

CISION GLOBAL MEDIA INSIGHTS

ESG IN ENERGY Q2 ANALYSIS

CISION
Insights



ESG conversations in the energy industry shift from speculation over corporations' ability to survive climate change in Q1 to increased pressure to reduce emissions and adapt to a shifting energy landscape in Q2.

Major revenue losses in the wake of the pandemic and the discovery of a new oil field in Suriname in early Q1 sparked a discussion over how traditional energy majors will survive in a world with diminishing oil resources and increasing awareness of the impact of climate change ([New York Times](#), [New York Times](#)).

However, the industry seemed to turn a corner in March with the American Petroleum Institute's surprise backing of a federal carbon price ([Yahoo](#)) and as major companies responded to investor pressure to adopt clean energy, as seen by Exxon's move to add two activists to its board ([New York Times](#)).

The trend toward embracing sustainable strategies extended across Q2 as Exxon continued to lead the way with a proposal for a \$100 billion carbon capture project in April ([Forbes](#)). However, in May, conversations around the energy industry's role in climate change were overshadowed by the Colonial pipeline attack, with the majors warning of potential gas shortages and sharing planned adjustments to maintain supply for anxious consumers ([MSN](#)).

June saw a renewed wave of interest in the energy industry's role in transforming to a cleaner energy landscape as Exxon fought against investors seeking to branch out from oil and gas to more sustainable resources ([New York Times](#)), paving the way for Shell to take leadership of the conversation with a new strategy to back green energy investments and reduce emissions ([New York Times](#)).

Q2 By the Numbers

12.8 K articles

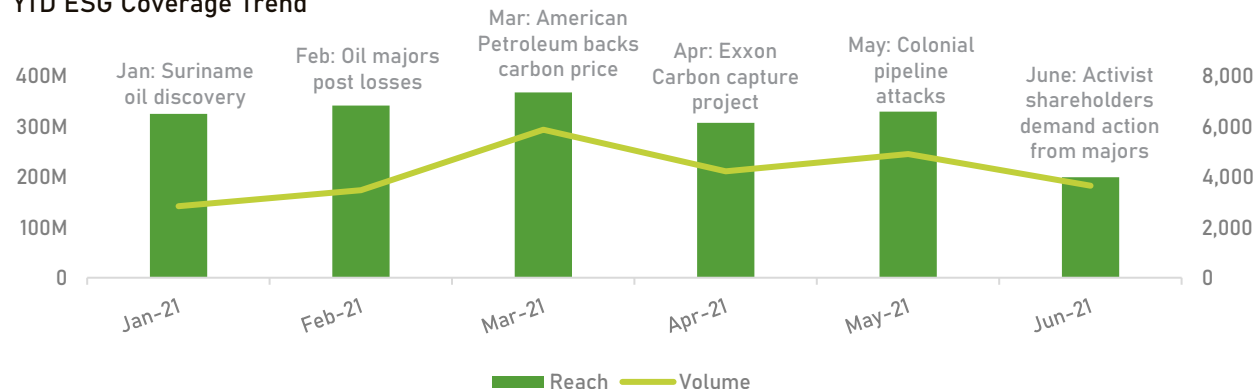
834.6 M reach

65.4 K avg.
reach/article

Q2 Top ESG Topics (Reach)

- 183M Climate change: [Biden administration called to stop greenwashing](#); [Big setbacks propel oil giants toward a tipping point](#)
- 72M Renewable energy: [Shell, Renault interested in Ionity stake](#); [Shell's green energy strategy](#)
- 25M Innovation: [Companies ignoring climate change will be on the wrong side of history](#)

YTD ESG Coverage Trend



Energy industry faces increased pressure to address climate change.

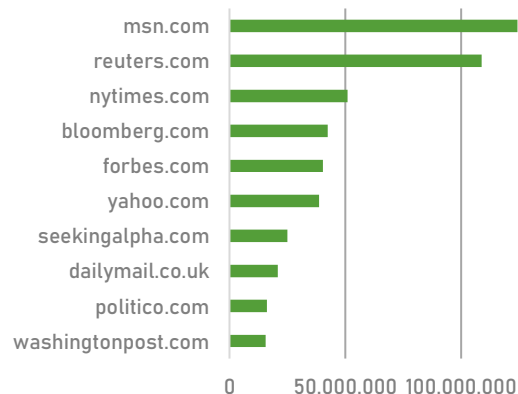
In Q2, top tier media outlets overwhelmingly focused on the major challenge climate change poses (*MSN*, *Forbes*) as energy majors face increasing pressure from court cases over high emissions and activist shareholders calling for reduced emissions (*New York Times*, *Bloomberg*).

In the energy industry, Shell's focus on sustainable investments, including its stake in an electric vehicle startup (*Reuters*) and rumored plans to exit carbon intensive ventures (*Reuters*), was well received. In comparison, similar moves from fellow majors – like Chevron's move to sell off low value assets – were more negatively viewed as doubling down on more profitable resources (*Reuters*). Exxon also drew media attention in its “face off” against activist investors demanding it embrace sustainability strategies similar to Shell and BP (*New York Times*, *Forbes*).

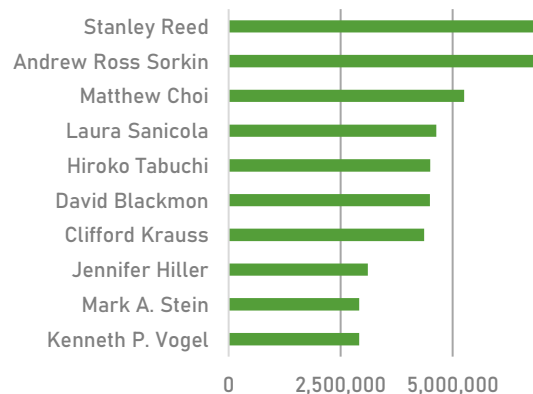
However, nearly all energy leaders were cited in articles noting the harmful impact of the industry, which includes the release of cancer-causing chemicals (*MSN*) and contribution to plastic waste (*New York Times*).

Concern over potential gas shortages also grabbed headlines following the Colonial pipeline attack (*MSN*, *Bloomberg*).

Q2 Top Outlets (Reach)



Q2 Top Journalists (Reach)



Media Highlights

Article	Outlet	Journalist	Engagements
Exxon, Shell, and Chevron suffer major setbacks as climate concerns cause power shift	MSNBC	Rachel Maddow	107.6 K
Revealed: ExxonMobile's lobbying war on climate change legislation	Channel 4	Alex Thomson	74.1 K
Exxon loses board seats to activist hedge fund in landmark climate vote	Reuters	Jennifer Hiller	68.4 K
Shell ordered to reduce emissions by 45% by 2030 in landmark ruling	Sky	Victoria Seabrook	63.9 K
Exxon Mobil Defeated by Activist Investor Engine No. 1	NY Times	Matt Phillips	32.3 K
How ExxonMobil Has Shifted Climate Change Messaging	Time	Justin Worland	25.2 K
Some gas stations run dry after motorists rush to fill their tanks as pipeline shutdown continues	NBC News	Ben Popken	23.7 K
13 U.S. refineries exceeded emissions limits for cancer-causing benzene in 2020 -report	Reuters	Laura Sanicola	15.6 K
People of Color Breathe More Hazardous Air. The Sources Are Everywhere.	NY Times	Hiroko Tabuchi	13.5 K
Big Oil Is Trying to Make Climate Change Your Problem to Solve	Rolling Stone	Amy Westervelt	11.4 K

Renewable Energy

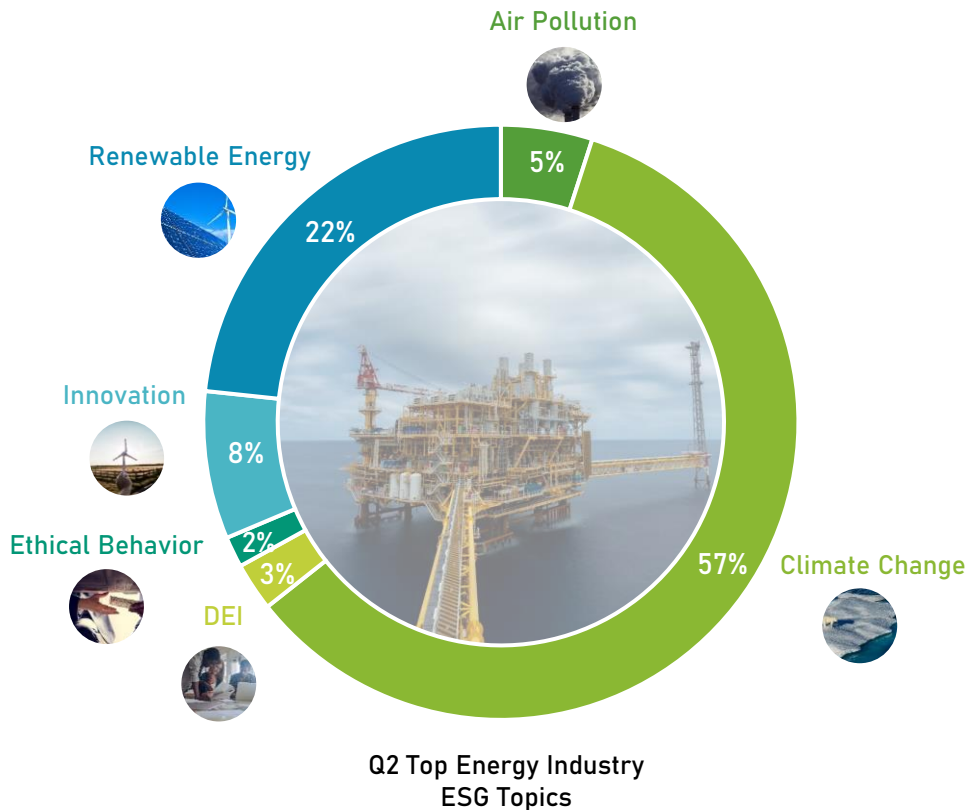
- Investments in green energy projects like electric vehicle charging

Innovation

- New oil field discoveries
- Speculation around potential industry transformations

Ethical Behavior

- Addressing the Texas power crisis and high customer fees
- Ongoing trials/lawsuits



Air Pollution

- Court-ordered air pollution reductions at refineries

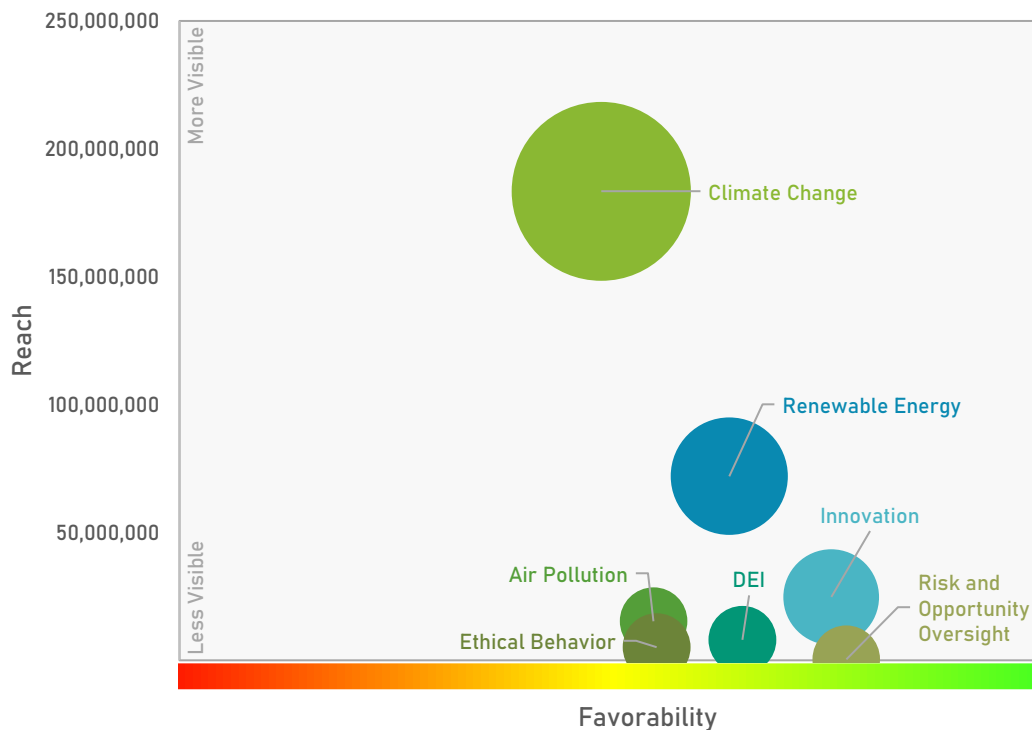
Climate Change

- Emissions lawsuits
- Actionable commitments to address climate change

Diversity, Equality & Inclusion

- Impact of air pollution and emissions on communities of color

Q2 ESG Topics



Opportunity to highlight positive commitments in high reach climate change topic.

Climate change drew both the highest visibility and the most negative coverage as headlines based around emissions lawsuits (*MSN*, *Business Insider*, *Reuters*) and accusations of greenwashing (*Forbes*, *Yahoo*) drove reach in top publications. Positive articles focused on new climate pledges and agreements by majors, including Shell (*New York Times*) and Exxon (*Business Insider*), presenting an opportunity for brands to boost their sentiment in this area by highlighting sustainability commitments.

Corporations could see similar improvements in their **renewable energy** sentiment by focusing on a green strategy, comparable to Shell (*New York Times*), which saw the most positive coverage in the area.

Risk and opportunity oversight was the most favorable topic, despite coverage focusing on how companies could best manage risks and adhere to the "Green Guide." It presents an opportunity to generate positive coverage by taking a stance against greenwashing.

Innovation was also highly favorable, but saw only a few high reach sources reported on new discoveries (*Reuters*, *Yahoo*). There is an opportunity to increase reach by linking new innovations to high visibility topics like climate change or renewable energy.

Diversity, equality & inclusion and **air pollution** were more polarizing topics, with negative coverage around the disproportionate impact on communities of color (*New York Times*, *Vice*). Energy companies were also noted in political discourse regarding anti-voting and anti-LGBTQ bills (*MSN*, *Yahoo*), areas where brands missed opportunities to engage by taking a firm stance on these issues.

Ethical behavior was closest to climate change in terms of poor favorability as outlets focused on the Texas power crisis and the resulting high customer fees (*Reuters*), Alex Oh's resignation from the SEC due to ties to an Exxon lawsuit (*The Hill*) and Steven Donziger's trial against Chevron (*The Intercept*).

Calls for greenhouse gas reductions drive climate change discussion.

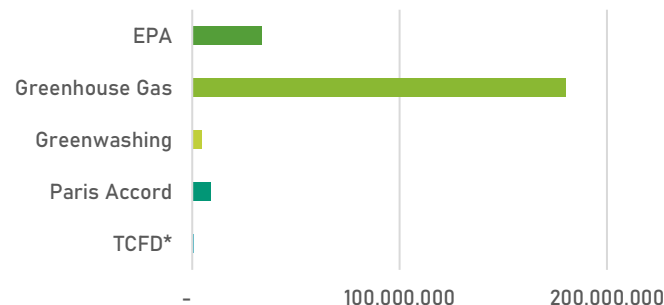
Climate change coverage throughout Q2 was dominated by news around **greenhouse gas emissions** as shareholders called for Exxon and Chevron to reduce emissions (*New York Times*). Shell saw similar coverage stemming from a court order to bring it in line with the **Paris Accord** (*Forbes, Reuters*). And top media showed a consistent interest in **greenwashing** accusations against energy leaders, particularly Chevron (*Reuters, Yahoo*), throughout the quarter.

Late April coverage was driven by more favorable news as Exxon shared a proposal for a \$100 billion project to capture carbon emissions (*New York Times, Forbes*). While May coverage was driven by the Colonial pipeline attack, which resulted in fears of fuel shortages and led the **Environmental Protection Agency** to issue temporary waivers to increase the fuel supply (*MSN, Reuters*).

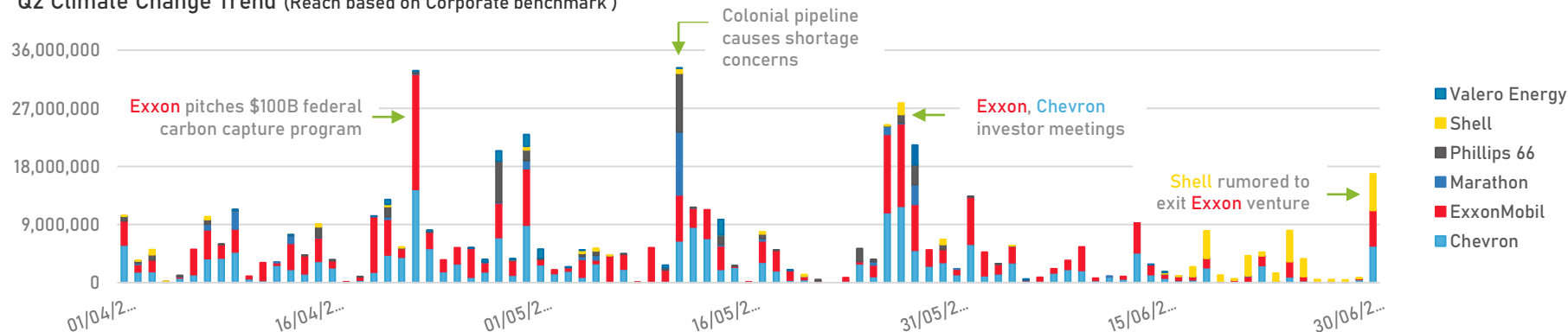
In June, conversation shifted back to climate actions, with discussion around industry trade groups' willingness to disclose the financial risks of ESG compliance (*Bloomberg*) and Exxon's alleged lobbying efforts to disrupt climate legislation (*New York Post*).

Q2 Top Climate Change Subtopics

(Reach based on Corporate benchmark)



Q2 Climate Change Trend (Reach based on Corporate benchmark)



Q2 business recovery is overshadowed by industry scrutiny.

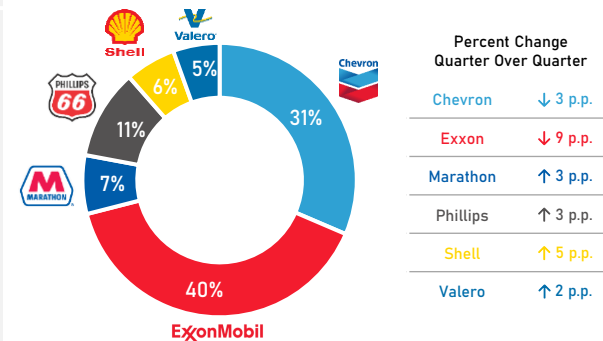
Overall reach of ESG in Energy news declined in Q2 following high volume speculation in the prior quarter over how the industry would adapt to growing concerns around climate change and regulations (*NYTimes*). Exxon led the industry response as it added two activist investors to its board (*MSN*), pledged to hold oil output at a record low (*MSN*), proposed a \$100B carbon capture program (April, *Forbes*), expanded a renewable diesel agreement (*Business Insider*) and its CEO Darren Woods voiced support for zero emissions goals (*NYTimes*). Trade group American Petroleum Institute also responded by officially backing a federal carbon price (*Yahoo*).

However, despite these moves and a return to profitability for both Exxon and Chevron (*MSN*), Q2 coverage was primarily driven by crises during May with Valero predicting a profit drop due to the Texas power emergency (*Reuters*) and majors addressing the Colonial pipeline attack (*Reuters*).

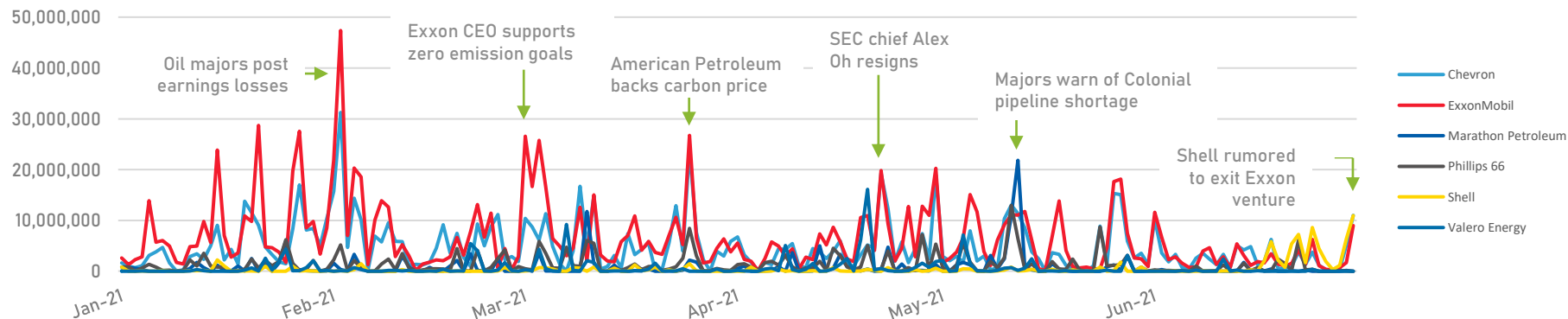
Lawsuits and regulatory issues also drove coverage throughout Q2 with news including: an Exxon/BP/Shell climate change lawsuit (*MSN*); a *New York Times* report accusing Chevron of lobbying the Biden administration against imposing sanctions in Myanmar; Alex Oh's resignation related to Exxon ties (*NYTimes*); Steven Dozinger's Chevron suit (*Yahoo*); and a Chevron/Phillips 66 joint venture that underreported a carcinogen (*Reuters*).

In late May-June, attention returned to Exxon, Chevron and Shell as shareholders demanded reduced emissions and diversification away from oil and gas (*NYTimes*).

Corporate SOV (Reach)



ESG Coverage (Reach)

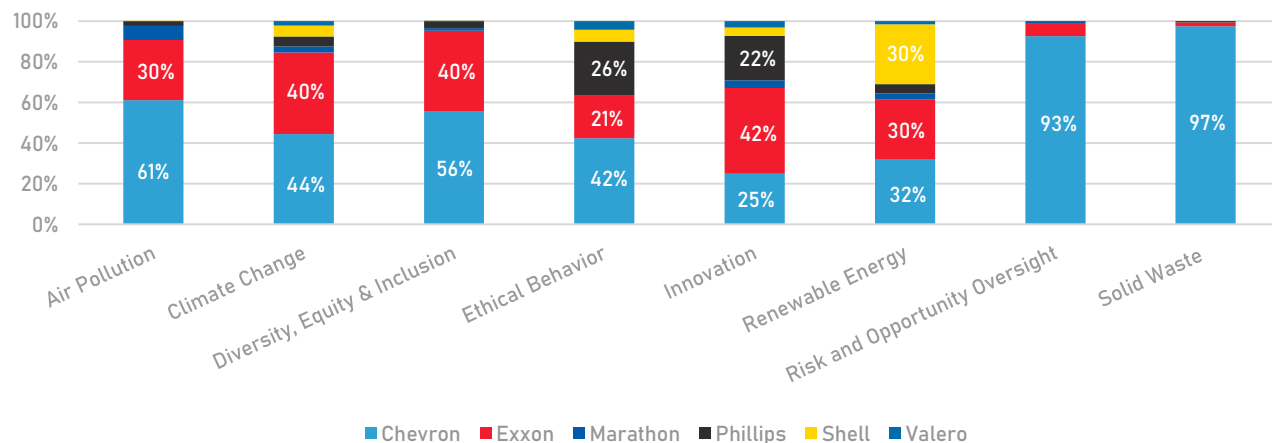


Exxon and Chevron lead ESG news; Shells wins with renewable energy.

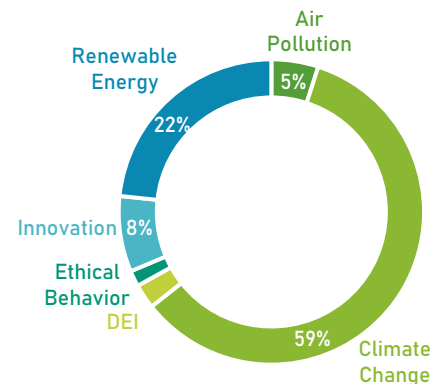
Exxon and Chevron dominated discussion across top ESG topics, with competitors (Shell and Phillips 66) earning a small share of coverage only in [renewable energy](#), [ethical behavior](#) and [innovation](#) topics. While Chevron garnered some attention in [renewables](#) after CFO Pierre Breber's comments indicating the company had no intention of investing in the industry over oil and gas ([MSN](#)), Shell gained ground with late rumors about its interest in exiting a joint venture with Exxon ([Yahoo](#)) and investing in an electric vehicle charging group ([Yahoo](#)). Meanwhile, an [MSN](#) article mentioning Phillips 66 in its criticism of brands that "enable China's oppression" took [ethical behavior](#) share of voice from Exxon and Chevron's discussion of losses related to the Texas power crisis ([Yahoo](#)). Market discussion around Phillips 66 ([MarketWatch](#)) also boosted its [innovation](#) share, while Exxon coverage focused on the newest oil discoveries ([MSN](#)) and the potential transformation that would follow Exxon and Chevron's investment in addressing climate change ([Business Insider](#)).

Chevron led [risk and opportunity oversight](#) and [solid waste](#) due to accusations that the company engaged in greenwashing ([Yahoo](#), [Forbes](#)). Coverage of other trending topics was closely split between Chevron and Exxon, particularly in [climate change](#), with discussion of issues with activist shareholders ([New York Times](#)), industry pollutants' negative impact on communities of color ([New York Times](#)), Exxon's proposal for a federal carbon capture program ([New York Times](#)) and Chevron's lobbying activities ([New York Times](#)). Similar coverage around reducing [air pollution](#) at Chevron's refinery in Richmond ([Reuters](#)) and Exxon's in Chicago ([Seeking Alpha](#)) also served to increase their shares in that topic.

ESG Topics (Reach)



Top ESG Topics (Reach)

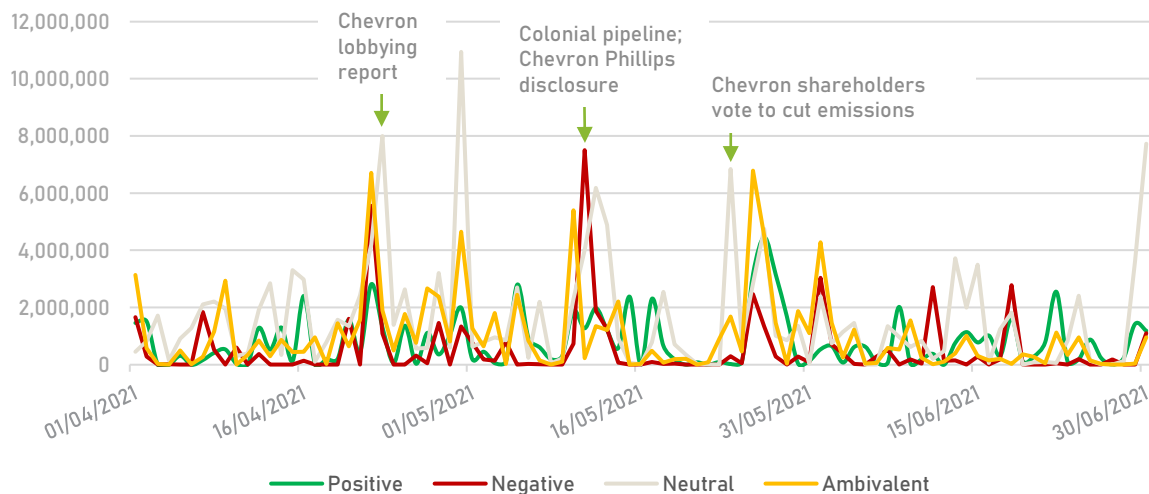


Chevron coverage impacted by scandals and Colonial pipeline shortage.

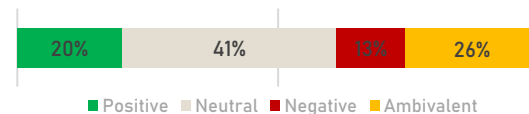
Chevron earned positive coverage throughout the quarter with its most positive story stemming from a shareholder vote to reduce emissions from both the company and its customers ([New York Times](#)), highlighting the media's interest in companies that commit to addressing climate change.

However, while most Chevron coverage skewed favorable, the brand saw significant negative coverage spikes during Q2. In mid-April, a [New York Times](#) article reporting that the company had sent lobbyists to the State Department, agencies and congressional offices to dissuade the Biden administration from imposing sanctions on Myanmar drew heavy criticism. In May the brand suffered from a substantial number of articles weighing in unfavorably on the gas shortage related to the Colonial pipeline attack and the resulting long lines at gas stations ([Forbes](#)). In addition, a [Reuters](#) report disclosing that the company's joint venture with Phillips 66, Chevron Phillips Chemical underreported the import of a carcinogen ([Reuters](#)) also drove negative coverage.

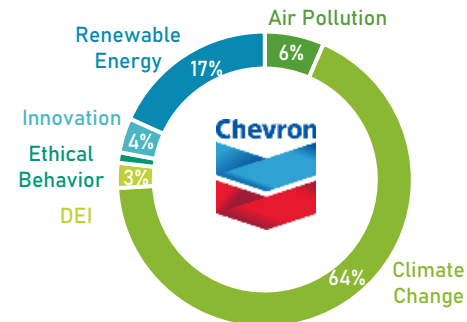
Chevron ESG Coverage (Reach)



Chevron ESG Sentiment



Chevron Top ESG Topics

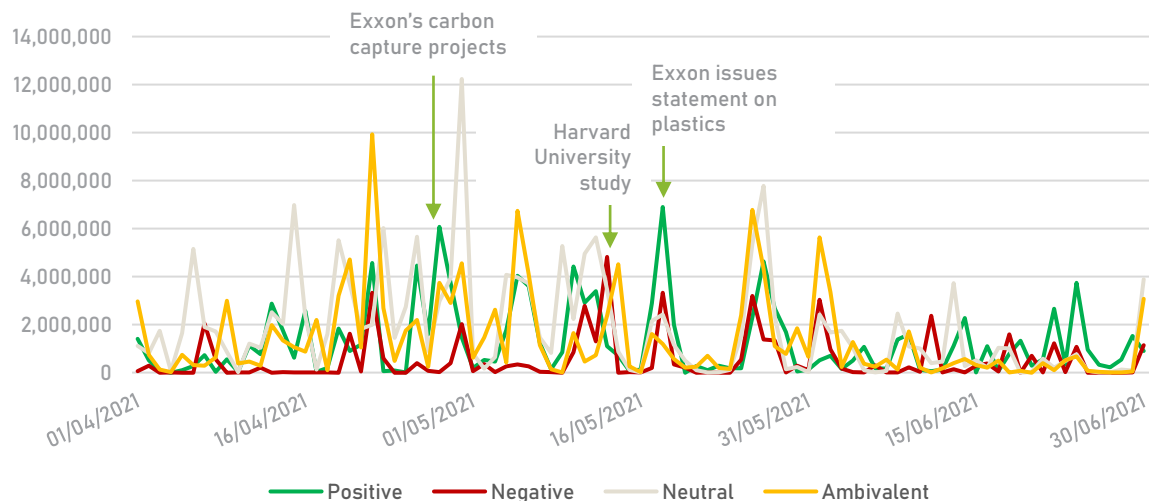


Exxon's carbon capture project drives Q2 coverage.

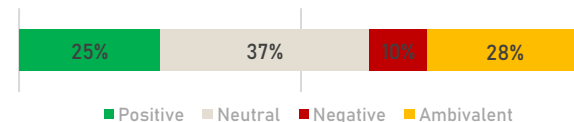
Exxon's Q2 coverage was largely driven by the company's commitment to address climate change. In late April, articles highlighted Exxon's proposal to transform the Houston/Gulf of Mexico region into an enterprise zone for carbon capture projects ([Forbes](#)) as well as its ongoing carbon capture and storage services ([Reuters](#)). A request, from union leaders, to resume negotiations at Exxon's plant in Beaumont, Texas ([Bloomberg](#)) also drove positive discussion. In May, Exxon was named at the top of the Minderoo Foundation's "Plastic Waste Makers Index," but articles circulating the company's statement promising improvements in plastic waste recovery and recycling efficacy drove positive sentiment ([New York Times](#), [Reuters](#)). The company also benefited from a Supreme Court ruling rejecting a Maryland lawsuit against it and other oil majors for contributing to climate change ([Reuters](#)).

Some negative discussion in early May was generated by a Harvard University study that determined the company engaged in a decades-long campaign to downplay the climate crisis and shift blame onto consumers ([MSN](#), [CNN](#)). While outlets also circulated Exxon's statement, the response lacked concrete remediation steps, potentially impacting its efficacy.

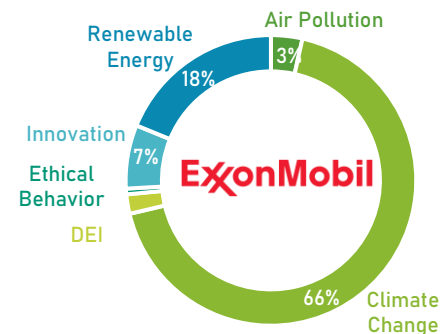
Exxon ESG Coverage (Reach)



Exxon ESG Sentiment



Exxon Top ESG Topics



The ESG In Energy Q2 report is based on automated analysis of 6 months (Jan 1 – Jun 30, 2021) of environmental, social and corporate governance (“ESG”) news. Sources include English language online news, blogs and boards. Corporations and topics highlighted in the analysis are not mutually exclusive.

Data includes articles that mention tracked Energy industry corporations along with an ESG mention, which include top-line keyword mentions as well as mentions of 90+ ESG sub-topics drawn from the World Economic Forum ESG framework. Tracked energy industry corporations include those energy corporations ranked in the top 100 companies from the 2020 or 2021 [Fortune 500](#) and [Fortune Global 500](#) (Exxon Mobile, Chevron, Marathon Petroleum, Phillips 66, Valero, Royal Dutch Shell, Sinopec Group, China National Petroleum, Saudi Aramco, BP, Glencore, Lukoil, Rosneft Oil).



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