

Do opinions regarding climate change adjust to economic conditions?

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Some studies claim that declining economic conditions cause people to become less concerned with climate change, while others find little

relationship. New research published in *Economic Inquiry* demonstrates that both results are valid, but they hold for different groups.

Specifically, economic conditions only meaningfully affect the [climate change](#) beliefs and concern of those who have the most to gain or lose from the current economy—those in the labor force.

The analysis of a large public opinion panel dataset, the Cooperative Congressional Election Study Panel Survey, indicates that for people in the labor force, climate concern varies with economic conditions. For those outside of the labor force, however, such as retired individuals and students, views on climate change do not tend to be impacted by [economic conditions](#).

The findings help to resolve previously conflicting results on the determinants of popular support for climate change initiatives.

"Previous work shows that climate change beliefs are closely linked to support for climate change policy and willingness to pay for [climate change mitigation](#). Therefore, this research suggests that individuals in the [labor force](#) may be less likely to support climate policy during economic downturns," said author Andrew Meyer, Ph.D., of Marquette University. "Conversely, these same individuals may be more amenable to climate policy when the economy is performing well."

More information: *Economic Inquiry*, [DOI: 10.1111/ecin.13036](https://doi.org/10.1111/ecin.13036)

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