

TO: Environmental Defense Fund, WEACT

FR: Morning Consult

DT: October 23, 2020

RE: Results: Differences in Adults' Concern and Perceptions of Climate Threats, Environmental Injustice

Morning Consult conducted a survey, on behalf of Environmental Defense Fund and WEACT, between October 9th – October 11th, 2020 among a national sample of 2,200 adults. The interviews were conducted online. Results from the survey have a margin error of plus or minus 2 percentage points.

The survey sought to measure concern for and perception of the impacts of climate change and other environmental threats like pollution, flooding, and storms, how these threats impact different racial/ethnic groups, and how adults' views on these issues vary by race and ethnicity.

KEY FINDINGS – POLLUTION AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Black adults (60%) are nearly twice as likely as white adults (32%) to say they are very concerned about air pollution in their local community.

Black adults are also *significantly more likely* than white adults to say they're concerned (very + somewhat) about water pollution (82% vs 72%) and climate change (78% vs 68%) in their local community.

A majority of Americans (70%) are concerned about climate change, but Hispanic adults (68%) and Black adults (66%) are more likely than white adults (53%) to say climate change is a major problem.

Black adults (66%), Hispanic adults (68%), and Asian + other adults (74%) are significantly more likely than white adults (53%) to see climate change as a major problem.

Perceptions of Climate Change Threat							
% Currently a Threat to... (Major + Minor)	The U.S. economy	My state's economy	The economy in my community	My housing	My life	My personal financial security	National Security
Adults	65%	60%	56%	47%	56%	44%	53%
White adults	63%	57%	51%	40%	53%	39%	50%
Black adults	67%	67%	65%	56%	68%	53%	57%
Hispanic adults	68%	69%	65%	62%	64%	53%	60%
Asian + other adults	69%	68%	67%	55%	59%	55%	59%

Familiarity with the term “environmental injustice” varies by race/ethnicity.

Hispanic (50%) and Black (41%) adults are more likely than white adults (36%) to say they're very or somewhat familiar with the term “environmental injustice.”

Racial gaps in familiarity with the term “environmental injustice” reflect differences in attitudes toward it as well. Black and Hispanic adults are significantly more likely than white adults to say that environmental injustice is a major problem in the U.S.

While 51% of Black adults and 48% of Hispanic adults view environmental injustice as a major problem in the U.S., only 33% of white adults hold the same view, a significantly lower percentage. The same holds true at the state level, where Black (41%) and Hispanic (30%) adults are significantly more likely than white adults (20%) to say environmental injustice is a major problem in their state.

These gaps persist in adults’ understanding of their own exposure to pollution, as well as how they view other groups’ exposure to pollution.

Black adults (60%) and Hispanic adults (61%) are significantly more likely than white adults (53%) to say they experience a lot + some exposure to pollution in their daily lives. Additionally, white adults are significantly less likely than people of color to say that Black communities (25% vs 33%), Latino communities (18% vs 30%), and low-income communities (30% vs 40%) experience a lot of exposure to pollution.

White adults seem to be less aware of the heightened levels of pollution communities of color face.

In fact, only 38% of white adults say Black communities face more exposure to pollution than the general population, and 34% of white adults say Latino communities face more exposure to pollution than the general population.

Despite demographic differences in perceived exposure to pollution, there is greater agreement among adults across racial groups about the causes of environmental injustice.

52% of adults say corporate decisions to pollute in certain areas play a large role in contributing to environmental injustice in the U.S., including 59% of Black adults, 52% of Hispanic adults, and 50% of white adults. 51% of adults say that government regulations that allow for pollution in certain areas play a large role as well, including 61% of Black adults, 53% of Hispanic adults, and 48% of white adults.

KEY FINDINGS – REDLINING

Although adults across racial groups are generally unfamiliar with the term “redlining,” there’s a strong belief that predominantly Black neighborhoods still experience the long-term effects of redlining.

While majorities of white (51%), Black 63% and Hispanic (55%) adults all say that predominantly Black neighborhoods still experience the long-term effects of redlining (definitely + probably), there are still differences between these groups in the extent to which they believe Black neighborhoods experience these impacts. Black adults (46%) are *significantly more likely* than both white adults (20%) and Hispanic adults (24%) to say that predominantly Black neighborhoods *definitely* still experience the long-term effects of redlining.

Redlining's Impact on the Following:					
% Large Impact on...	Adults	White Adults	Black Adults	Hispanic Adults	Asian + other adults
My economic opportunities	17%	11%	41%	21%	21%
The economic opportunities of people in my neighborhood	18%	13%	43%	22%	17%
My neighborhood	15%	10%	38%	17%	14%
My health	13%	10%	33%	13%	14%
The health of people in my neighborhood	15%	11%	33%	18%	15%
My life	14%	10%	31%	18%	17%

Large majorities of adults across racial demographics recognize the ability of clean energy jobs to help people in their communities.

Three quarters of adults (73%) say clean energy jobs probably would help people in communities like theirs, including 81% of Black adults, 73% of Hispanic adults, and 71% of white adults.

Additionally, a majority of adults (54%) as well as registered voters (56%) say government should focus on creating new jobs in the clean energy industry, compared to 16% of both groups who say the same about the oil and gas industry.

A majority of liberal voters (76%), moderate voters (62%), independent voters (50%), and swing Trump approval voters (52%)* express the same broad support for the creation of new clean energy jobs.

Clean Energy Job Agreement					
% Agree (Somewhat + Strongly)	Adults	White Adults	Black Adults	Hispanic Adults	Asian + other adults
Clean energy jobs are for people like me	53%	50%	64%	56%	55%
Clean energy jobs are for people with my education level	57%	57%	57%	60%	54%
Clean energy jobs are for people with my skillsets	50%	48%	55%	58%	48%
Clean energy jobs are for people my age	49%	44%	54%	63%	58%
Clean energy jobs are for people with my background	52%	51%	61%	54%	48%
I would want a job in the clean energy sector	52%	50%	59%	57%	59%
I would want people in my family to have a job in the clean energy sector	62%	61%	66%	67%	61%
Clean energy jobs are for people in my region of the country	67%	65%	69%	66%	72%
Clean energy jobs are for people in my neighborhood	58%	60%	71%	45%	55%

*Trump job approval somewhat approve + somewhat disapprove