

President Donald Trump's stance on climate change conflicts with the opinion of the majority of American voters, according to a POLITICO/Morning Consult poll. | Peter Dejong/AP Photo

POLITICO/MORNING CONSULT POLL

Poll: Majority of voters worried about climate change

By STEVEN SHEPARD 12/06/2018 05:09 AM EST

A new poll shows most voters side with elements of the federal government that sounded the alarm last month in a dire report on climate change rather than with the head of that government — and the nation's leading climate-change denier — President Donald Trump.

According to the latest POLITICO/Morning Consult poll, two-thirds of voters say they are very or somewhat concerned about the report. A 58 percent majority agrees with the scientific consensus — and disagrees with Trump — that climate change is being caused by human activity.

The poll was conducted on Dec. 4 — roughly a week after Trump dismissed the results of the report, which warned that climate change is poised to devastate the country financially and ecologically.

Overall, Trump described the report as “fine” in public remarks last week. But he disputed the report's conclusions that climate change could cost the U.S. economy hundreds of billions of dollars per year by the end of the century, telling reporters, “I don't believe it.”

Pressed further by The Washington Post in an interview last week, Trump said many smart people, himself included, dispute the existence and causes of climate change — a statement at odds with the vast scientific consensus on the subject.

“One of the problems that a lot of people like myself, we have very high levels of intelligence but we're not necessarily such believers,” Trump said in the interview, adding, “As to whether or not it's man-made and whether or not the effects that you're talking about are there, I don't see it.”

But 58 percent of voters say climate change is being caused by human activity, compared with 30 percent who say it's a natural phenomenon. Only 4 percent of voters say climate change is not happening, while 8 percent are undecided.

More than 3 in 4 Democratic voters, 78 percent, say human activity is causing climate change, compared with 34 percent of Republicans and 58 percent of independents.

And most voters are worried about climate change: 67 percent are very or somewhat concerned about the impact that climate change is having on the U.S. economy, while only 17 percent are not too concerned and just 11 percent aren't concerned at all. Roughly the same percentage, 68 percent, are very or somewhat concerned about the impact of climate change on the environment.

Many voters also see climate change as an urgent problem for the U.S.: 46 percent say it's a critical threat to the vital interests of the country, while 29 percent say it's an important threat but not critical. Only 19 percent say it is not an important threat at all.

Other challenges facing the U.S. that voters see as critical threats include ISIS and terrorist groups in foreign countries (50 percent call those critical threats), economic collapse (49 percent) and illegal immigration (43 percent). But more voters say cyberattacks against the country (66 percent) and terrorism in the U.S. (61 percent) are critical threats to the U.S.

WHITE HOUSE

'I don't believe it': Trump dismisses grim government report on climate change

By CAITLIN OPRYSKO

Despite its content, the timing of the government report's release — on the Friday after Thanksgiving, when many Americans were traveling, spending time with family or bargain shopping — suggested that the Trump administration was hoping to limit its exposure. The poll suggests it may have worked, with more voters saying they are more familiar with other prominent recent news stories than the climate-change report.

“Public attention on the latest federal climate change report is being superseded by the Russia probe and border tensions,” said Tyler Sinclair, Morning Consult's vice president. “Over a half of Americans (53 percent) say they have heard a lot or some about the climate change report. The comparable figure for Michael Cohen's guilty plea is 71 percent, and nearly eight in 10 have heard about CBP agents using tear gas to stop Central American migrants.”

The POLITICO/Morning Consult poll surveyed 1,975 registered voters and has a margin of sampling error of plus or minus 2 percentage points.

Morning Consult is a nonpartisan media and technology company that provides data-driven research and insights on politics, policy and business strategy.

More details on the poll and its methodology can be found in these two documents — Toplines: <https://politi.co/2BRKrED> |

Crosstabs: <https://politi.co/2rkOdQO>