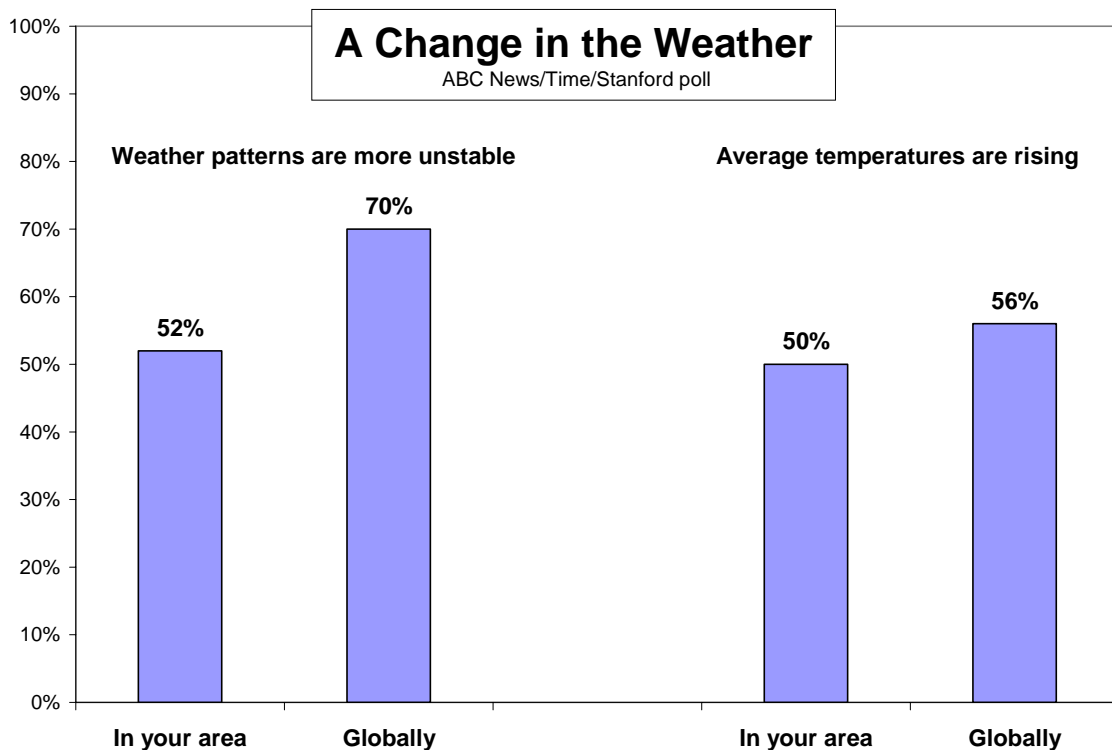


## **Intensity Spikes in Concern on Warming; Many See a Change in Weather Patterns**

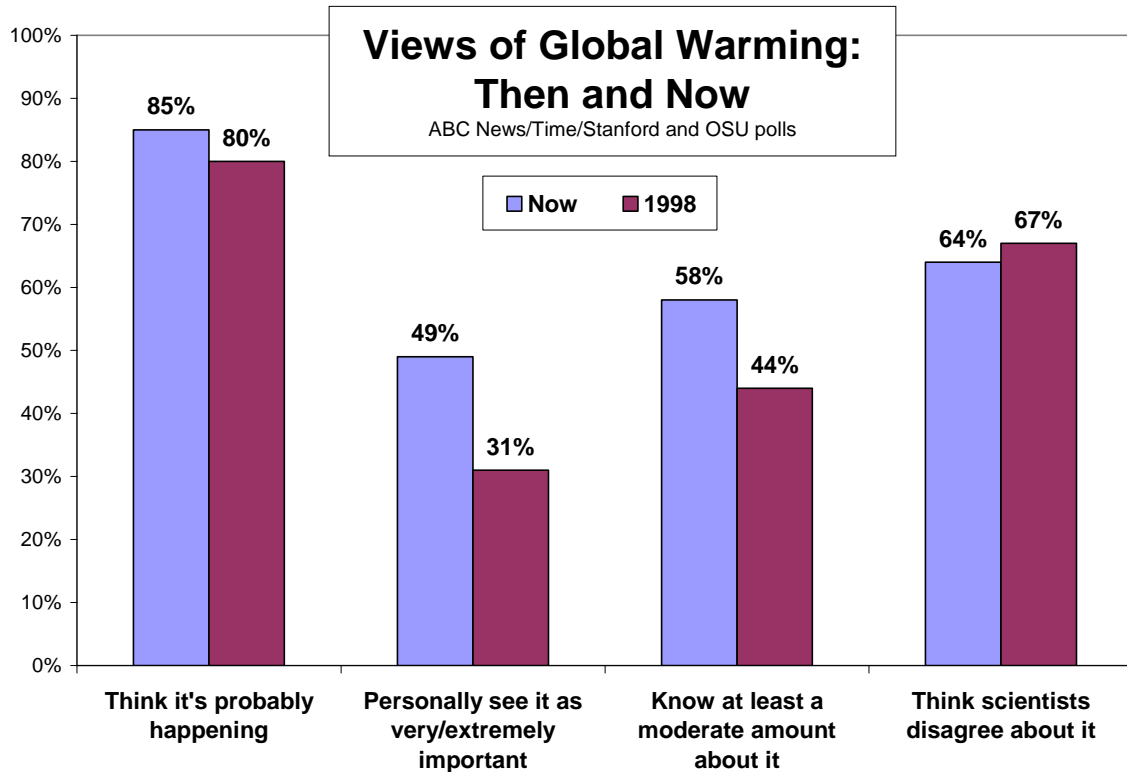
The intensity of public concern about global warming has spiked sharply over the last decade, along with a change in personal experience: Half of Americans say weather patterns have grown more unstable and temperatures have risen where they live, and 70 percent think weather patterns globally have become more unsettled in recent years.

A vast majority, 85 percent, believes global warming probably is occurring, up slightly from 80 percent in a 1998 poll. But fewer than four in 10 are very sure of it, a level of uncertainty that reflects broad and continued belief that scientists themselves disagree on whether or not it's happening.

Nonetheless, the intensity of concern is up. In 1998, 31 percent called global warming extremely or very important to them personally. Today that's sharply higher, 49 percent, with an additional three in 10 calling it "somewhat" important. It may be that personal experience with disrupted weather patterns – reported equally across U.S. regions – is counteracting continued misapprehensions about scientific disagreement.



Moreover, almost seven in 10 in this benchmark survey by ABC News, Time magazine and Stanford University say the government should do more to address global warming. And just under half – rising sharply among those who are most concerned – say it should do “much more.” But views on what should be done are fractured, with little support for measures such as higher gasoline or electricity taxes to discourage consumption.



**SCIENCE** – A key element in attitudes on global warming is the extent to which doubters continue to influence public perceptions. Despite broad scientific consensus that global warming is happening, 64 percent of Americans perceive “a lot of disagreement” among scientists on that question. Only about a third think most scientists agree that it’s begun.

That’s essentially unchanged from polls in 1997 and 1998 alike – despite developments such as a June 2005 statement from 11 national science academies proclaiming that “climate change is real” and calling on governments to take “prompt action” to mitigate it. Others, including the Bush administration, have underscored scientific uncertainties, and this poll finds a sharp political gap in views on whether global warming is occurring, with Republicans much more skeptical about it.

There are other signs of disconnect between scientific and public views. While the academies said that most recent warming can be attributed to human activities, barely over three in 10 Americans believe a rise in world temperatures is caused mainly by things people do. Two in 10 blame mainly natural causes, while the largest group, about half, says it’s a combination of both.

Those who think people are the main cause of global warming are much more likely to feel sure it's occurring – and, more generally, to trust what scientists say about the environment.

**KEY FACTORS** – Views on scientific consensus predict levels of concern and support for action. People who think scientists mainly agree that global warming is happening are 25 to 30 percentage points more likely than others to think it poses a great threat to the world's environment, to call it extremely or very important personally and to say the federal government should do much more about it. They're also twice as likely, in an open-ended question, to call global warming the world's greatest environmental problem.

Similarly, people who say weather patterns in their area have grown more unstable in recent years are much more apt – by 15 to 29 percentage points - to call global warming highly important, to say it poses a very serious problem and to say the government should do more about it.

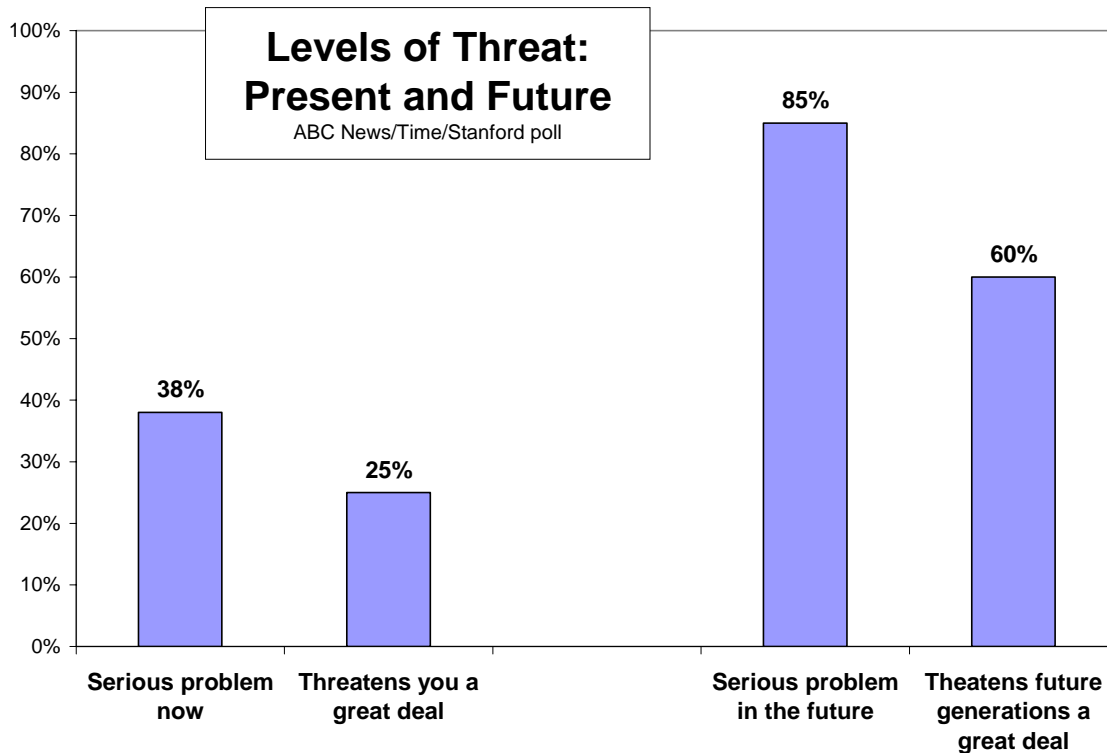
Another important factor is familiarity with the subject, and this has grown: Fifty-eight percent of Americans feel at least moderately well informed about global warming, up about 15 points from the 1997 and 1998 polls, done by researchers at The Ohio State University.

Indeed, these factors – seeing unstable or warmer weather patterns, feeling well-informed about global warming and believing there's scientific consensus about it – are, in a statistical model, the strongest predictors of belief that global warming is occurring, concern about its impact and support for government action to mitigate it.

	GW extremely/ very important	Very serious problem for world	Gov't should do much more
Think scientists agree it's happening	68%	74%	64%
Think they don't agree	39	48	37
Local weather more unstable	60	71	58
Weather not more unstable	37	42	34
Informed about GW	61	68	53
Not informed	33	43	38

**A PROBLEM NOW?** – As in previous ABC News polling, more people see global warming as a near-future threat rather than as a current one. Fewer than four in 10 Americans, 38 percent, think it's a serious problem now. But far more – exceeding eight in 10 – think it will become a serious problem in the future if nothing is done to reduce it. And most of them, six in 10, say that future is fewer than 50 years off.

About half, 49 percent, think it'll be a “very” serious problem for the United States if nothing is done; more, 57 percent, think it'll be a “very” serious problem for the world.



A look at specific possible impacts tells a similar story. Sizable majorities see threats across the board, but lowest on the list is the sense of personal threat; instead the future is a deeper concern. While 62 percent of Americans say global warming threatens them personally, far fewer, 25 percent, say it threatens them “a great deal.” By contrast, 88 percent think it threatens future generations – 60 percent, a great deal.

	Threatened by global warming?	
	Yes NET	Yes, a great deal
Future generations	88%	60%
Plant and animal species	86	56
Poor people in undeveloped countries	84	51
World’s environment	83	51
People in other industrialized countries	78	34
Other Americans	77	32
You personally	62	25

Unsurprisingly, people who are sure global warming is happening, or who see it as a big threat – either personally or to future generations – are far more apt than others to view it as a serious problem overall, and to favor government action to address it.

In addition to the 60 percent who say global warming poses a significant threat to future generations, 56 percent says it threatens plant and animal species a great deal, and about half say it poses a great deal of threat to the world’s environment overall and to poor people in undeveloped countries.

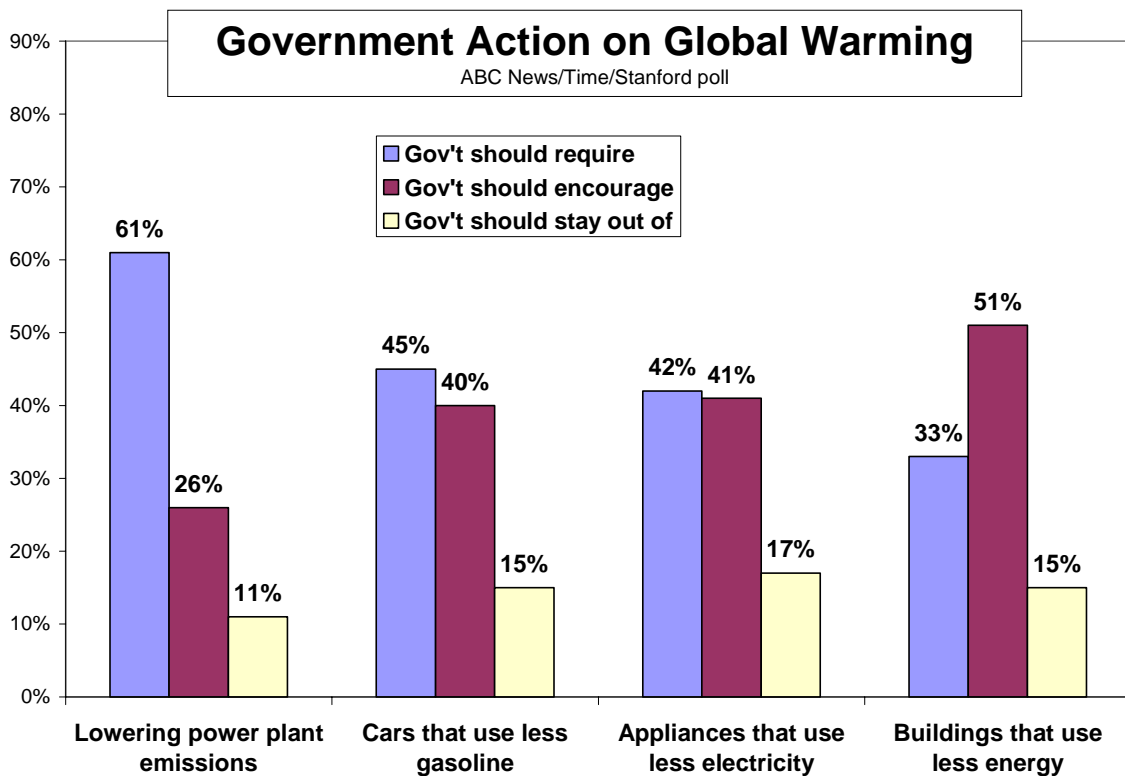
Fewer, about a third, see a great deal of threat to other Americans or to people in other industrialized countries, presumably given their greater resources to mitigate the impacts.

**ACTION** – Six in 10 think much can be done to reduce both the amount of global warming and its effect on people and the environment. Fewer, but still over half – 52 percent – in general prefer mandated government measures rather than steps that are encouraged but not required, or no government action.

But in most cases there’s no broad agreement on how to proceed, and substantial opposition to some measures. Eighty-one percent oppose higher taxes on electricity, 68 percent oppose higher gasoline taxes and 56 percent oppose giving companies tax breaks to build nuclear power plants. On the other hand, 87 percent support tax breaks to develop water, wind and solar power, long popular as alternative energy sources.

	Favor	Oppose
Higher taxes on electricity	19%	81
Higher taxes on gasoline	31	68
Tax breaks for nuclear power	41	56
Tax breaks for water, wind, solar power	87	12

On a separate set of possible regulatory actions, just one receives majority support for mandated government action – reducing the amount of greenhouse gases that power plants are allowed to release into the air, favored by six in 10.



Fewer, 45 percent, say the government should mandate better fuel-efficiency in cars, 42 percent say it should require more energy-efficient appliances and a third favor a requirement that new homes and offices be more energy-efficient. All these, however, get support as options the government should encourage via tax breaks. Fewer than two in 10 say the government should stay out of them entirely.

**BIG PICTURE** – The bigger picture, in terms of overall environmental attitudes, is not positive. Sixty percent of Americans say the natural environment in the world is worse than it was 10 years ago, and 55 percent think it will be worse still 10 years from now. Pessimism peaks, not surprisingly, among people who are most concerned about climate change.

Nor do current actors get much credit: Two-thirds say George W. Bush did little or nothing to help the environment in the past year. And three-quarters want to see Bush and others – the Congress, American businesses and the American public – take action to help the environment in the year ahead.

At the same time, just 35 percent of Americans say that in the past year they personally have given a lot of thought to the impact they were having on the environment. That self-reflection peaks among people who say the environment’s in bad shape, and those who are most concerned about global warming and most sure it’s happening.

**PARTY, IDEOLOGY and EVANGELICALS** – Political affiliation and ideology inform views on the environment overall and on global warming in particular: Democrats and liberals are more likely than Republicans and conservatives to say the environment’s in bad shape, and more apt to believe that global warming is occurring, to call it a threat and to support government action to address it. Liberals are twice as likely as conservatives to identify climate change as the world’s biggest environmental problem.

On many of these, independents more closely resemble Democrats. They’re about as likely as Democrats to say global warming is important to them, to see it as potentially a very serious problem in this country, to say it threatens the world's environment a great deal and to say much can be done to reduce it.

The partisan gap on global warming has shifted: In 1998, 31 percent of Republicans and independents alike were sure that global warming was happening; it was a not-distant 39 percent among Democrats. Today 46 percent of Democrats and 45 percent of independents are certain – but just 26 percent of Republicans feel that way. A difference from 1998 to now is the presence of the Bush administration’s voice on this issue.

	Extremely/very sure Global warming is occurring		
	Now	1998	Change
All	38%	34%	+4
Democrats	46	39	+7
Independents	45	31	+14
Republicans	26	31	-5

Partisan differences extend to some proposed policies. Democrats, Republicans and independents alike all broadly oppose increasing electricity and gasoline taxes, and favor giving companies tax breaks to produce more water, wind and solar power. In general, though, Republicans are the most apt to favor tax breaks to encourage changes, as opposed to government mandates.

There's been interest in the views of evangelical white Protestants – a core Republican group – since 86 evangelical leaders last month signed a statement citing “general agreement” among scientists working on the issue that climate change is happening, and urging federal legislation to deal with it.

This survey, however, finds little resonance for that statement among evangelical white Protestants. They're less likely than others to think about their personal impact on the environment, to see global warming as a threat to the global environment or to say the government should address it. Evangelicals also are no more likely than others to think scientists agree on the issue – and they're 12 points less likely than other Americans to trust environmental scientists in the first place.

**SENIORS AND KIDS** – There are differences among other groups as well. Seniors are less likely than younger adults to be sure that global warming is happening (25 percent are, compared with 41 percent of those under 65). They're also 11 points less likely to say global warming is highly important to them and 17 points less likely to call it a very serious problem.

Just one in four senior citizens thinks global warming threatens the world's environment a great deal; more than half of others think so. It follows, then, that seniors are the least apt to say the government should be doing more to deal with the issue.

Parents with children under 18 have some different views on global warming, perhaps given their stake in future generations. They're eight to 10 points more likely than others to say global warming will be a very serious problem if nothing is done to reduce it, to think it threatens the world's environment a great deal and to want the government to do much more to try to deal with it.

**SUV** – Finally, there are SUVs. One in six adult Americans drives a sports utility vehicle, which have been criticized in some quarters for their low fuel efficiency. Being an SUV driver doesn't affect most views on environmental or global warming issues. But there is one significant difference: SUV drivers are 14 points less likely than people who drive sedans to support a government mandate that cars be made more fuel-efficient.

**METHODOLOGY** – This ABC News/Time/Stanford University poll was conducted by telephone March 9-14, 2006, among a random national sample of 1,002 adults. The results have a three-point error margin. Sampling, data collection and tabulation by TNS of Horsham, PA.

This survey was produced in consultation with the Woods Institute for the Environment at Stanford University and Stanford Prof. Jon Krosnick, author of the 1997 and 1998 studies while at The Ohio State University.

Analysis by Gary Langer.

ABC News polls can be found at ABCNEWS.com at <http://abcnews.com/pollvault.html>.

Media contact: Cathie Levine, (212) 456-4934.

Full results follow (\*= less than 0.5 percent).

1. How would you rate the condition of the natural environment in the world today - excellent, good, fair, poor, or very poor?

	--- Excellent/Good ---				--- Poor/Very Poor ---			No op.
	NET	Excellent	Good	Fair	NET	Poor	Very poor	
3/14/06	24	3	21	43	33	25	8	*

2. Compared to 10 or so years ago, do you think the natural environment in the world today is better, worse or about the same? IF BETTER: Do you think it's much better or somewhat better? IF WORSE: Do you think it's much worse or somewhat worse?

	----- Better -----				----- Worse -----			No op.
	NET	Much	Somewhat	Same	NET	Somewhat	Much	
3/14/06	12	4	9	27	60	38	22	*

3. Thinking ahead to 10 or so years from now, do you think the natural environment in the world will be better, worse, or about the same as it is today? IF BETTER: Do you think it will be much better or somewhat better? IF WORSE: Do you think it will be much worse or somewhat worse?

	----- Better -----				----- Worse -----			No op.
	NET	Much	Somewhat	Same	NET	Somewhat	Much	
3/14/06	21	5	16	23	55	31	24	1

4. Thinking about the way (ITEM) (is/are) handling issues involving the natural environment, do you approve, disapprove, or neither approve nor disapprove? IF APPROVE: Do you approve strongly or somewhat? IF DISAPPROVE: Do you disapprove strongly or somewhat?

3/14/06 - Summary Table

	-----Approve-----				Neith.	-----Disapprove-----			No op.
	NET	Strngly	Smwht			NET	Smwht	Strngly	
a. President Bush	21	10	11	25	53	14	39	1	
b. American businesses	21	7	15	30	47	23	24	1	
c. the U.S. Congress	15	4	11	32	52	22	31	1	

5. During the past year, how much did (ITEM) do to HELP the natural environment - a great deal, a lot, a moderate amount, a little, or nothing?

3/14/06 - Summary Table



	-- Grt dl/Lot --			Mod.	- Little/Nothing -			No
	NET	Grt dl	Lot	amt.	NET	Little	Noth.	op.
a. President Bush's policies	8	4	4	23	66	31	35	3
b. American businesses	8	3	5	35	54	40	14	3

6. During the past year, how much did (ITEM) do to HARM the natural environment - a great deal, a lot, a moderate amount, a little, or nothing?

3/14/06 - Summary Table

	-- Grt dl/Lot --			Mod.	- Little/Nothing -			No
	NET	Grt dl	Lot	amt.	NET	Little	Noth.	op.
a. President Bush's policies	28	16	12	22	47	28	19	2
b. American businesses	29	11	18	37	32	24	7	2

7. During the past year, do you think the American public mainly (helped) the natural environment, mainly (hurt) the natural environment, or neither helped nor hurt it overall? IF HELPED: Has the public helped the environment a great deal or somewhat? IF HURT: Has the public hurt the environment a great deal or somewhat?

	----- Helped -----			Neither helped	----- Hurt -----			No
	NET	Grt deal	Smwht	nor hurt	NET	Smwht	Grt deal	op.
3/14/06	21	6	15	40	38	24	14	1

8. During the next year, how much do you want (ITEM) to do to help the natural environment - a great deal, a lot, a moderate amount, a little, or nothing?

3/14/06 - Summary Table

	---Grt deal/Lot---			Mod.	--- Little/Nothing ---			No
	NET	Grt dl	Lot	amt.	NET	Little	Nothing	op.
a. President Bush	73	49	23	18	8	4	4	1
b. The U.S. Congress	75	49	27	17	7	4	3	*
c. American businesses	76	47	28	19	5	4	1	*
d. The American public	77	51	26	17	5	3	2	*

9. During the past year, how much did you think about the impact that you personally had on the natural environment - a great deal, a lot, a moderate amount, a little, or not at all?

	--- Great deal/Lot ---			Moderate	--- Little/Not at all ---			No
	NET	Great deal	Lot	amount	NET	Little	Not at all	op.
3/14/06	35	16	20	35	30	22	8	*

10. What in your opinion is the single biggest environmental problem the world faces at this time? 10a. (IF AIR POLLUTION OR POLLUTION UNSPECIFIED, Q10) What about (air pollution/pollution) do you have in mind?

	3/14/06
Air pollution	13
Water pollution	6
Pollution (unspecified)	4
Chemical pollution/substances in environment	0
Miscellaneous pollution mentions	3
Global warming/Greenhouse effect/Climate change	16
Destruction/fragmentation/loss of habitat, rain forests, wetlands, forests, open spaces; over-development; logging and mining	7

Energy problems/dependence on fossil fuels/ lack of oil	8
Toxic substances in environment	7
Tsunami/tidal wave/earthquake/natural disasters	1
Oil drilling/oil tankers	2
Waste/landfills/not enough recycling	9
Overpopulation/over-consumption	4
Nuclear power/substances	0
Lack of environmental standards in third-world countries	0
Depletion of ozone	0
Saving natural resources	3
Acid rain	*
Extinction of species	*
Spread of invasive non-native species	*
None	2
Other	8
No opinion	7

11. How much do you trust the things that scientists say about the environment - completely, a lot, a moderate amount, a little, or not at all?

	----- Trust -----		Moderate	----- Do not trust -----			No	
	NET	Completely	Lot	amount	NET	Little	Not at all	op.
3/14/06	31	5	27	41	27	22	5	1

12. Would you say that weather patterns in the county where you live have been more (stable) in the last three years than before that, more (unstable), or about the same?

	More	More	About the	Haven't lived in area	No
	stable	unstable	same	long enough to know (vol.)	opin.
3/14/06	3	52	43	2	*

13. Would you say that average temperatures in the county where you live have been (higher) in the last three years than before that, (lower), or about the same?

	Higher	Lower	About the	Haven't lived in area	No
			same	long enough to know (vol.)	opin.
3/14/06	50	9	37	2	1

14. As far as you know, would you say that weather patterns around the world have been more (stable) in the last three years than before that, more (unstable), or about the same?

	More stable	More unstable	About the same	No opinion
3/14/06	3	70	26	1

15. As far as you know, would you say that average temperatures around the world have been (higher) in the last three years than before that, (lower), or about the same?

	Higher	Lower	About the same	No opinion
3/14/06	56	8	33	3

16. You may have heard about the idea that the world's temperature may have been going up slowly over the past 100 years. What is your personal opinion on this - do you think this has probably been happening, or do you think it probably hasn't been happening?

	Has been happening	Hasn't been happening	No opinion
3/14/06	85	13	2
2/13/98*	80	18	2
10/5/97*	76	22	2
*OSU poll			

17. How sure are you that the world's temperature (has/hasn't) been going up - extremely sure, very sure, somewhat sure, or not sure at all?

16/17: "Has been happening"

	----- Sure -----			----- Less sure -----			No op.
	NET	Extremely	Very	NET	Somewhat	Not at all	
3/14/06	45	19	26	55	44	11	*
2/13/98*	43	15	27	57	40	16	*
10/5/97*	44	14	30	56	44	12	*
*OSU poll							

16/17: "Has not been happening"

	----- Sure -----			----- Less sure -----			No op.
	NET	Extremely	Very	NET	Somewhat	Not at all	
3/14/06	34	10	24	66	38	28	0
2/13/98*	30	11	18	69	39	30	1
10/5/97*	34	11	24	66	31	34	0
*OSU poll							

16/17 NET:

	-----Has been happening-----					-----Has not been happening-----					No op.
	-----Sure about it-----					-----Sure about it-----					
	NET	Ext.	Very	Somewhat	Not	NET	Ext.	Very	Somewhat	Not	
3/14/06	85	16	22	37	9	13	1	3	5	4	2
2/13/98*	80	12	22	32	13	18	2	3	7	5	1
10/5/97*	76	11	23	33	9	22	2	5	7	7	2
*OSU poll											

18. Do you think a rise in the world's temperatures is being caused mostly by things people do, mostly by natural causes, or about equally by things people do and by natural causes?\*

	Things people do	Natural causes	About equally	No opinion
3/14/06	31	19	49	1

\*\*For Q18, Q21, Q22, Q25, Q26, Q27, if respondent not sure in Q17, "Assuming its happening" and "would be" or "could be" were asked.

19. How important is the issue of global warming to you personally - extremely important, very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not at all important?

	----- Important -----				----- Not important -----			No
	NET	Extremely	Very	Smwht	NET	Not too	Not at all	op.
3/14/06	49	17	33	32	18	10	8	*
2/13/98*	31	9	21	49	20	15	5	*
10/5/97*	27	7	20	47	26	20	6	*

\*OSU poll

20. How much do you feel you know about global warming - a lot, a moderate amount, a little, or nothing?

	--- Lot/Moderate ---			--- Little/Nothing ---			No
	NET	Lot	Moderate	NET	Little	Nothing	op.
3/14/06	58	11	47	42	36	6	*
2/13/98*	44	5	39	56	46	10	*
10/5/97*	43	5	38	57	51	7	0

\*OSU poll

21. If nothing is done to reduce global warming in the future, how serious of a problem do you think it will be for THE UNITED STATES - very serious, somewhat serious, not so serious or not serious at all?

	----- Serious -----			----- Not Serious -----			No
	NET	Very	Somewhat	NET	Not so	Not at all	op.
3/14/06	83	49	34	16	10	6	2

22. If nothing is done to reduce global warming in the future, how serious of a problem do you think it will be for THE WORLD - very serious, somewhat serious, not so serious or not serious at all?

	----- Serious -----			----- Not Serious -----			No
	NET	Very	Somewhat	NET	Not so	Not at all	op.
3/14/06	85	57	28	13	8	5	2

23. (GLOBAL WARMING IS SERIOUS PROBLEM, Q21 OR Q22) Do you think global warming is already a serious problem, or do you think it will become one in the future?

	Already a serious problem	Will be in the future	No opinion
3/14/06	44	54	2

21/22/23 NET:

	-----Serious-----				Not serious	No opin.
	NET	Now	Future	DK		
3/14/06	87	38	47	2	12	1

24. (GLOBAL WARMING WILL BE PROBLEM IN FUTURE, Q23) About how many years from now do you think global warming will become a serious problem?

	1-15	16-49	50-99	100+	No op.
3/14/06	32	27	18	19	4

25. Do you think global warming threatens (ITEM) a great deal, somewhat, not so much or not at all?

3/14/06 - Summary Table\*

	----- Threat -----			----- Not a threat -----			No op.
	NET	Grt dl	Smwht	NET	Not so	Not at all	
a. the world's environment	83	51	32	15	6	9	2
b. you personally	62	25	37	37	18	19	1
c. other Americans	77	32	45	22	11	10	1
d. people living now in other modern industrialized countries	78	34	44	21	14	7	1
e. poor people in undeveloped countries around the world today	84	51	33	14	9	5	2
f. future generations	88	60	28	12	7	5	1
g. plants and animal species	86	56	30	12	8	4	2

\*Items a-c asked of half sample, items d-g asked of other half sample.

26. How much do you think can be done to reduce the amount of future global warming -- a great deal, a good amount, just some, or hardly anything?

	----- More -----			----- Less -----				
	NET	Great deal	Good amount	NET	Just some	Hardly anything	Nothing (vol.)	No opin.
3/14/06	62	31	31	36	19	16	1	2

27. How much do you think can be done to reduce global warming's effects on people and the environment - a great deal, a good amount, just some, or hardly anything?

	----- More -----			----- Less -----				
	NET	Great deal	Good amount	NET	Just some	Hardly anything	Nothing (vol.)	No opin.
3/14/06	60	28	32	39	22	16	1	1

28. Do you think the federal government should do more than it's doing now to try to deal with global warming, should do less than it's doing now, or is it doing about the right amount? IF MORE: Should it do much more or somewhat more? IF LESS: Should it do much less or somewhat less?

	----- More -----			Right amount	----- Less -----			No op.
	NET	Much	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Much		
3/14/06	68	46	22	25	5	2	3	1

29. Which of these would you rather see the federal government do: require companies and individuals to do things to reduce global warming; offer tax cuts to encourage these things, but not require them; or do nothing to influence whether companies and individuals do these things?

	Require	Encourage	Do nothing	No op.
3/14/06	52	38	8	2

30. Do you think most scientists agree with one another about whether or not global warming is happening, or do you think there is a lot of disagreement among scientists on this issue?

	Most agree	A lot of disagreement	No opinion
3/14/05	35	64	1
2/13/98*	30	67	3

10/5/97\*            35                            62                            3  
 \*OSU poll

31. (IF MOST AGREE, Q30) Do you think most scientists believe that global warming is happening or is not happening?

	Is happening	Is not happening	No opinion
3/14/05	98	2	0
2/13/98*	98	2	*
10/5/97*	98	2	0

\*OSU poll

30/31 NET:

	-----Scientists agree-----		Scientists disagree	No op.
	NET	Happening	Not happening	
3/14/05	35	34	1	64
2/13/98*	30	29	1	67
10/5/97*	35	34	1	62

\*OSU poll

32. For each of the following, please tell me whether you favor or oppose it as a way for the federal government to try to reduce future global warming:

3/14/06 - Summary Table

	Favor	Oppose	No op.
a. Increase taxes on electricity so people use less of it	19	81	*
b. Increase taxes on gasoline so people either drive less, or buy cars that use less gas	31	68	1
c. Give companies tax breaks to build nuclear power plants	41	56	3
d. Give companies tax breaks to produce more electricity from water, wind and solar power	87	12	1

33. For the next items, please tell me for each one whether it's something the government should require by law, encourage with tax breaks but not require, or stay out of entirely.

3/14/06 - Summary Table

	Require	Encourage	Stay out	No op.
a. Building cars that use less gasoline	45	40	15	*
b. Building air conditioners, refrigerators and other appliances that use less electricity	42	41	17	1
c. Building new homes and offices that use less energy for heating and cooling	33	51	15	1
d. Lowering the amount of greenhouse gases that power plants are allowed to release into the air	61	26	11	2

\*\*\*END\*\*\*