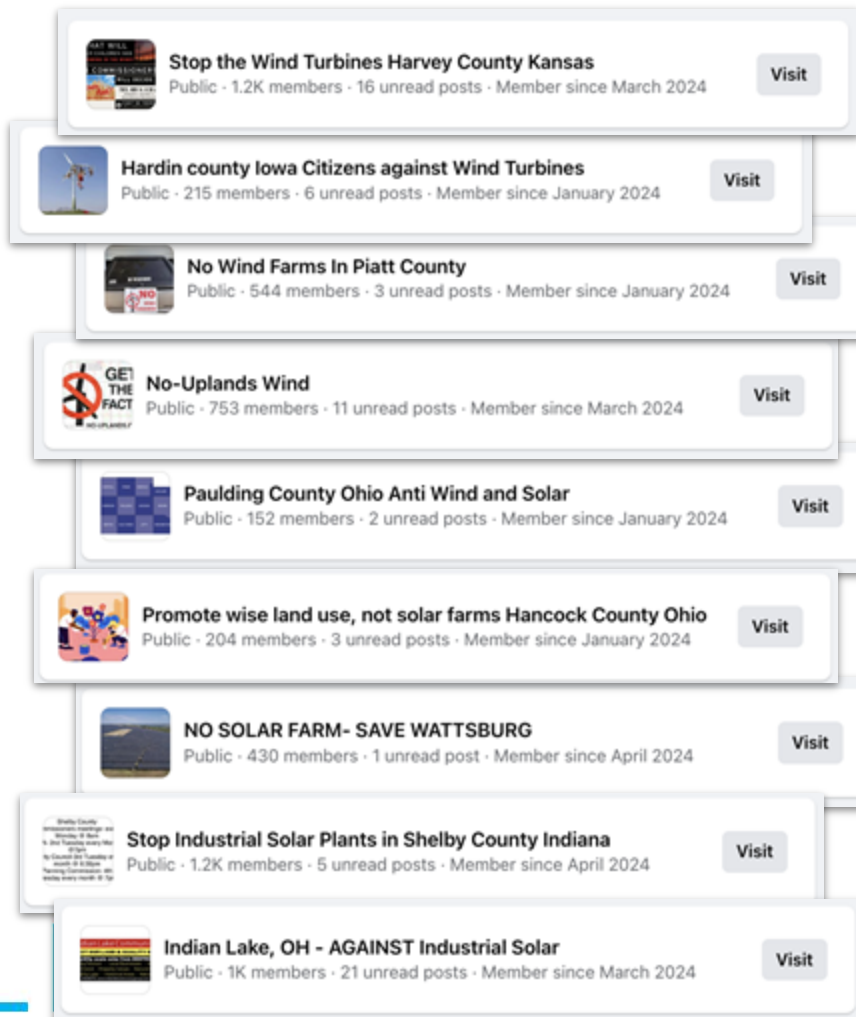
# How opponents disrupt clean energy projects

# Narrative Trends

Below are some of the most common narratives we see week after week, but this is not an exhaustive list of narrative trends.

- 1 Wind turbines kill wildlife and harm ecosystems and habitats.**
- 2 Renewable energy is not “clean” or “green,” and is more harmful than it is beneficial.**
- 3 Renewable energy is not reliable; solar panels/ wind turbines are easily damaged by weather-related events.**
- 4 Agricultural land is being replaced and destroyed by solar panels, compromising our food supply and security as well as farmers’ livelihoods.**

# Tactic 1: Localized Communications



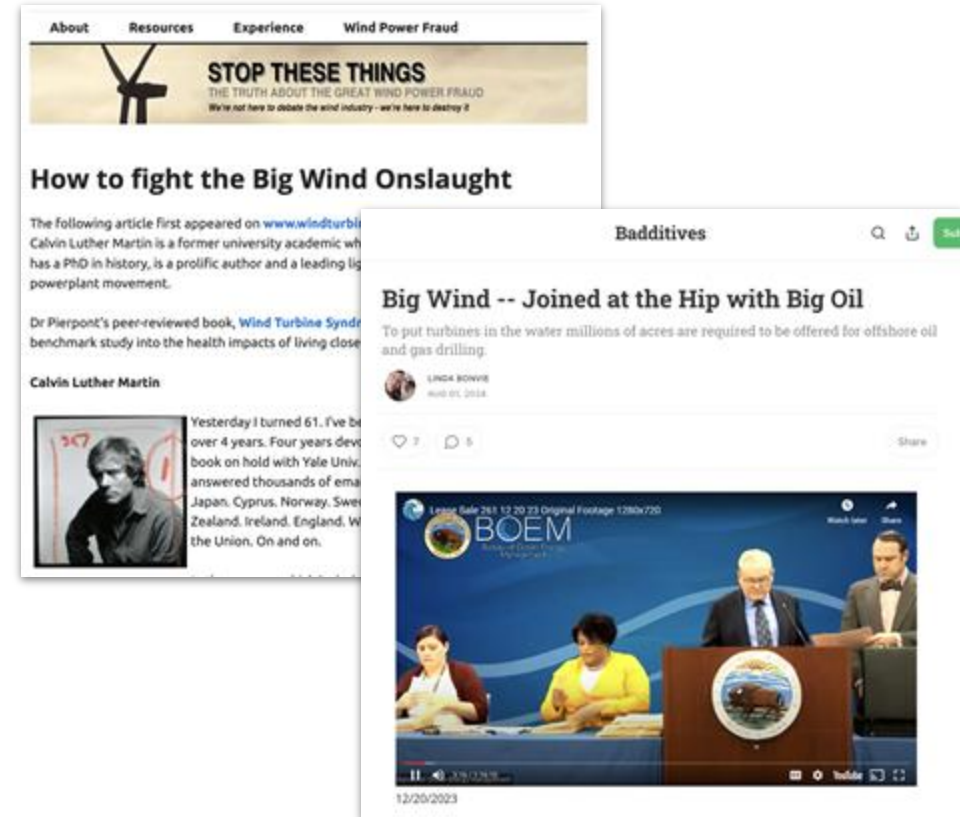
**Narratives are spread in hyper-local networks and spaces like private Facebook groups, creating a neighborly and “in-group” dynamic.**

This tactic taps into the psychological factors that promote trust, meaning content in these groups is less likely to be questioned or debunked.

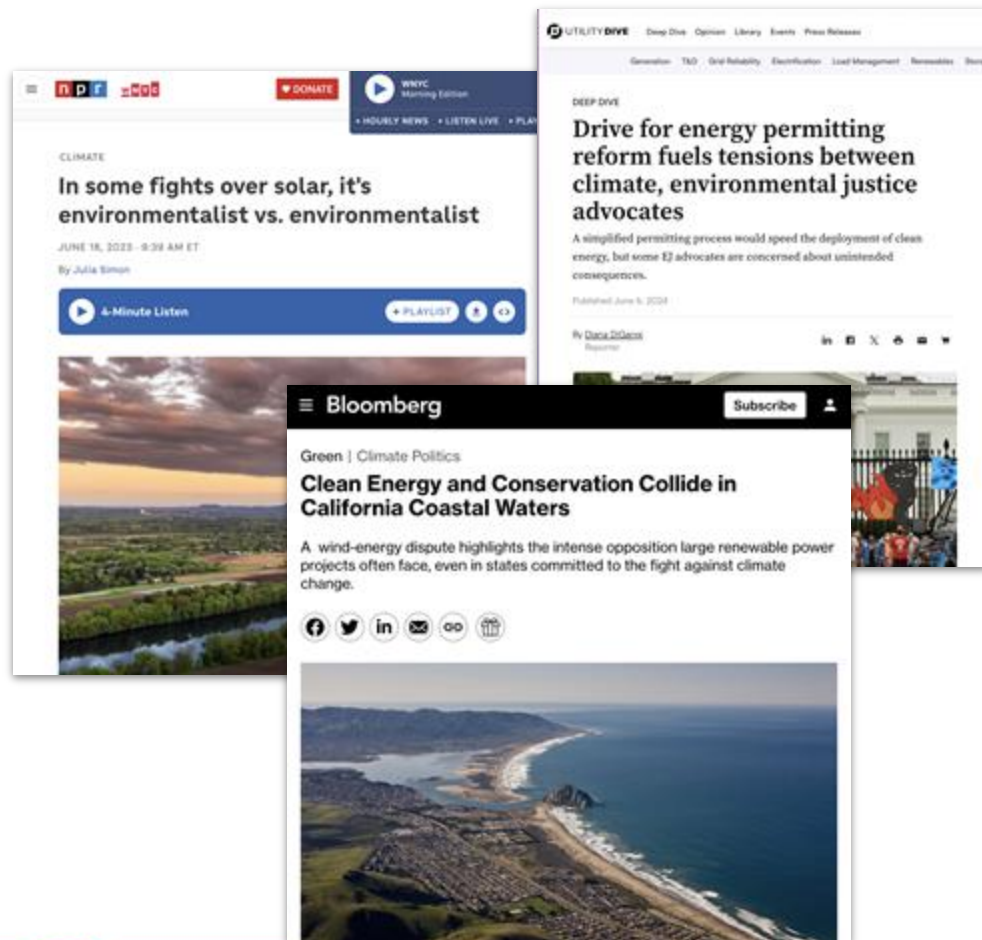
# Tactic 2: Creating an Insider/Outsider Dynamic

**Opponents position developers as big corporate outsiders, looking to profit off local farms or the rural way of life.**

Opponents refer to developers or the industry at large as “big wind” or “big solar,” drawing comparisons to “big oil.”



# Tactic 3: Turning Clean Energy into a Wedge Issue



**Opponents are turning clean energy into a progressive wedge issue, employing tactics to peel off specific constituencies and weaken political support.**

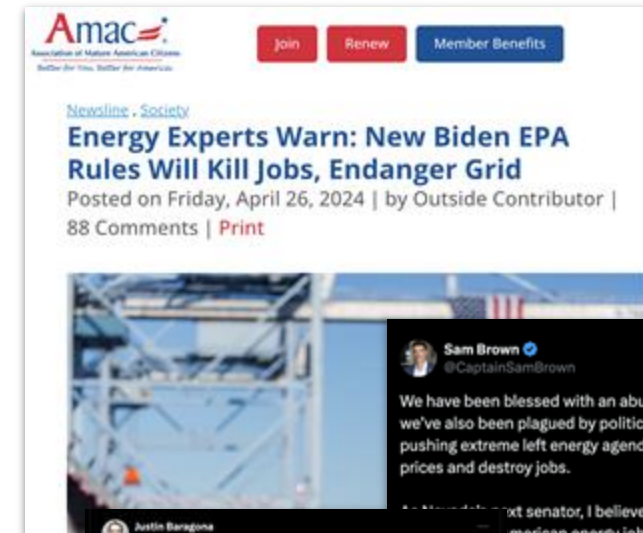
Particularly in an election year, opponents are politicizing clean energy projects for their own partisan gain. They attempt to break up coalitions with a clean energy agenda by identifying and exploiting vectors of attack for each group.

# Tactic 4: Creating False Binaries

Opponents create false binaries between clean energy and other important priorities to force people to choose between two things they care about.

For example:

- You can save the environment **or** the economy
- You can have a strong US **or** strong China
- You can protect wildlife **or** support clean energy



**Thank you!**

