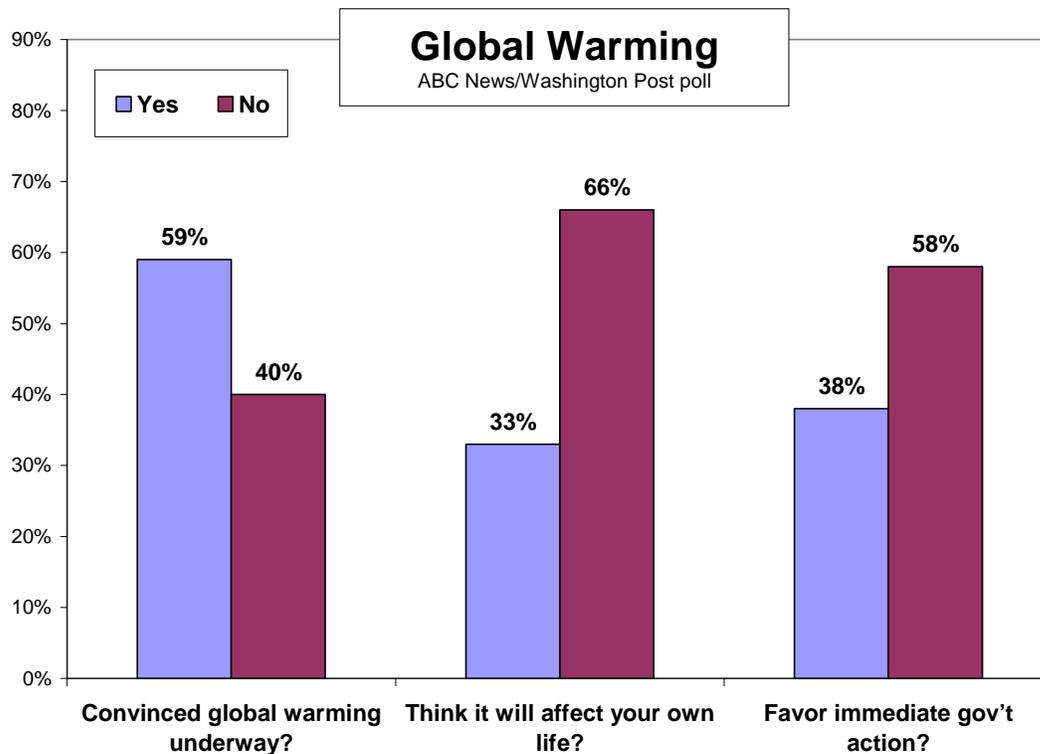


## **Most Think Global Warming has Begun But Differ With Scientists on Urgency**

Nearly six in 10 Americans think global warming likely is underway and as many accept that human activities play a significant role. But – like the Bush administration – most part company with scientists’ calls for prompt government action.

That lack of urgency stems from perceptions of the hazard: While a vast majority, nearly eight in 10, believe global warming will pose a serious threat to future generations, far fewer – just one-third – think it’ll affect their own lives. The majority who see the risk as a distant one overwhelmingly prefer more study to immediate action.

The majority view aligns in this respect with the Bush administration, which has focused on uncertainties in climate science, urged further study and supported only voluntary steps through 2012 to slow greenhouse gas emissions. The administration has rejected the Kyoto treaty on global warming, which went into effect in February and now has 150 signatories.



Contrasting the administration's position, in a statement last week the scientific academies in 11 countries, including the U.S. National Academy of Sciences, said the problem "is now sufficiently clear to justify nations taking prompt action." It cited "strong evidence that significant global warming is occurring" and that most of it likely can be attributed to human activity.

Bush was scheduled to speak on energy policy today, focusing in part on conservation and efficiency measures that the White House says will reduce peak electricity demand in 2020 by the equivalent of 170 power plants.

In this ABC News/Washington Post poll, 59 percent of Americans say they're convinced ("mostly" or "completely") that global warming is occurring, and 61 percent believe human activities such as driving cars and burning fossil fuel are a significant contributor. But far fewer, 38 percent, call it an urgent problem that requires immediate government action. Instead 58 percent say global warming is a longer-term problem that needs more study before government action is taken.

As noted, views on the immediacy of the threat are a main driver in these attitudes. Among the third of Americans who see global warming as a serious threat in their own lifetimes, 67 percent favor immediate action. But among the two-thirds who don't see an imminent threat, far fewer – 24 percent – call for prompt action, while seven in 10 instead say more study is needed first.

Similarly, the six in 10 who believe humans are a big part of the problem are more likely to see it as a threat in their own lifetimes, and to favor urgent government action.

In addition to the perceived lack of an immediate threat, public resistance to prompt government action may reflect questions on what that action might be, particularly in terms of its costs and impacts. The administration cited economic costs among the reasons it rejected the Kyoto accords. Willingness to sacrifice to meet a threat depends on both the nature and immediacy of the threat, and the specific sacrifices required.

THREAT and DOUBT – The number of Americans who don't see a short-term, personal threat from global warming has held steady, between 65 and 69 percent, in polls since 1997. This poll is the first to ask separately about a longer-term threat that may impact future generations.

	Will global warming pose a serious threat to...	
	Yes	No
You in your lifetime?	33%	66
Future generations?	79	17

It's notable that not only do most people disagree with the science academies on the need for prompt action, but that significant minorities – four in 10 – doubt that global warming

is occurring and that human activities are a significant cause. Indeed just 23 percent are “completely” convinced that global warming has begun.

Such doubts may reflect not just the administration’s view, but also the language used by scientists to describe the situation. The academies, for instance, report “strong evidence” rather than scientific certainty of global warming, say it “likely” is due to human activities, and explicitly say the “lack of full scientific certainty about some aspects of climate change” shouldn’t delay an immediate response.

**GROUPS** – Older adults are more skeptical on this subject – they’re much less likely to be convinced that global warming is happening, to think human actions are a significant part of the problem and to expect adverse effects in their own lifetimes. Such concerns peak among the youngest adults, 18- 29; young adults, however, are no more likely to support immediate government action.

	18-29	30-64	65+
Convinced it’s underway	67%	59	48
Human activity a significant cause	70	62	44
Threat in your lifetime	47	33	12
Urgent government action needed	39	38	35
Threat to future generations	91	78	70

Mirroring the political debate about government policy, there also are deep partisan and ideological divides on global warming. Republicans are less likely than Democrats and independents to think it’s underway, to see human activities as a cause, to think they’ll see the impact or to favor urgent action to address it.

	Dem	Ind	Rep
Convinced it’s underway	69%	64	42
Human activity a significant cause	68	64	54
Threat in your lifetime	41	40	19
Urgent government action needed	47	44	24
Threat to future generations	90	82	65

**METHODOLOGY** – This ABC News/Washington Post poll was conducted by telephone June 2-5, 2005, among a random national sample of 1,002 adults. The results have a three- point error margin. Sampling, data collection and tabulation by TNS of Horsham, Pa.

ABC News polls can be found at ABCNEWS.com at <http://abcnews.com/pollvault.html>.

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Full results follow (\*= less than 0.5 percent).

41. How convinced are you that global warming or the greenhouse effect is actually happening - would you say you are completely convinced, mostly convinced, not so convinced or not convinced at all?

	-----Convinced-----			-----Not Convinced-----			No
	NET	Completely	Mostly	NET	Not so	Not at all	op.
6/5/05	59	23	36	40	24	16	2

42. Do you think human activities such as driving cars and burning fossil fuel are the single most important cause of global warming, one of several significant causes, a minor cause, or not a cause of global warming?

	Single most important cause	One of several significant causes	Minor cause	Not a cause	No op.
6/5/05	10	51	27	10	2

43. Do you think global warming is (an urgent problem that requires immediate government action), or (a longer-term problem that requires more study before government action is taken)?

	Urgent problem	Longer-term problem	Not a problem (vol.)	No op.
6/5/05	38	58	3	1

44. Do you think the effects of global warming will pose a serious threat to you or your way of life in your lifetime, or not?

	Yes, will pose a threat	No, will not pose a threat	No opinion
6/5/05	33	66	1
3/7/02*	33	65	2
3/7/01	31	66	3
11/9/97**	25	69	6

\*3/7/02 and 3/7/01: Gallup. Wording: "Do you think that global warming will pose a serious threat to you or your way of life in your lifetime?"

\*\*11/9/97: Gallup. Wording: Do you think that global warming will pose a threat to you or your way of life in your lifetime?

45. Do you think the effects of global warming will or will not pose a serious threat to future generations?

	Yes, will pose a threat	No, will not pose a threat	No opinion
6/5/05	79	17	4

\*\*\*END\*\*\*