

BABY, IT'S COLD OUTSIDE...AND MAYBE WE'RE TO BLAME

For many in the Garden State, this past winter ranks among the coldest and snowiest in recent memory. Luxuriously warm temperatures in the early part of this week seemed to herald the arrival of Spring, but roller coaster temperatures will define the latter half of the week.

According to a recent statewide survey from Fairleigh Dickinson University's PublicMind, a majority of New Jersey residents (56%) believe solid evidence of climate change exists, with an additional third (35%) who remain dubious. Similar numbers believe the earth's warming is attributable to human activity (51%) as opposed to natural patterns in the earth's environment (37%). New Jersey is slightly less convinced that climate change is occurring relative to the nation. In October of 2013, the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press asked the same question nationally and found 67 percent of adults have seen sufficient scientific evidence to support the claim that the average temperature on Earth has been getting warmer over the past few decades.

"Droughts in the west, snow in the south, and sustained tundra-like temperatures in the northeast - all at the same time - raise questions about the normalcy of the weather this winter. These results suggest that most in New Jersey are aware of debate over climate change, and have accepted both its presence and the human causes behind it," said Krista Jenkins, director of PublicMind and professor of political science at Fairleigh Dickinson University. "Still, the numbers reveal a good amount of division over weather patterns as well."

On a scale of zero to ten, with zero meaning this winter was milder than usual, and ten indicating extreme harshness, this winter scored an 8.5 among New Jersey residents. Most respondents (73%) believe extreme weather events are likely to happen more often, with significantly fewer (20%) who believe it unlikely that harsh winters like the one New Jersey is enduring will happen with greater frequency. The same question was asked in the days following Hurricane Sandy. In November of 2012, virtually the same percentage said they expect more extreme weather in the years to come (74%) as who said the trend was unlikely to continue (16%).

Across all questions related to weather, Republicans and Democrats understand weather patterns and their causes very differently. Almost three-quarters of Democrats (70%) believe solid evidence exists for the earth's warming, with less than half that number of Republicans (33%) who say the same. Rather, Republicans are largely of the belief that sufficient scientific evidence does not exist (57%).

As for what's contributing to any increase in the earth's temperature, two thirds of Democrats (64%) say human activity is likely to blame, with about a third of Republicans (30%) who say the same. Republicans are more convinced that natural patterns are to blame (60%) with nearly a quarter of Democrats (23%) who say the same.

Republicans and Democrats also differ on the question of whether extreme weather is the new normal. Although a majority of both Republicans (56%) and Democrats (85%) expect the frequency of extreme weather events to pick up as a consequence of global warming, an almost thirty percentage point gap separates partisans.

"What we're seeing in New Jersey is what's been confirmed nationally - something as empirical and scientific as the weather is evaluated differently based on whether you're a Democrat or Republican," said Jenkins.

Another divide exists among the college versus non-college educated, with college graduates more likely to believe in climate change (65%) and see it as a consequence of human activity (56%) than those without a college degree. Among these individuals, opinion is more divided over the nature of the scientific evidence (46% believe it exists; 43% believe it does not) as well as the causes for climate change (46% say human activity is to blame; 42% say natural patterns in the Earth's environment are the cause).

The Fairleigh Dickinson University poll of 758 New Jersey residents was conducted by telephone with both landline and cell phones from March 3 through March 9. Among all respondents, the margin of error is +/- 3.6 percentage points.

Methodology, questions, and tables on the web at: <http://publicmind.fdu.edu>

Radio actualities at 201.692.2846

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Methodology

The most recent survey by Fairleigh Dickinson University's PublicMind was conducted by telephone from March 3 through March 9 using a randomly selected sample of 758 New Jersey residents. One can be 95 percent confident that the error attributable to sampling has a range of +/- 3.6 percentage points for the sample as a whole. The margin of error for subgroups is larger and varies by the size of that subgroup. Survey results are also subject to non-sampling error. This kind of error, which cannot be measured, arises from a number of factors including, but not limited to, non-response (eligible individuals refusing to be interviewed), question wording, the order in which questions are asked, and variations among interviewers.

PublicMind interviews are conducted by Opinion America of Cedar Knolls, NJ, with professionally trained interviewers using a CATI (Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing) system. Random selection is achieved by computerized random-digit dialing. This technique gives every person with a landline phone number (including those with unlisted numbers) an equal chance of being selected.

Landline households are supplemented with a separate, randomly selected sample of cell-phone respondents interviewed in the same time frame. The total combined sample is mathematically weighted to match known demographics of age, race and gender.

Tables

<i>On a scale of 0 to 10, with 0 meaning the winter weather this year has been milder than we should expect in New Jersey, and 10 meaning the weather has been harsher than New Jersey should experience, how would you rate this winter's weather?</i>													
	PID				Gender		Race		Education		Age		
	All	Dem	Ind	Repub	Male	Female	White	Non-white	College	Non-college	18-34	35-59	60+
Average	8.5	8.6	8.5	8.3	8.4	8.6	8.4	8.6	8.5	8.4	8.4	8.4	8.6

<i>From what you've read and heard, is there solid evidence that the average temperature on Earth has been getting warmer over the past few decades, or not?</i>													
	PID				Gender		Race		Education		Age		
	All	Dem	Ind	Repub	Male	Female	White	Non-white	College	Non-college	18-34	35-59	60+
IS solid evidence	56%	70	50	33	58	53	53	60	65	46	51	59	56
Is NOT solid evidence	35%	21	40	57	36	34	38	29	26	43	36	33	36
DK/Ref (vol)	9%	9	10	10	6	13	9	11	9	11	13	8	8

<i>Some people say the earth is getting warmer because of human activity, while others say it's mostly due to natural patterns in the Earth's environment. What about you?</i>													
	PID				Gender		Race		Education		Age		
	All	Dem	Ind	Repub	Male	Female	White	Non-white	College	Non-college	18-34	35-59	60+
Human activity	51%	64	51	30	50	51	47	57	56	46	55	54	43
Natural patterns	37%	23	40	60	39	36	42	30	33	42	36	35	44
DK/Ref (vol)	11%	13	8	10	11	13	12	13	12	12	10	11	13

<i>Some say that global warming will make extreme weather events happen more often, others say extreme weather events will remain unlikely. What about you? How likely or unlikely to you think it is that that extreme weather events will happen more often in New Jersey?</i>													
	PID				Gender		Race		Education		Age		
	All	Dem	Ind	Repub	Male	Female	White	Non-white	College	Non-college	18-34	35-59	60+
Very likely	40%	52	33	23	38	41	36	48	45	35	38	46	33
Somewhat likely	33%	33	35	33	32	34	33	33	31	34	38	30	33
Somewhat unlikely	13%	6	18	20	16	10	15	9	11	15	13	12	14
Very unlikely	7%	5	6	13	8	7	8	6	6	9	6	6	10
DK/Ref (vol)	7%	4	8	10	6	7	8	4	7	7	5	6	10

Exact Question Wording and Order

US1 and US2 withheld for future release

NJ1 through NJ11 released March 11, 2014

POT1 through POT2 withheld for future release

TAX1 through TAX3 withheld for future release

WEA1 On a scale of 0 to 10, with 0 meaning the winter weather this year has been milder than we should expect in New Jersey, and 10 meaning the weather has been harsher than New Jersey should experience, how would you rate this winter's weather?

0-10

99 DK/REF (vol)

WEA2 From what you've read and heard, is there solid evidence that the average temperature on Earth has been getting warmer over the past few decades, or not?

1 IS solid evidence

2 IS NOT solid evidence

8 DK/REF/both (vol)

WEA3 Some people say the Earth is getting warmer because of human activity, while others say it's mostly due to natural patterns in the earth's environment. What about you?[rotate]

1 Human activity

2 Natural patterns

8 DK/Ref (vol)

WEA4 Some say that global warming will make extreme weather events happen more often, others say extreme weather events will remain unlikely. [Rotate] What about you? How likely or unlikely to you think it is that that extreme weather events will happen more often in New Jersey?

1 Very likely

2 Somewhat likely

3 Somewhat unlikely

4 Very unlikely

9 DK/Ref (vol)

Weighted sample characteristics

		All Respondents N = 758 ; MoE = +/- 3.6
Gender	Male	49%
	Female	51%
Age	18-34	27%
	35-59	43%
	60+	28%
Race	White	62%
	African American	14%
	Hispanic	15%
	Asian	4%
	Other	4%
Union household	Self	14%
	Someone else	8%
	No	76%
Party (with leaners)	Dem	47%
	Ind/DK/Refused	25%
	Repub	28%