



at the UNIVERSITY of CHICAGO

The Associated Press-NORC
Center for Public Affairs Research

**Yale SCHOOL OF FORESTRY &
ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES**

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**Inaugural Survey of American Attitudes about the Environment released by
The Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies and
The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research**

Majority of Americans say the United States ought to take a leadership role in
addressing global warming

Chicago, IL, and New Haven, CT, December 12, 2014 – The Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies and The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research today released the first set of findings from its inaugural environment poll. The poll surveys a nationally representative sample of American adults and provides a portrait of what the public thinks and feels about environmental issues, and what actions they are taking as consumers.

Findings from the first report indicate that most Americans say the United States ought to take a leadership role in combating global warming, and twice as many Americans think the country should participate in international treaty negotiations aimed at addressing its effects as oppose it. However, Americans tend to place a low priority on addressing global warming when compared with other environmental concerns. And few Americans believe that protecting the environment needs to come at a cost of lost economic growth.

“Public understanding of environmental issues—from global warming to water pollution to the loss of biodiversity—is more important than ever, as many Americans work to create a more sustainable future,” said Anthony Leiserowitz, PhD, a research scientist and faculty member at The Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies. “Policies are being considered at the national, state, and local levels, and Americans are increasingly adopting environmentally friendly lifestyles. This new poll will help inform these vital decisions.”

Here are some of the key findings from the Yale – AP-NORC Center poll:

- Fifty-six percent of Americans believe global warming is happening, and 20 percent believe it is not happening. Almost a quarter, 23 percent, are unsure.
- About twice as many Americans favor U.S. participation in international climate negotiations as oppose it.
- A majority of Americans say environmental protections will improve economic growth and provide new jobs in the long run.
- Americans are mixed on whether construction of the Keystone XL pipeline should proceed. Republicans are more likely than Democrats to support it. A quarter of Americans are confident it will be a safe way to transport heavy oil.

“We are delighted to work with our colleagues at Yale to explore Americans’ opinions on the environment,” said Trevor Tompson, NORC vice president and director of the AP-NORC Center for Public



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Affairs Research. "Public opinion about the environment is complex and often misunderstood. With this partnership, we hope to bring a scientifically rigorous approach to inform journalists, policymakers, and the public about what the American people really believe about environmental issues and how those beliefs translate into policy preferences and consumer choices."

The Yale – AP-NORC partnership was established in 2014 to conduct rigorous and innovative research on the American public's perspectives on enduring and current environmental issues. This survey is the most comprehensive and deepest examination of American beliefs, attitudes, policy preferences, and behavior around environmental issues. This issue brief is the first in a set of reports based on data from the 2014 poll. The partners intend to conduct an annual poll.

"We are excited to work with the AP-NORC Center, which combines the resources of a great research institution and the tremendous reach of The Associated Press," said Geoff Feinberg, a research director at The Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies. "Together we will employ best-practice research methods to provide the public and policymakers a comprehensive and objective picture of American environmental attitudes and behavior."

About the Survey

This survey was conducted by GfK using the web-enabled KnowledgePanel®, a probability-based panel designed to be representative of the U.S. population. Interviews were conducted between November 20 and December 1, 2014, with 1,576 adults 18 and over from the 50 states and the District of Columbia. The overall margin of error is +/- 2.9 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level. A comprehensive listing of all study questions, complete with tabulations of top-level results for each question, is available at apnorc.org.

About The Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies

Founded in 1900, FES is the oldest institution of higher learning devoted to conservation and natural resource management in the United States. Now in its second century, the school prepares new leadership and creates new knowledge to sustain and restore the long-term health of the biosphere and the well-being of its people. We educate women and men to guide human activity at the local, national, and global levels with a comprehensive understanding of the environmental, economic, and social effects of their choices. We create new knowledge in the science of sustainability and new methods of applying that knowledge to the challenge of environmental management, the restoration of degraded environments, and the pursuit of sustainable development.

<http://environment.yale.edu/>

About The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research

The AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research taps into the power of social science research and the highest-quality journalism to bring key information to people across the nation and throughout the world.

www.apnorc.org

The Associated Press is the essential global news network, delivering fast, unbiased news from every corner of the world to all media platforms and formats. Founded in 1846, AP today is the most trusted source of independent news and information. On any given day, more than half the world's population



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NORC at the University of Chicago is an independent research organization that collaborates with government agencies, foundations, educational institutions, nonprofit organizations, and businesses to provide data and analysis that support informed decision-making in key areas including health, education, economics, crime, justice, and energy. NORC's 70 years of leadership and experience in data collection, analysis, and dissemination—coupled with deep subject matter expertise—provides the foundation for effective solutions.

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The two organizations have established the AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research to conduct, analyze, and distribute social science research in the public interest on newsworthy topics, and to use the power of journalism to tell the stories that research reveals.

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