

## U.S. Views on Climate Change Stable After Extreme Winter

---

by Lydia Saad



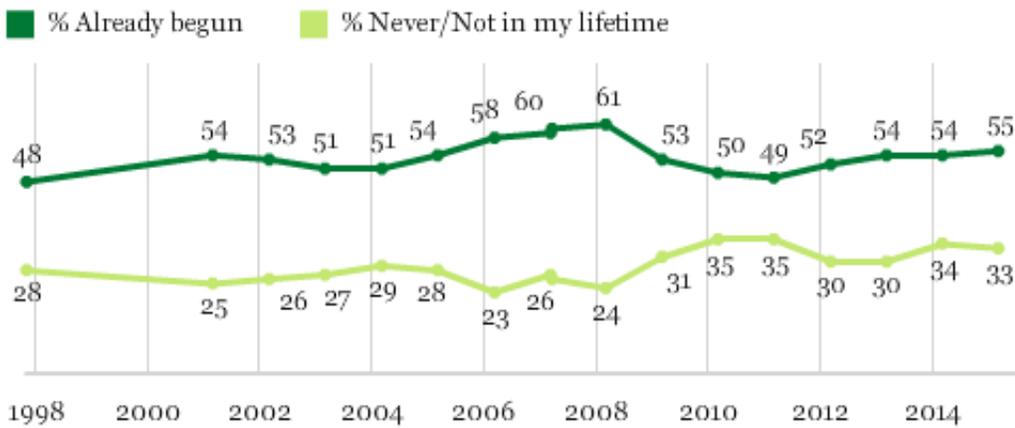
### Story Highlights

- *Slight majority continue to say effects of warming already evident*
- *No change in percentage worried about the issue, at 55%*
- *Less than half see global warming as a serious threat to them*

PRINCETON, N.J. -- Although climate scientists have been in the news describing this winter as a strong signal that global warming is producing more extreme weather, Americans are no more likely today (55%) than in the past two years to believe the effects of global warming are occurring.

### Americans' Belief That Effects of Global Warming Are Already Happening

Which of the following statements reflects your view of when the effects of global warming will begin to happen -- they have already begun to happen; they will start happening within a few years; they will start happening within your lifetime; they will not happen within your lifetime, but they will affect future generations; or they will never happen?



GALLUP®

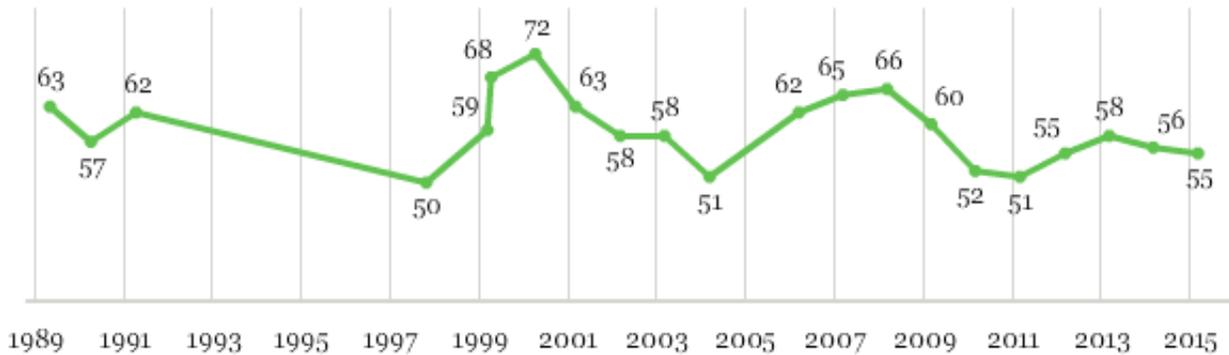
The 2014-2015 winter season brought record warm temperatures to the Western U.S. while it delivered record cold to much of the rest of the country and record snowfall in the East. However, this winter has neither created an uptick in new believers that the effects of global warming are manifest nor reduced the ranks of skeptics. A third of Americans believe the effects of global warming will either never happen (16%) or not happen in their lifetime (17%), about the same as in March 2014.

Similarly, as Gallup reported previously, Americans' levels of concern about a number of environmental issues are no higher today than last March, including concerns about global warming. Just over half of Americans, 55%, currently say they worry a "great deal" (32%) or "fair amount" (23%) about the issue, roughly the same as last year and similar to the average over the past six years. Public worry about global warming was higher from 2006 to 2009, and higher still in 1999 and 2000.

## Worry About Global Warming/Climate Change

Please tell me if you personally worry about this problem a great deal, a fair amount, only a little or not at all -- global warming or climate change.

■ % Great deal/Fair amount



GALLUP®

## Other Global Warming Trends Also Steady

Three other trends reflecting Americans' concerns and attitudes about global warming tell the same story. Just over a third believe global warming will pose a serious threat to their way of life in their lifetime, a slight majority believe the seriousness of global warming is either underestimated or reported correctly in the news, and a similar majority believe global warming is the result of human activities rather than natural causes.

## Three Measures of Public Belief About Global Warming

Recent trends

	2014	2015
	%	%
Do you think that global warming will pose a serious threat to you or your way of life in your lifetime?		
Yes	36	37
No	64	62
Thinking about what is said in the news, in your view is the seriousness of global warming:		
Generally underestimated	33	35
Generally correct	23	21
Generally exaggerated	42	42
Do you believe increases in the Earth's temperature over the last century are due more to:		
Human activities	57	55
Natural causes	40	41

See accompanying question responses and trends for precise question wording.

GALLUP

In the same poll, Gallup found 51% of Americans saying the weather in their area was colder than usual this winter, while 18% said it was warmer and 29% said it was about the same. However, when asked what they attribute it to, most of those in the cold regions believe the extreme cold reflected normal variations in weather. At the same time, just half of those in the warm spots attribute the unusual heat to global warming; the other half think it was normal variation.

Thus, one reason more Americans may not make the connection between unusual weather patterns and global warming is that many more experienced extreme cold than record heat, making the connection less intuitive.

### Bottom Line

Americans' global warming views have been in a holding pattern for the past few years. This winter, much of the country experienced either unusually hot, cold or snowy weather, theoretically providing cause for people to reflect on whether they were witnessing normal variation in weather or the effects of global warming. However, most

Americans believe the strange weather reflects natural variations, not global warming -- and the stability of Gallup's global warming trends underscores this.

## Survey Methods

Results for this Gallup poll are based on telephone interviews conducted March 5-8, 2015, with a random sample of 1,025 adults, aged 18 and older, living in all 50 U.S. states and the District of Columbia. For results based on the total sample of national adults, the margin of sampling error is  $\pm 4$  percentage points at the 95% confidence level. All reported margins of sampling error include computed design effects for weighting.

Each sample of national adults includes a minimum quota of 50% cellphone respondents and 50% landline respondents, with additional minimum quotas by time zone within region. Landline and cellular telephone numbers are selected using random-digit-dial methods.

[View complete question responses and trends.](#)

Learn more about how [Gallup Poll Social Series](#) works.

**RELEASE DATE:** March 25, 2015

**SOURCE:** Gallup <http://www.gallup.com/poll/182150/views-climate-change-stable-extreme-winter.aspx>

**CONTACT:** Gallup World Headquarters, 901 F Street, Washington, D.C., 20001, U.S.A  
+1 202.715.3030

---

Copyright © 2015 Gallup, Inc. All rights reserved.

Gallup, Inc. maintains several registered and unregistered trademarks that include but may not be limited to: A8, Accountability Index, Business Impact Analysis, BE10, CE11, CE11 Accelerator, Clifton StrengthsExplorer, Clifton StrengthsFinder, Customer Engagement Index, Customer Engagement Management, Dr. Gallup Portrait, Employee Engagement Index, Enetrix, Engagement Creation Index, Follow This Path, Gallup, Gallup Brain, Gallup Business Journal, GBJ, Gallup Consulting, Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index, Gallup Management Journal, GMJ, Gallup Panel, Gallup Press, Gallup Tuesday Briefing, Gallup University, Gallup World News, HumanSigma, HumanSigma Accelerator, ICE11, I10, L3, ME25, NurseInsight, NurseStrengths, Patient Quality System, Performance Optimization, Power of 2, PrincipallInsight, Q12, Q12 Accelerator, Q12

Advantage, Selection Research, Inc., SE25, SF34, SRI, Soul of the City, Strengths Spotlight, Strengths-Based Selling, StatShot, StrengthsCoach, StrengthsExplorer, StrengthsFinder, StrengthsInsight, StrengthsQuest, SupportInsight, TX(R+E+R)=P3, TeacherInsight, The Gallup Path, The Gallup Poll, The Gallup School, VantagePoint, Varsity Management, Wellbeing Finder, Achiever, Activator, Adaptability, Analytical, Arranger, Belief, Command, Communication, Competition, Connectedness, Consistency, Context, Deliberative, Developer, Discipline, Empathy, Fairness, Focus, Futuristic, Harmony, Ideation, Includer, Individualization, Input, Intellection, Learner, Maximizer, Positivity, Relator, Responsibility, Restorative, Self-Assurance, Significance, Strategic, and Woo. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners. These materials are provided for noncommercial, personal use only. Reproduction prohibited without the express permission of Gallup, Inc.