

More Americans Are Concerned About Climate Change Than You Think

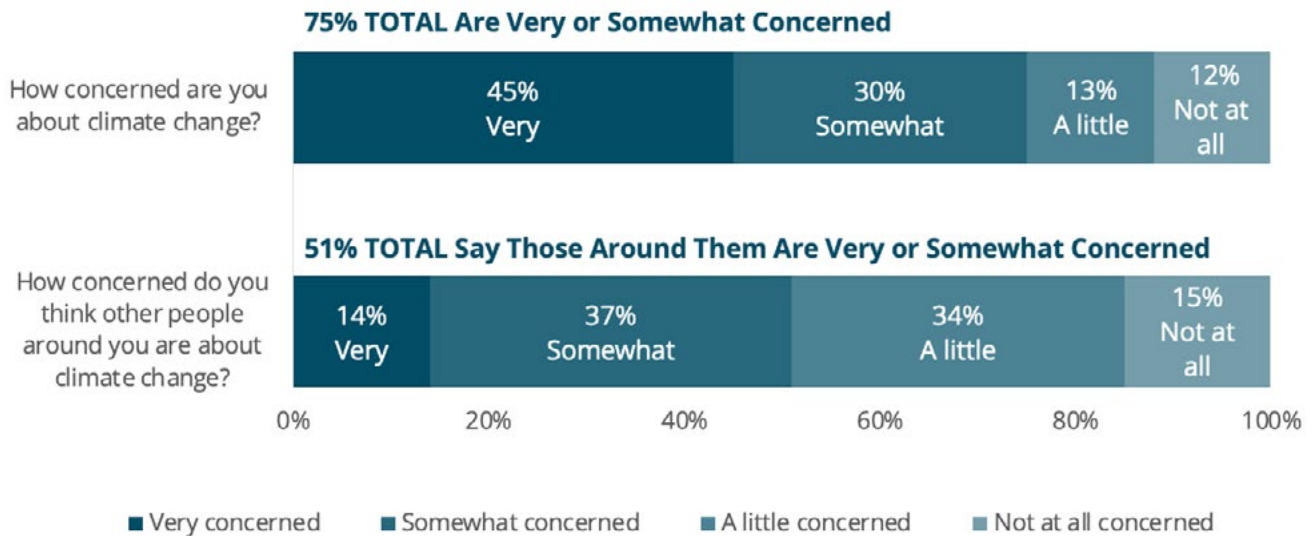
The climate movement made great efforts to energize Americans and the world to take action in 2021. Weighing on many advocates' minds is the question of whether or not the country will deliver on its climate promises, particularly after the lack of progress over the past several years.

The American public is likewise concerned about climate change. In fact, climate concern is at an [all-time high](#). However, ecoAmerica's research finds a notable discrepancy between perceived (lower) and actual (higher) concern about climate change, which may be slowing action on climate because Americans likely feel alone in their concern. This state of affairs is also referred to as pluralistic ignorance. Few Americans report being influenced on the issue by friends, family, and colleges despite reports of growing concerns over the past year. Americans are noticing the climate change-related changes and events around them, playing a role in their level of concern.

Perception vs Reality on Climate Change Concern

ecoAmerica's research finds that most Americans are concerned about climate change (75%), but only about half think that others around them are concerned (51%). Even more dramatic is the difference between the 45% of Americans who are "very" concerned and the 14% who think others around them are "very" concerned. Nearly half of Americans falsely believe that those around them are either only a little concerned or not at all concerned when in reality far fewer report this.

The majority of Americans are concerned about climate change but far fewer think those around them are concerned. Survey questions: 1) How concerned are you about climate change, 2) How concerned do you think other people around you are about climate change? 1,067 national respondents. +/- 3% margin of error.



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Over the Past Year Concerns Grew, Especially Among Democrats

Forty-three percent of Americans report that in the past year they have become more concerned about climate change. Among Democrats, an even higher percentage (62%) say their concern has grown. Despite perceptions to the contrary, **over 1 in 5 (23%) of Republicans say they are more concerned about climate change**, and more than double (53%) report that climate change should be a top or important priority for the Biden Administration. Aligning closely with the national average, 42% of Independents voice growing concern.

Over 2 in 5 Americans report growing concern about climate change. Survey question: How has your concern about climate change changed in the past year? 1,067 national respondents. +/- 3% margin of error.

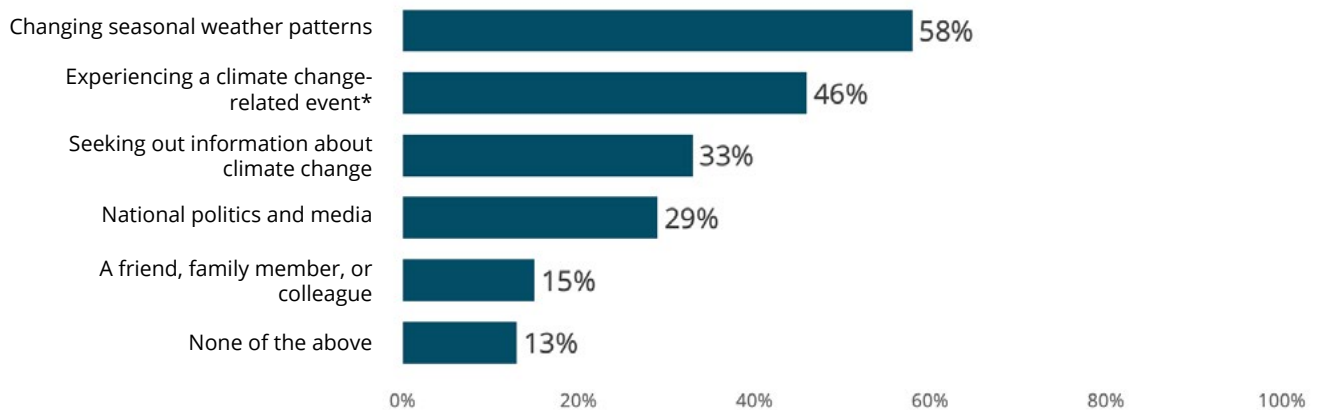
	National	Republican	Democrat	Independent	Something else
I am more concerned	43%	23%	62%	42%	28%
I am less concerned	10%	16%	7%	7%	9%
My concerns have stayed the same	45%	59%	29%	49%	58%
I don't know	2%	2%	3%	1%	5%

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Americans See the Climate Changing

When asked about which factors contribute to climate change concerns, Americans point to what they see or experience around them. Changing seasonal weather patterns influence climate change concerns for 58%, and 46% report that experiencing a climate change-related event (such as wildfires or severe storms) influenced concerns. Just one-third of Americans are influenced by the information they seek out and even fewer (29%) credit national politics and media. Only 15% of Americans are reporting that they are being influenced by their friends, families, or colleges, which may partially explain why fewer Americans think those around them are concerned than actually are.

Changing seasonal weather patterns is the most reported factor influencing climate change concern. Survey question: What are the factors influencing your level of climate change concern? 1,067 national respondents. +/- 3% margin of error.



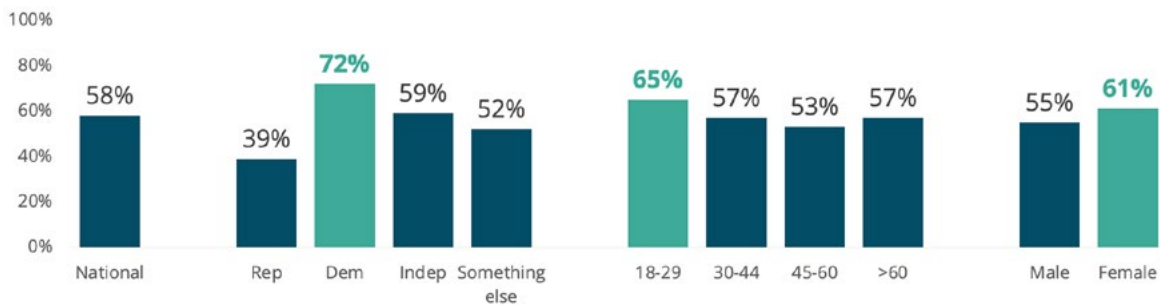
*like wildfires, severe storms, flooding, or extreme heat

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The Influence of Changing Seasonal Weather Patterns

Many Americans report that changing seasonal weather patterns influence their climate change concern, more so than other factors. In particular, there are a few groups whose climate concern is particularly influenced by changing seasonal weather patterns, including 72% of Democrats, 65% of younger Americans between 18-29, and 61% of females. While fewer, it's notable that roughly 2 in 5 (39%) Republicans report being affected by changing seasonal weather patterns.

More Democrats, younger Americans, and females report influence by seasonal weather patterns. Survey question: What are the factors influencing your level of climate change concern? Responses for "Changing seasonal weather patterns". 1,067 national respondents. +/- 3% margin of error.

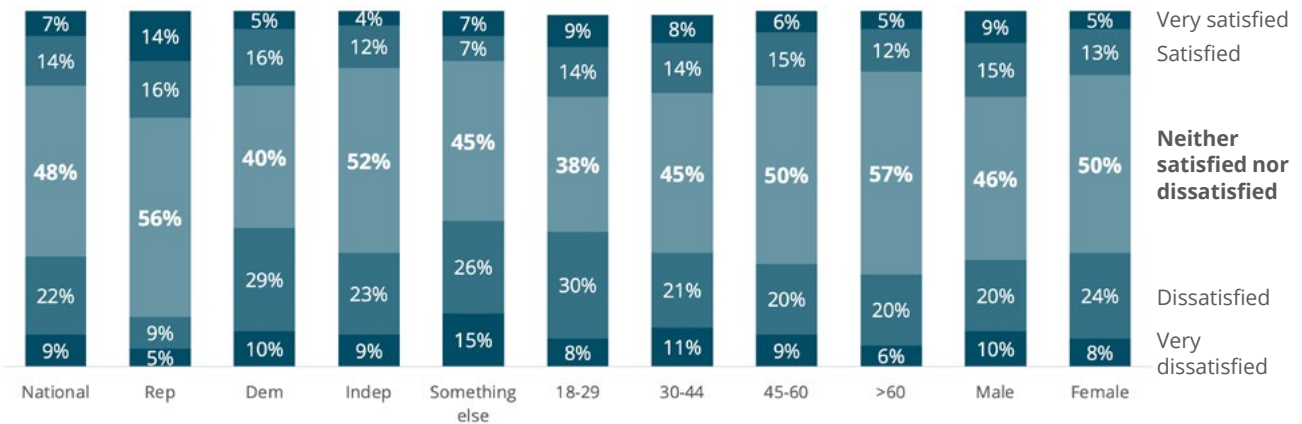


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Community Members Report Low Satisfaction With Climate Action

Despite 70% of Americans thinking it's their local communities' responsibility to address climate change, few are currently satisfied with the action their communities are taking. Nationally, only 21% total are satisfied, including 7% who are "very satisfied" and 14% who are "satisfied". Many Americans are feeling neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, and a significant number across demographic groups are reporting feeling dissatisfied. The discrepancy between the 75% of Americans who are concerned about climate change, the 70% that believe it's their local communities' responsibility to address it, and the low satisfaction rate is a call to action to local and regional governments to raise their ambitions, actions and speed for just and equitable climate solutions.

Demographic consensus that few Americans are satisfied with local community climate change action. Survey question: How satisfied are you with the actions your local community is taking to address climate change? 1,067 national respondents. +/- 3% margin of error.



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Full data is available in the accompanying [toplines](#).

Methodology

ecoAmerica designed and administered this survey, which was conducted online on December 22, 2021 using Survey Monkey. The survey yielded a total of 1,067 complete 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 margin of error for the sample is +/-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 1,067 respondents answered, "Yes" to a particular question, we can be 95% confident that the true percentage would fall within 3 points, or range from 47% to 53%.

Suggested Citation

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