

Poll: American opinion on climate change warms up

June 8 2010

Public concern about global warming is once again on the rise, according to a national survey released today by researchers at Yale and George Mason Universities. The results come as the U.S. Senate prepares to vote this week on a resolution to block the EPA from regulating carbon dioxide as a pollutant.

Since January, public belief that [global warming](#) is happening rose four points, to 61 percent, while belief that it is caused mostly by human activities rose three points, to 50 percent. The number of Americans who worry about global warming rose three points, to 53 percent. And the number of Americans who said that the issue is personally important to them rose five points, to 63 percent.

"The stabilization and slight rebound in public opinion is occurring amid signs the economy is starting to recover, along with consumer confidence, and as memories of unusual snowstorms and scientific scandals recede," said Anthony Leiserowitz, director of the Yale Project on Climate Change Communication. "The BP oil disaster is also reminding the public of the dark side of dependence on fossil fuels, which may be increasing support for clean energy policies."

Americans who said President Obama and Congress should make developing sources of clean energy a high priority increased 11 points, to 71 percent, while those who said that global warming should be a high priority rose six points, to 44 percent. In a seven-point increase since January, 69 percent of Americans said that the United States should

make a large or medium effort to reduce global warming even if it incurs large or moderate economic costs.

Current public support for specific policy options (and changes since January, 2010) include:

- 77 percent support regulating [carbon dioxide](#) as a pollutant (+6)
- 87 percent support funding more research into [renewable energy sources](#) (+2)
- 83 percent support tax rebates for people who buy fuel-efficient vehicles and solar panels (+1)
- 65 percent support signing an international treaty that requires the United States to cut its emissions of carbon dioxide 90 percent by the year 2050 (+4)
- 61 percent support requiring electric utilities to produce at least 20 percent of their electricity from renewable energy sources, even if it cost the average household an extra \$100 per year (+2)
- Support for expanding offshore drilling for oil and natural gas off the U.S. coast fell to 62 percent (-5)

"More than seven out of 10 Americans say the United States should take action to power our nation with clean energy," said Edward Maibach, director of the Center for [Climate Change](#) Communication at George Mason University. "Even more Americans support regulating carbon dioxide as a pollutant, including 64 percent of Republicans."

More information: Copies of the reports can be downloaded from:

www.climatechangecommunication...resources_reports.cfm

Provided by George Mason University

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