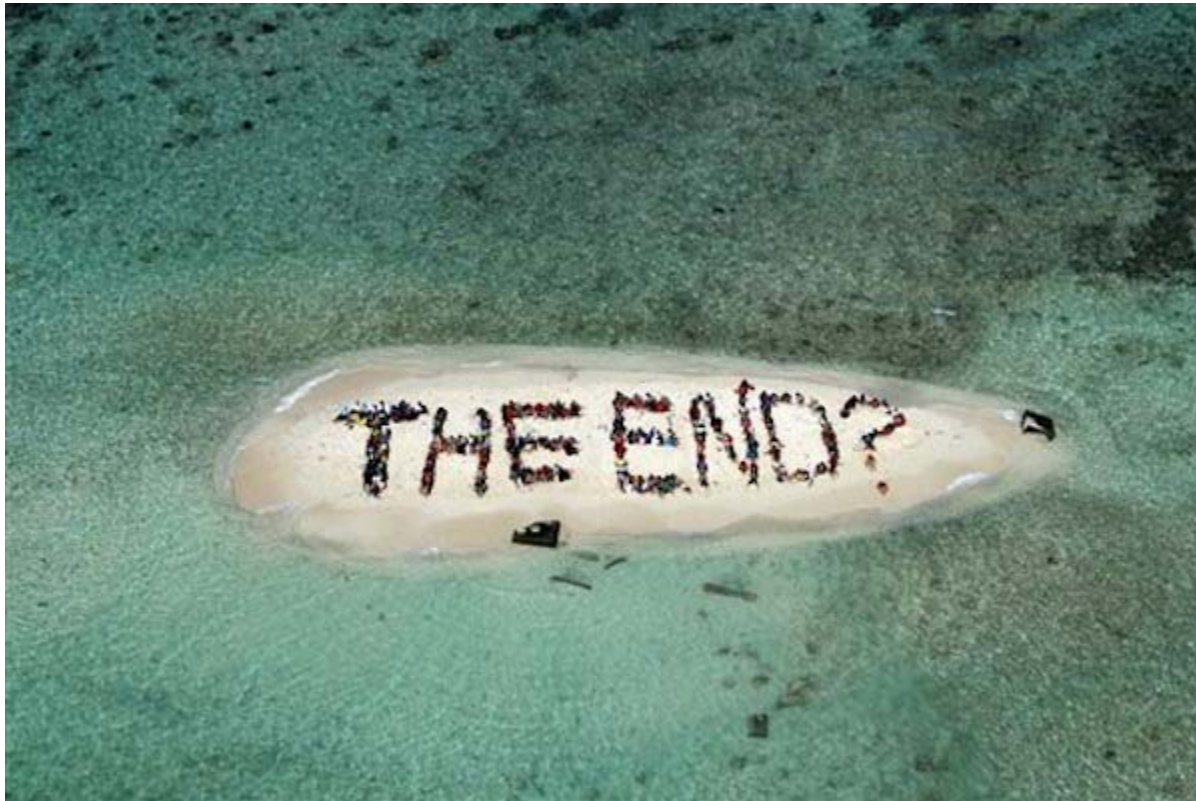


Poll: Most Republicans don't believe in climate change

By [Liz Goodwin](#)

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A new Pew poll [shows a dramatic change](#) in opinion on climate change among Republicans that seems to mirror a new tone on the issue taken up by GOP politicians.

In the poll, 53 percent of Republicans said there is no evidence for climate change, when only three years ago 62 percent of GOPers said they did believe in global warming. Almost 80 percent of Democrats and a majority of independents said there is solid evidence for global warming.

Overall, 59 percent of adults thought there was good evidence that the planet is warming, and 34 percent said global warming is mostly caused by human activity. Both numbers are down steeply from 2006.

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An overwhelming number of scientists say global warming exists, is harmful and is caused by human-created carbon emissions, from cars, factories and other sources. Even climate-change "skeptics" agree that more carbon dioxide in the atmosphere means higher temperatures, [as Bjorn Lomborg tells The Daily Beast](#). Lomborg made a documentary saying global pacts to reduce carbon emissions are not a good idea, but agrees that evidence for man-made climate change is undeniable.

"Ninety-seven percent of top scientists are in agreement, but the public is split about 50-50," University of Minnesota professor John Abraham [told the AFP](#). (The Pew poll shows that only 44 percent of Americans think most scientists believe in man-made climate change.) Meanwhile, a group of hundreds of U.S. scientists announced this month they want to speak out on climate change to battle misinformation.

So why the disconnect?

The campaign to raise awareness about global warming took a major hit in 2009 when leaked emails from scientists at the University of East Anglia suggested that some climate scientists were manipulating data. A government review later [cleared the scientists of manipulating data](#), but the "Climategate" damage was done, [at least in terms of public perception](#). (Though there's some debate. One Stanford researcher [conducted another poll](#) that suggests that most Americans had not heard of "Climategate.")

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As criticism over "Climategate" mounted and President Obama's efforts to secure a carbon-reduction pact at Copenhagen last year failed, Republican politicians — especially those affiliated with the tea party movement — began more boldly to deny man-made global warming. (And it's not just Republicans who are [publicly airing doubts about global warming](#). Democratic Senator Joe Manchin won his election in West Virginia after literally shooting a copy of the failed cap-and-trade energy bill in a campaign ad.)

The liberal blog ThinkProgress [estimates](#) that about half of the approximately 100 freshmen GOP Congressmen do not believe in man-made global warming. The soon-to-be chair of the House Science Committee [is a climate-change skeptic](#).

Even among more moderate Republicans, climate change has become a no-go zone.

New Jersey Governor Chris Christie, who ran on a clean-energy platform just a year ago, [told a town hall last week he "can't figure this stuff out"](#) when asked if he is convinced man-made global warming is a problem.

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"Mankind, is it responsible for global warming? Well I'll tell you something. I have seen evidence on both sides of it. I'm skeptical — I'm skeptical," he said. (His press secretary later walked back the remark a little in speaking to the Huffington Post.)

It's unclear what effects this new trend among Republicans will have on global policy, since austerity-minded European nations have already signaled they are reluctant to act on reducing carbon emissions. The next UN conference on climate change [is set for Nov. 29](#), when a binding deal to reduce carbon emissions is again not expected to be agreed upon by participating nations.

(Climate change activists spell out "The End?" on a reef off Belize, hoping to spur action by global leaders at the UN climate change conference this month: AP)

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