



Florida Atlantic University
Division of Public Affairs
777 Glades Road, AD 101
Boca Raton, FL 33431

MEDIA CONTACT: Joshua Glanzer
561-297-1168, jglanzer@fau.edu

FAU Survey Finds Floridians Believe in Climate Change and Want Government Action

BOCA RATON, Fla. (Oct. 23, 2023) – Floridians are more convinced that climate change is happening than Americans as a whole and strongly support steps to address its impact, according to a new [Florida Atlantic University survey](#).

The latest edition of the Florida Climate Resilience Survey found that 90 percent of respondents believe climate change is happening. The finding is consistent with eight previous surveys conducted by FAU’s Center for Environmental Studies (CES), which found that 86 percent to 92 percent of respondents had that belief.

In contrast, a recent Yale University survey found that 74 percent of Americans as a whole think climate change is happening.

“Floridians might be more likely to believe climate change is happening due to their experiences with hurricanes and other extreme weather,” said Dr. Colin Polsky, the founding director of FAU’s School of Environmental, Coastal, and Ocean Sustainability (ECOS).

The survey also found that Floridians overwhelmingly support more government action to address the impacts of climate change, with 69 percent support for state action and 70 percent support for federal action.

“The obvious hypothesis to test is that recent personal experiences with weather events increase support for addressing climate change, regardless of party affiliation,” Polsky said.

The survey’s data appear to support this notion with 60 percent of Floridians reporting some level of negative impact by strong winds from a hurricane or tornado in the past 12 months, and 45 percent of Floridians reporting some level of negative impact from flooding in the past 12 months.

The survey did find a slight decline in statewide belief in the human-caused nature of climate change, which dropped to 57 percent from 65 percent since a March survey. But Polsky said the current survey’s overall findings suggest that support for action on climate change will

strengthen as the state’s population continues to boom, with Florida adding more than 400,000 new residents last year alone.

The last two editions of the survey found that newer residents exhibit higher levels of belief in human-caused climate change than people who have lived in Florida longer than five years. Polsky believes these trends might explain the state’s investment in recent years of more than \$1 billion in climate adaptation projects.

“It’s fair to conclude that state politicians feel insulated from backlash if they support actions to address climate change,” he said. “Since the state is so dominated by the Republican Party, it makes sense to consider calling Florida the first Republican state to openly fight climate change.”

CES has conducted the Florida Climate Resilience Survey since October 2019 and now does so twice each year. The latest edition of the survey was conducted in English and Spanish from September 22 to 28, 2023. The sample consisted of 1,400 Floridians, age 18 and older, with a survey margin of error of +/- 2.53 percentage points. The data were collected using an online panel provided by GreatBlue Research. Responses for the entire sample were weighted to adjust for age, race, income, education and gender, according to the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Surveys. It is important to remember that subsets carry higher margins of error.

For more information, survey results and full cross-tabulations, visit www.ces.fau.edu/ces-bepi/ or contact Colin Polsky, Ph.D., at cpolsky@fau.edu.

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About Florida Atlantic University:

Florida Atlantic University, established in 1961, officially opened its doors in 1964 as the fifth public university in Florida. Today, the University serves more than 30,000 undergraduate and graduate students across six campuses located along the southeast Florida coast. In recent years, the University has doubled its research expenditures and outpaced its peers in student achievement rates. Through the coexistence of access and excellence, FAU embodies an innovative model where traditional achievement gaps vanish. FAU is designated a Hispanic-serving institution, ranked as a top public university by U.S. News & World Report and a High Research Activity institution by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. For more information, visit www.fau.edu.