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# Carsey Survey Tracks Public Perceptions of Climate Change in N.H

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## Media Relations

# Carsey Survey Tracks Public Perceptions Of Climate Change In N.H

July 13, 2010

DURHAM, N.H. – Slightly more than half of New Hampshire residents surveyed recently say they understand “a moderate amount” about climate change, and nearly one-third report understanding “a great deal,” a new report from the Carsey Institute at the University of New Hampshire finds.

The report, a collaboration of the Carsey Institute, the UNH Survey Center and the UNH Office of Sustainability, is the first survey of a new initiative that will track public perceptions about climate change as they change over time. Questions related to climate change were asked as part of New Hampshire’s Granite State Poll, which surveyed 512 New Hampshire residents in April 2010. It will be repeated quarterly.

“Unlike questions on some earlier surveys, the questions in this new survey initiative focus on what is happening now – not some time in the future – due to climate change, the central point stated by scientists in a range of scientific reports,” says report author Lawrence Hamilton, a senior fellow at the Carsey Institute and professor of sociology at UNH. Such neutral, factual wording aims to focus on what people know or believe they know about climate change now.

Additional key findings of the survey include:

- Understanding of climate change tends to increase with education.
- About half the respondents think that most scientists agree that climate change is happening now, caused mainly by human activities. Forty-one percent think there is little agreement among scientists.
- Half of those surveyed personally believe that climate change is happening and is human-caused; 39 percent believe it is happening but with natural causes; four percent believe that climate change is not happening.
- A large majority of Democrats believe that climate change is human-caused, while most Republicans believe it is a natural phenomenon.

“Research that will help decision-makers from educators to scientists get a better sense of public understanding of our changing climate will make efforts to develop robust approaches to mitigation and adaptation more effective,” says Tom Kelly, UNH’s chief sustainability officer and director of the University Office of Sustainability.






The Carsey Institute publication, called “Do Scientists Agree about Climate Change? Public Perceptions from a New Hampshire Survey,” is available to download here:

[http://www.carseyinstitute.unh.edu/publications/IB\\_Hamilton\\_Climate\\_Survey.pdf](http://www.carseyinstitute.unh.edu/publications/IB_Hamilton_Climate_Survey.pdf).

The Carsey Institute conducts policy and applied research on vulnerable families and on sustainable community development, giving policy makers and practitioners the timely, independent resources they need to effect change in their communities. Learn more at <http://carseyinstitute.unh.edu/>.

The UNH Survey Center is an independent, non-partisan academic survey research organization and a division of the UNH College of Liberal Arts.

Since 1997, the University Office of Sustainability -- the oldest endowed sustainability program in higher education in the U.S. -- has been transforming UNH into a sustainable learning community across curriculum, operations, research and engagement and initiatives in biodiversity, climate, food and culture.

 
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