

## Climate at a Glance – Consensus



### Key Takeaways:

- **Facts and scientific evidence** always **trump a show of hands**.
- A majority of scientists (including skeptics) believe the Earth is warming and humans are playing a role, but a **strong majority of scientists are not very concerned** about it.
- The key debate between alarmists and skeptics is the issue of impacts, not whether humans are causing some warming. **The only consensus that matters is whether scientists are very worried** about climate change, and most scientists are not very worried.

### Short Summary:

Science is the evaluation of evidence, not a mere vote or show of hands. Throughout the course of human history, there have been many periods during which a majority of scientists have wrongly concluded all sorts of erroneous assertions about the natural world and human beings. It was the scientific method, not consensus, that has allowed our understanding of the universe to expand.

Nevertheless, to the extent people claim a scientific consensus exists about climate change and its potential dangers, there has been only a single scientific organization whose full membership has been polled on climate change issues: the American Meteorological Society (AMS). What's more, the evidence shows AMS members are not deeply concerned about the effects of climate change.

Although surveys of AMS members show two-thirds believe humans are causing a majority of recent warming, the polling results reveal only about 30 percent are very worried about it.<sup>1</sup> And almost as many—28 percent—said they are “not at all worried” or “not very worried.” A plurality of

respondents (42 percent) reported they are only “somewhat worried,” which would seem to indicate they would only support monitoring the scientific evidence and perhaps implementing some modest, cost-effective programs to deal with the effects of climate change—not a total or near-total overhaul of the global economy, as so many climate activists have suggested.

Further, it is important to note that 40 percent of AMS members believe climate change impacts have been primarily beneficial or equally mixed between beneficial and harmful, and only half said they expect the impacts to be entirely or primarily harmful over the next 50 years.

A more recent survey conducted by Fairleigh Dickenson University of 400 researchers in climate-related fields found that although the vast majority of scientists agree the planet is warming, slightly more than half, 59 percent, said that they expect climate change to cause “significant harm.”<sup>2</sup> This is a far cry from the supposed 97 percent consensus that humans are causing catastrophic climate change. Thirty-nine percent said the world was either experiencing “significant improvement,” “slight improvement,” “no change,” or “slight harm.” Among respondents with the most experience – those at least 50-years-old – less than half expect significant harm for people alive today, and less than half of those surveyed said they believed there has been a significant increase in the frequency of severe weather events. The majority say there has been no change or only a slight increase.

Finally, there have been numerous prominent scientists and scientific organizations that have openly and consistently rejected the view that humans are causing a climate change catastrophe. Clintel (the Climate Intelligence Group) is one such organization. It produced a “World Climate Declaration, There is No Climate Emergency,” which states, among other points that: Natural as well as anthropogenic factors cause warming; Warming is far slower than predicted; Climate policy relies on inadequate models; CO<sub>2</sub> is plant food, the basis of all life on Earth; Global warming has not increased natural disasters.<sup>3</sup> At present, more than 1,960 scientists and professionals have signed onto this declaration, including prominent researchers at MIT, Harvard, Columbia, Princeton, and Penn, as well as researchers at other respected academic institutions and research institutes around the world.

Others have served as official state climatologists or have worked for important government agencies, such as NASA and NOAA.<sup>4</sup> Among the many influential scientists who have questioned the causes and/or consequences of the alleged climate change “consensus” are several giants of the scientific world of the past half-century, such as Nobel Prize Laureate John F. Clauser, Nobel Prize Laureate Ivar Giaever, Freeman Dyson, S. Fred Singer, Richard Lindzen, Will Happer, and Steven Koonin.

## References:

1. Center for Climate Change Communication, A 2016 Survey of American Meteorological Society Members About Climate Change, George Mason University, March 2016, <https://blog.ametsoc.org/2016/03/24/new-survey-shows-ams-members-positions-on-climate-change/>

2. “Climate Change Study, Summary Report,” Fairleigh Dickenson University, October 2022; <https://heartland.org/opinion/97-consensus-on-climate-change-survey-shows-only-59-of-scientists-expect-significant-harm/>
3. “World Climate Declaration, There is No Climate Emergency,” Clintel, October 2024 (update); <https://clintel.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/WCD-241023.pdf>
4. Craig D. Idso, Robert M. Carter, and S. Fred Singer, Why Scientists Disagree About Global Warming (Arlington Heights, IL: The Heartland Institute, 2016), <https://heartland.org/publications/why-scientists-disagree-about-global-warming/>

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