

Global Warming Seen as a Problem That Needs to be Addressed Globally, But Most People Want U.S. to Take the Lead

ROCHESTER, N.Y. – November 7, 2007 – A large majority of the public believes that global warming is a problem that must be addressed by industrial countries globally. However, a large majority also believes that the United States needs to take the lead when it comes to controlling greenhouse gases and pollution.

These are two of the findings of a new Harris Poll of 1,052 adults surveyed by telephone between October 16 and 23, 2007 by Harris Interactive®.

The main findings of this poll include:

- Those who think we have too little government regulation (53%) “in the area of environmental protection” greatly outnumbers those who think we have too much (21%);
- Those who now think we have too little regulation (53%) have increased from 47 percent in 2005 and 39 percent in 2000. However, they are far fewer than those who felt that way in the early 1990s;
- Republicans are split more or less equally between those who believe we have too much (34%) and too little (36%) regulation. Most Democrats (68%) and half of Independents (51%) believe we have too little regulation;
- A 71 percent to 23 percent majority believes that current trends will lead to global warming and an increase in average temperatures. This substantial majority who believe in global warming has not changed much in the last ten years (in 1997 a 67 percent to 21 percent believed this to be true). The same proportion (71%) of the public believes that we are already *experiencing* global warming;
- A very large majority (87%) of all adults agrees with the statement that “since emerging countries such as India and China will soon pass the United States as the largest contributor of greenhouse gases, whatever is done to control these gases should be undertaken by almost all industrial countries”;
- At the same time an almost equally large 81 percent majority believes that “the United States needs to set the lead when it comes to controlling greenhouse gases and pollution”.

So What?

This poll leaves no doubt that the great majority of Americans, believe that global warming is a real threat, that we are already experiencing its effects, and that this country should take the lead in doing more to address it. Clearly that has not been the position of the Bush administration.

As we get closer to the 2008 election, candidates will surely notice that over half of Republicans (and very large majorities of Democrats and Independents) believe we are experiencing global warming, and that more than a third of Republicans (36%) think there is too little environmental regulation. The Republican nominee next fall, whoever he is, will need to avoid being identified with President Bush's skepticism on global warming and his resistance to taking strong steps — domestically or internationally — to deal with it. If he does not, some Republicans may be reluctant to vote for him.

TABLE 1
GOVERNMENT REGULATION TO REDUCE ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS – TREND

“Do you think there is too much, too little, or about the right amount of government regulation and involvement in the area of environmental protection?”

Base: All Adults

		Too Much	Too Little	About the Right Amount	Not Sure
Now	%	21	53	21	5
2005	%	19	47	32	2
2000	%	22	39	33	5
1999	%	29	42	28	1
1998	%	29	41	29	2
1997	%	21	49	28	1
1996	%	24	41	30	5
1993	%	20	52	24	3
1991	%	11	63	23	3

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

TABLE 2
AMOUNT OF REGULATION AND INVOLVEMENT IN ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

“Do you think there is too much, too little, or about the right amount of government regulation and involvement in the area of environmental protection?”

Base: All Adults

	All Adults	Party ID		
		Republican	Democrat	Independent
	%	%	%	%
Too much	21	34	10	25
Too little	53	36	68	51
About the right amount	21	25	17	19
Not sure	5	4	4	4

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

**TABLE 3
BELIEF IN GLOBAL WARMING – TREND**

“Do you believe the theory that increased carbon dioxide and other gases released into the atmosphere will, if unchecked, lead to global warming and an increase in average temperatures?”

Base: All Adults

	1997	2000	2001	2002	NOW
	%	%	%	%	%
Believe	67	72	75	74	71
Do not believe	21	20	19	19	23
Not sure/Refused	12	9	6	7	6

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

**TABLE 4
ARE WE CURRENTLY EXPERIENCING GLOBAL WARMING?**

“Do you believe that we are currently experiencing global warming?”

Base: All Adults

	Total	Party ID		
		Republican	Democrat	Independent
	%	%	%	%
Yes, believe	71	56	82	74
No, do not believe	24	37	13	22
Not sure	6	7	5	4

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

**TABLE 5
AGREE/DISAGREE WITH STATEMENTS ON INTERNATIONAL ROLE OF U.S.**

“Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?”

Base: All Respondents

		Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Sure/ Decline to Answer	Total Agree	Total Disagree
Since emerging countries such as India and China will soon pass the United States as the largest contributor of greenhouse gases, what ever is done to control these gases should be undertaken by almost all industrial countries	%	65	22	4	7	2	87	10
As the world’s leading industrial country, the United States needs to set the lead when it comes to controlling greenhouse gases and pollution	%	56	24	8	8	3	81	16

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Methodology

The Harris Poll[®] was conducted by telephone within the United States between October 16 and 23, 2007 among 1,052 adults (aged 18 and over). Figures for age, sex, race/ethnicity, education, region, number of adults in the household, size of place (urbanicity) and number of phone lines in the household were weighted where necessary to bring them into line with their actual proportions in the population.

All sample surveys and polls, whether or not they use probability sampling, are subject to multiple sources of error which are most often not possible to quantify or estimate, including sampling error, coverage error, error associated with nonresponse, error associated with question wording and response options, and post-survey weighting and adjustments. Therefore, Harris Interactive avoids the words “margin of error” as they are misleading. All that can be calculated are different possible sampling errors with different probabilities for pure, unweighted, random samples with 100% response rates. These are only theoretical because no published polls come close to this ideal.

These statements conform to the principles of disclosure of the National Council on Public Polls.

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