

DRAFT: Please Do Not Quote or Cite

Are the loudest voices in the room different? Testing preferences for engaged versus random samples.

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Abstract:

This study estimates and compares willingness to pay values from a choice experiment for solar siting attributes between two groups: a random sample of Rhode Island residents and a sample of engaged individuals. Our results suggest that the preferences of engaged and random sample respondents are similar for a majority of attributes. However, there are large differences in willingness to pay magnitudes, with engaged respondents willing to pay two to four times more than random sample respondents. We advise caution while generalizing valuation estimates derived from convenience samples, though the overall preferences can be said to be representative of the population at large.

Keywords: Convenience sample; Contingent valuation; Utility-scale solar; Willingness to pay

JEL codes: C83; Q24; Q42; Q51

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