Policy brief

Who will oppose a repeal of the Inflation Reduction Act's clean energy subsidies?

Summary

- The Inflation Reduction Act, passed under President Biden in 2022, is the flagship climate change initiative of the United States, providing tax incentives estimated to be worth up to US$ 730 billion[1] for clean investment over ten years.

- As the Republican Party (GOP) now controls both Congress and the White House, the future of the IRA is uncertain. However, repealing the IRA is more complex than Congressional majorities suggest.

- We identify 32 GOP Congressional Representatives who might oppose a full-scale repeal of the IRA's clean energy subsidies, based on the IRA funds flowing into their district, their prior stance on environmental issues, and their re-election prospects for 2026. Fourteen of them have already declared their opposition in a letter published before the 2024 elections.

- The GOP House majority of three or less may be enough to keep the IRA on the statute books, although probably in an amended form.

Introduction

The Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 (IRA), passed by the United States (US) Congress well over two years ago, is the flagship initiative of the US federal government on climate change. The IRA is projected by the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) in 2023 to deliver up to US$ 730 billion[2] in tax incentives and grants for clean energy production and climate investments in the US over the decade since its passage. A recent assessment by Goldman Sachs suggests that this figure may be even higher, at up to US$ 1.2 trillion.[3] Integrated assessment models by the Rhodium Group have found that the IRA will significantly lower US Greenhouse Gas emissions by 11% more than current policies by 2030 as compared to 2005. This would precipitate a drop of around 660 million metric tons of carbon dioxide (CO_2) per year, by 2030.[4]

However, the future of the IRA is now uncertain. As the Republican Party (GOP) has won a governing trifecta in the 2024 US election, many observers expect GOP leaders to attempt some sort of repeal, though the extent to which they will choose to do so is unclear.[5]

While many, including Speaker Mike Johnson, have indicated that GOP Leadership support taking a "scalpel" rather than a "sledgehammer" to the IRA,[6] it is important to understand the attitude of individual Members of Congress toward the Act.

A focus on the House of Representatives, rather than the Senate, is prudent, due to its shorter election cycles and smaller populations represented, which some scholars have noted provides Congressional representatives with more direct constituent contact than their Senate counterparts.[7]

This Policy Brief analyses the unique political characteristics of each district and its Representative, as well as the total amount of private capital expenditure eligible for major IRA subsidies that has been publicly announced in the district.[8]

Repeal Dynamics

Following the 2024 Congressional elections, the new House of Representatives will have a 3-seat GOP majority (220 Republicans to 215 Democrats—218 required for a majority), representing a 2-seat loss for the GOP. This margin is set to shrink even further to 217-215 as a result of several GOP departures for positions in the Trump administration.

As Democratic candidates will almost certainly vote against any repeal of the IRA,[9] it will only take a few dissenting GOP voices to derail a possible major repeal of the IRA's clean energy subsidies.

We assessed the likelihood of GOP House Representatives to oppose an IRA repeal bill based on three criteria, using a simple marking system (See Annex 1).

- Total publicly-announced private capital expenditure (CAPEX) on clean energy projects in the Representative's district from 16 August 2022 to 30 September 2024 using data from MIT and the Rhodium Group.[10] The higher the flow of clean energy CAPEX, the more likely a Representative will be to vote against a repeal. CAPEX on clean energy projects is correlated with IRA funding. Therefore, if the project was announced since the passage of the IRA, we can assume it was done so with the intention of receiving IRA subsidies.

- How contested their home district is, based on the Cook Political Report (CPR). CPR includes seven designations: 'Solid', 'Likely' and 'Lean' GOP; 'Tossup'; and, 'Lean', 'Likely' and 'Solid' Democrat. We assume that GOP Representatives are more likely to oppose a repeal, the more contested (i.e. Democrat-leaning) their district.

- The general stance of a Representative towards environmental protection, based on the 'Lifetime Score' from the League of Conservation Voters (LCV).[11]

Of these three factors, the allocation of clean energy CAPEX is particularly striking, and potentially decisive. Over three quarters of IRA-related CAPEX has been channelled into GOP-held districts (Table 1).

Table 1: Private Capital Expenditure into Congressional Districts by Party Representation

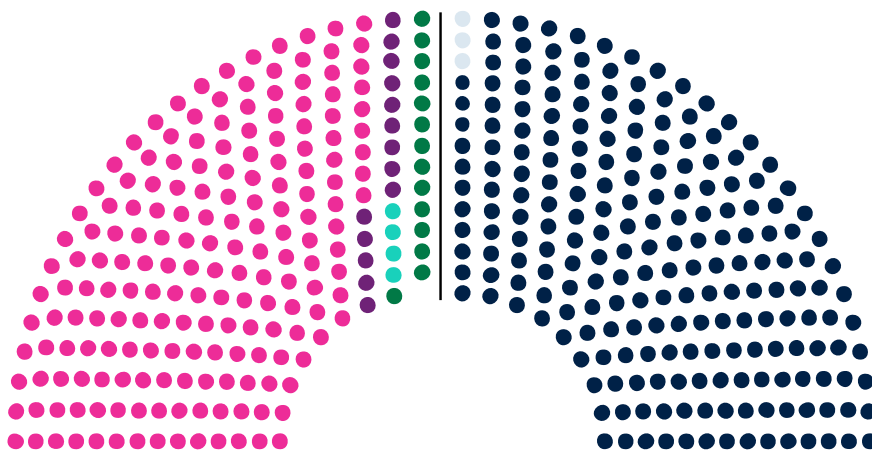| District Data	GOP Districts	DEM Districts	Total
CAPEX (Million USD)	326,588.94	94,535.01	421,123.95

Note: As many previous geographic analyses of IRA spending have included extraneous funding from the "Creating Helpful Incentives to Produce Semiconductors" for America (CHIPS) and Science Act or the Bipartisan Infrastructure Act, it was necessary to recalculate using data from the Rhodium Group and MIT. This data was then run through Google APIs to ascertain their corresponding congressional districts.

GOP Representatives to watch

Our district-by-district analysis identified 32 GOP Representatives who might vote against a possible repeal (Figure 1), more than enough to flip a potential vote.

Figure 1: Potential GOP Representatives opposing a wide-scale repeal of IRA clean energy subsidies

- ● Democrats (Presumed Opponents): 215
- ● Medium-Likelihood GOP Opponents: 14
- ● High-Likelihood GOP Opponents: 4
- ● Declared GOP Opponents: 14
- ● Low-Likelihood GOP Opponents: 185
- ● Presumed Vacancies as of January 20th, 2025: 3

There are fourteen GOP "declared opponents" who have indicated their opposition to a major IRA repeal in an open letter published before the 2024 elections (Box 1).[12]

Box 1: Declared opponents of an IRA repeal

Ahead of the 2024 elections, 18 House Republicans, led by Rep. Andrew Garbarino (R-NY), signed a letter addressed to House Speaker Mike Johnson (R-LA) on August 6th 2024, imploring him not to repeal the clean energy subsidies contained in the IRA should the GOP hold control over all of Congress in 2025. Three of these GOP signatories (Anthony D'Esposito (R, NY-04), Marc Molinaro (R, NY-19), and Lori Chavez-DeRemer (OR-07)) subsequently lost their seats to Democrats while John Curtis (R, UT-03) resigned to take up a Senate seat, leaving the following 14 signatories:

Andrew Garbarino (R, NY-02),

David Valadao (R, CA-22),

Erin Houchin (R, IN-09),

Michael Lawler (R, NY-17),

Jen Kiggans (R, VA-02),

Nick LaLota (R, NY-01),

Young Kim (R, CA-40),

Don Bacon (R, NE-02),

Thomas Kean Jr. (R, NJ-07),

David Joyce (R, OH-14),

Mariannette Miller-Meeks (R, IA-01),

Juan Ciscomani (R, AZ-06),

Earl "Buddy" Carter (R, GA-01),

Mark Amodei (R, NV-02).

These 14 signatories to the letter might be joined by another 18 Representatives, who have not yet declared their intentions, but might be inclined to vote against a major repeal (Table 1). The most likely opponents are GOP Congressmen from competitive districts in California and prominent swing states, but the list also includes Rep. Tony Gonzales (TX-23), whose solid Republican district has received over US$ 7.2 billion in private clean energy capital expenditure and Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick (PA-01), who has the strongest environmental voting record among Republicans, with a LCV score of 71%.

Table 2: Most likely opponents of a wide–scale repeal of IRA clean energy subsidies

Representative	District	CAPEX (as of September 30, 2024) in Million USD	District Status (Cook Political Report)	LCV Score	Total Score
Ken Calvert	CA-41	2,257.38	Tossup	8%	6
Derrick Van Orden	WI-03	1,525.27	Lean GOP	14%	6
Tom Barrett	MI-07	987.71	Lean GOP	32%	6
Ryan Mackenzie	PA-07	134.78	Tossup	14%	6
Kevin Kiley	CA-03	4,647.79	Likely GOP	19%	5
Gabe Evans	CO-08	727.42	Tossup	Unknown	5
Zach Nunn	IA-03	210.23	Tossup	8%	5
Tony Gonzales	TX-23	7,244.84	Solid GOP	13%	4
Eli Crane	AZ-02	2,860.45	Likely GOP	3%	4
Monica De La Cruz	TX-15	2,146.18	Likely GOP	0%	4
Mike Simpson	ID-02	1,448.64	Solid GOP	10%	4
Ashley Hinson	IA-02	1,090.86	Solid GOP	13%	4
Jeff Hurd	CO-03	804.85	Lean GOP	Unknown	4
Bryan Steil	WI-01	654.41	Likely GOP	13%	4
John James	MI-10	95.82	Lean GOP	14%	4
Scott Perry	PA-10	87.34	Tossup	2%	4
Nick Begich III	AK-AL	15.94	Tossup	Unknown	4
Bryan Fitzpatrick	PA-01	0	Likely GOP	71%	4

Note: *Scores are per the classification system introduced in Annex 1. 9–6 = highly likely opponent; 5–4 = medium likely opponent; <4 = unlikely opponent. Excluding declared opponents (Box 1).*

A particularly important factor in voting intentions is likely to be the IRA–supported capital flows into a district. Table 3 lists the top 25 GOP Representatives by private capital expenditure (CAPEX) eligible for IRA Clean Energy Subsidies in their districts. We compiled a list of all 220 GOP representatives by CAPEX, and by total score.

Table 3: GOP Representatives by Private CAPEX Eligible for IRA Clean Energy Subsidies

GOP Representative	District	CAPEX (as of September 30, 2024) in Million USD	Race Status (Nov. 1 2024)	Lifetime LCV Score	Signatory of August 6th Letter
Richard Hudson	NC-09	12773.66	Solid GOP	4%	No
August Plufger	TX-11	11404.59	Solid GOP	0%	No
Troy Nehls	TX-22	10368.17	Solid GOP	1%	No
Mark E. Amodei	NV-02	10261.58	Solid GOP	7%	YES
Randy K. Weber	TX-14	8773.91	Solid GOP	1%	No
Paul Gosar	AZ-09	8670.77	Solid GOP	4%	No
Michael Cloud	TX-27	8289.80	Solid GOP	0%	No
Barry Loudermilk	GA-11	7419.90	Solid GOP	1%	No
Jake Ellzey	TX-06	7355.90	Solid GOP	7%	No
Tony Gonzales	TX-23	7244.84	Solid GOP	13%	No
Ronny Jackson	TX-13	6941.17	Solid GOP	0%	No
Harriet Jackson	WY-AL	6822.59	Solid GOP	0%	No
Mark Messmer	IN-08	6410.81	Solid GOP	7%	No
Jodey Arrington	TX-19	6389.97	Solid GOP	1%	No
Celeste Maloy	UT-02	6342.13	Solid GOP	0%	No
Pete Sessions	TX-17	6249.21	Solid GOP	3%	No
Darin LaHood	IL-16	6071.13	Solid GOP	5%	No
Rudy Yakym	IN-02	5947.84	Solid GOP	3%	No
Adrian M. Smith	NE-03	5371.82	Solid GOP	4%	No
Clay Higgins	LA-03	5121.57	Solid GOP	2%	No
Brian Babin	TX-36	5045.12	Solid GOP	1%	No
Pat Fallon	TX-04	4985.39	Solid GOP	1%	No
Kevin Kiley	CA-03	4647.79	Likely GOP	19%	No
Tim Walberg	MI-05	3882.93	Solid GOP	4%	No
Nick LaLota	NY-01	3881.78	Likely GOP	14%	YES

Limitations

Predicting voting intentions can only ever be indicative. Many factors will play a role. Our analysis only accounts for private capital expenditure on clean energy eligible for IRA subsidies, particularly those in the dataset gathered by MIT and Rhodium Group. There are numerous IRA programs that our analysis does not account for, including individual tax credits as well as government loan and grant programs. The CAPEX flowing into particular districts also may not be supported by every IRA tax credit. Therefore, a Representative with a new green hydrogen plant under construction may only be inclined to keep tax credits that benefit the project if it is the only major clean energy investment in their district. Additionally, while the Cook Political Report provides an encapsulation of district race dynamics, they were created for the 2024 elections, not subsequent ones. Lastly, many new House Representatives are missing a League of Conservation Voters Score, due to their lack of voting histories. All of these limitations could affect our judgements of which candidates are 'most likely' to oppose a large-scale repeal of the IRA.

Additionally, it is quite difficult to predict how Representatives will vote after a sustained vote-whipping effort from GOP leadership; even some representatives who signed the August 6th Letter opposing a large-scale repeal may be forced into a 'Yea' vote. There are complex internal dynamics on Capitol Hill that we simply cannot account for.
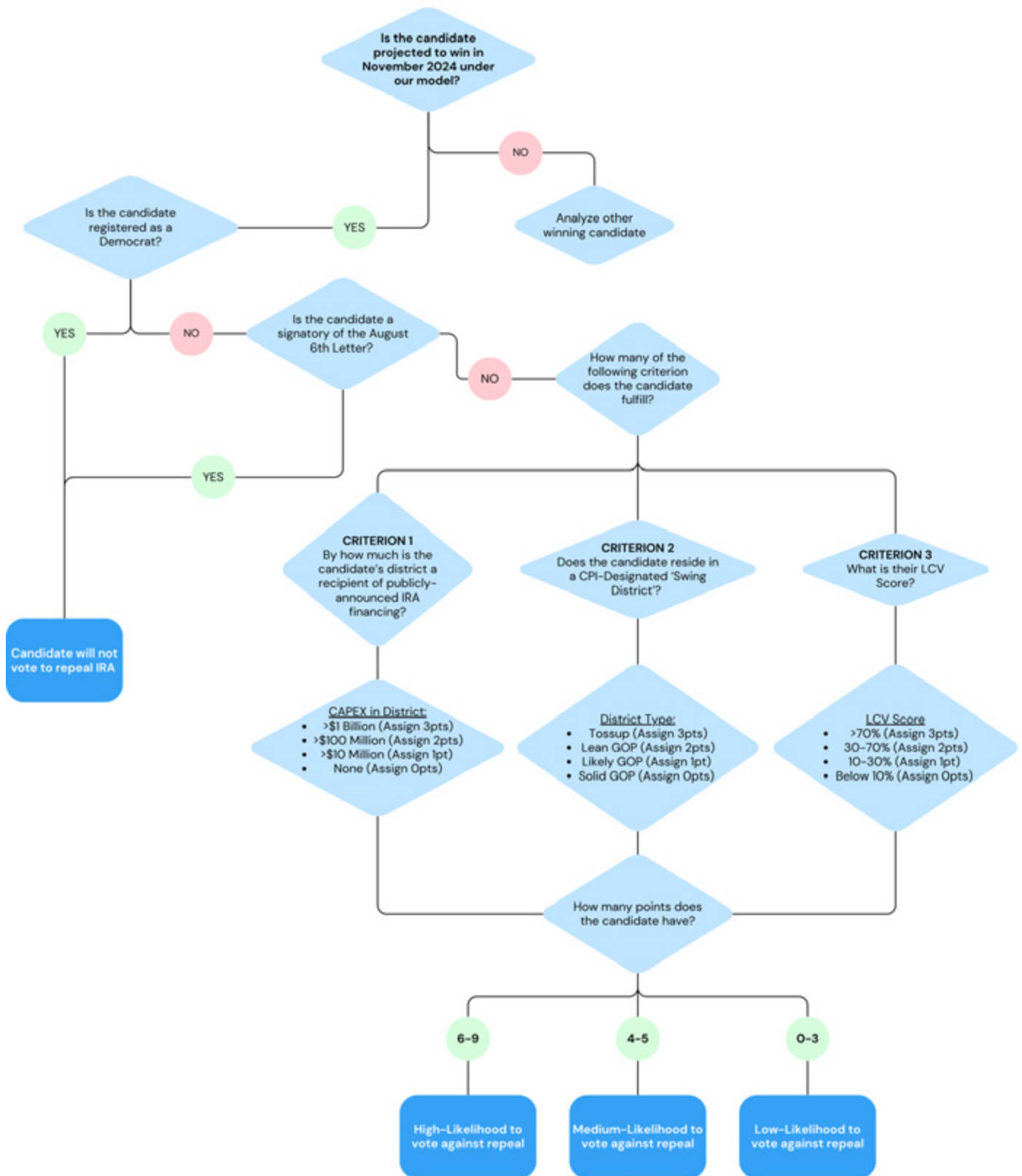
Nevertheless, it seems clear that there is enough GOP opposition to make the wholesale, or even large-scale repeal of the IRA a difficult political proposition.

Conclusions

As indicated by comments from GOP leadership and given the realities of small-margin majorities, it is likely that any GOP repeal effort will not target the entire Inflation Reduction Act of 2022. A potential repeal will most likely focus on rolling back a narrow set of programs. For example, much GOP ire has focused on electric vehicle tax credits, with House Speaker Mike Johnson pledging to prioritize their repeal in early January.[13] One likely outcome is that the GOP repeals these EV credits and yet leaves many others intact. Other parts of the IRA that could be targeted for a repeal include the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund, Methane Emissions Reduction Program, and the energy efficiency rebate.[14]

Nevertheless, our analysis can tell us a great deal about the Representatives most likely to oppose a large-scale repeal of the IRA's major clean energy provisions, including the Credit for Electricity Produced from Renewable Sources, the Clean Energy Investment Credit, Residential Clean Energy Credit, Zero-Emission Nuclear Power Production Credit, and the Advanced Manufacturing Production Credit. Given the vast amount of capital that is flowing into certain congressional districts represented by GOP Representatives, totalling over US$ 327 billion as of September 2024, it will be difficult for the House GOP leadership to repeal much of the IRA. As Budget Reconciliation negotiations get underway, the Representatives identified in our analysis will be the Representatives to watch as bellwethers for the future of the IRA.

Annex 1: Decision Tree for Analysing the Likelihood for a No-repeal Vote

Is the candidate projected to win in November 2024 under our model?

NO → Analyze other winning candidate

YES → Is the candidate registered as a Democrat?

YES → Candidate will not vote to repeal IRA

NO → Is the candidate a signatory of the August 6th Letter?

YES → Candidate will not vote to repeal IRA

NO → How many of the following criterion does the candidate fulfill?

CRITERION 1
By how much is the candidate's district a recipient of publicly-announced IRA financing?

CAPEX in District:
- >$1 Billion (Assign 3pts)
- >$100 Million (Assign 2pts)
- >$10 Million (Assign 1pt)
- None (Assign 0pts)

CRITERION 2
Does the candidate reside in a CPI-Designated 'Swing District'?

District Type:
- Tossup (Assign 3pts)
- Lean GOP (Assign 2pts)
- Likely GOP (Assign 1pt)
- Solid GOP (Assign 0pts)

CRITERION 3
What is their LCV Score?

LCV Score
- >70% (Assign 3pts)
- 30-70% (Assign 2pts)
- 10-30% (Assign 1pt)
- Below 10% (Assign 0pts)

How many points does the candidate have?

6-9 → High-Likelihood to vote against repeal

4-5 → Medium-Likelihood to vote against repeal

0-3 → Low-Likelihood to vote against repeal

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7   Frederick, Brian. Congressional Representation & Constituents. Routledge, 2010.

8   This Policy Brief draws on Mihan, N. 2024. Surviving the Red Wave: A Critical Analysis of the Inflation Reduction Act's Political Durability after the 2024 Election. MSc Dissertation, Smith School of Enterprise and the Environment. All the data and information on which this analysis was based can be found at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/387897332_Surviving_the_Red_Wave_A_Critical_Analysis_of_the_Inflation_Reduction_Act%27s_Political_Durability_after_the_2024_Election?channel=doi&linkId=67814e2d32c79152e3c7c488&showFulltext=true

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10   MIT, and Rhodium Group. "The Clean Investment Monitor – Rhodium Group." Rhg.com, 15 July 2024, rhg.com/energy-climate/data-and-tools/clean-investment-monitor/. Accessed 23 July 2024.

11   The LCV scoring system divides the number of "pro-environment" votes (as determined by a Scorecard Advisory Committee) by the total number of votes on issues dealing with the environment.

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Acknowledgments