

Children, Morality, and Responsibility Top American Climate Concerns

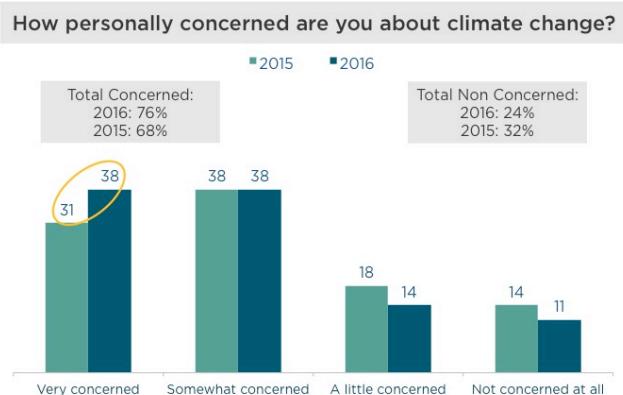
According to the American Climate Metrics Survey 2016, 87% of Americans feel a moral responsibility to create a safe and healthy climate for themselves and their children. They also support charging polluters a fee on the pollution they create, and see the personal benefits of climate solutions.

The concern that Americans have about climate change is pervasive. Their desire for solutions is underscored by moral responsibility, and they are increasingly seeing the personal benefits of reducing the pollution that is causing climate damage. The intensity of these findings suggests broad support for action, a signal to the new Trump administration that Americans demand progress vs. easement on climate solutions.

This annual survey was conducted in September 2015 and 2016, prior to the election and inauguration of President Trump, whose views on climate change have varied, and whose plans to address it have moved from uncertain to regressive. ecoAmerica and Lake Research Partners will continue to conduct this survey annually in September, and issue reports on the findings. Full data are available on request.

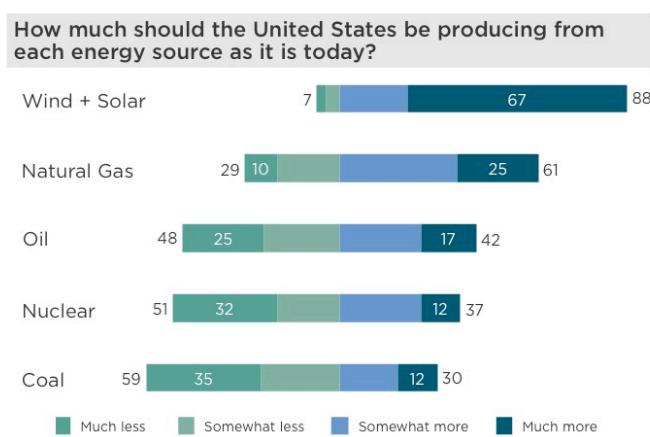
Key American Climate Metrics Study 2016 Findings

- Americans' awareness, belief, and concern for climate change are strong and pervasive, and rising dramatically.** Nationally, 78% of this survey's respondents have noticed more severe weather and changing seasonal weather patterns where they live over the last several years (up from 71% in 2015), 87% believe climate change is happening (up from 85% in 2015), and 76% are personally concerned about climate change (up from 67% in 2015).
- Powerful feelings of moral responsibility underscore Americans' support for climate solutions.** In the US, 87% of the surveyed adults agree (65% strongly agree) that we have a moral responsibility to create a safe and healthy climate for ourselves and our children.
- A strong majority of Americans support charging companies a fee for the pollution they emit.** 78% of adults surveyed favor a proposal to reduce climate pollution by charging large companies a fee for the pollution they (the companies) create (up from 75% in 2015).



4. Americans are increasingly seeing the personal benefits that solutions bring to the economy, jobs, and health. Two-thirds of the surveyed adults say that if the US took steps to help prevent future climate change it would help the economy (66%, up from 53% in 2015) or improve their health (67%, up from 58% in 2015); moreover, 56% say it would increase jobs (up from 54% in 2015).

5. On energy, Americans continue to believe that, out of all energy options, the US should focus most on producing much more clean energy, such as wind and solar power. Not only should the US be producing more wind and solar power than it is today (88%), but 67% of the respondents said it should be producing much more. Moreover, 51% believe those two forms of clean energy result in the lowest cost for consumers. These findings match the 2015 results, but support for natural gas declined 7 points year over year.



6. There are indications that action on climate change is beginning to be viewed as an election issue. When Americans were asked if they have voted for a candidate based on his or her support for taking action on climate change, 34% of the respondents claimed to have done so in 2016; a 131% increase from the 26% who claimed to have done so in 2015.

7. Trust in key climate messengers is increasing. In 2016, 62% of the surveyed US adults said they trust environmental organizations as a source of information about climate change, which is up from 54% in 2015, and 64% trust health professionals, which is up from 58% in 2015. There have also been notable upticks in trust for colleges and universities (+7 points, 55% in 2016, up from 48% in 2015), scientists (+8 points, 45% in 2016, up from 37% in 2015), and local community leaders (+9 points, 34% in 2016, up from 25% in 2015).

Methodology

ecoAmerica and Lake Research Partners (LRP) designed and LRP administered this survey, which was conducted online September 12–29, 2016. The survey yielded a total of 800 adult responses. The sample was drawn from an online panel and the respondents were screened to ensure that they were over the age of 18. The national sample was weighted slightly by gender, region, age, and race. The margin of error for the sample is +/- 3.3%. In interpreting the survey results, it is important to note that all sample surveys are subject to possible sampling error. Thus, the results of a survey may differ from the results that would be obtained if the entire population was interviewed. The size of the sampling error depends upon both the total number of respondents in the survey and the percentage distribution of the responses to a particular question. For example, if 50% of the respondents in a sample of 900 respondents answered, "Yes" to a particular question, we can be 95% confident that the true percentage would fall within 3.3 points, or range from 46.7% to 53.3%.

Special Thanks

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