

# Executive Summary

## Survey Results: U.S. Views on Climate Adaptation

Coastal communities face grave risks from climate change, including sea level rise and greater storm intensity, that may result in increased inundation and flooding of coastal areas. Barring proactive adaptive measures, these impacts will cause significant harm to people, property and coastal ecosystems. Preparing for these impacts to ensure that people and natural habitats mutually benefit requires effective leadership and an informed and engaged public.

In March 2013 the Stanford Woods Institute for the Environment and the Center for Ocean Solutions commissioned a public opinion survey on climate adaptation. Results found an overwhelming majority of Americans want to prepare in order to minimize the damage likely to be caused by global warming-induced sea level rise and storms. Americans believe that preparing for climate change impacts will create jobs, yet they are divided on who should pay for these preparations. The survey also measured support for climate adaptation strategies, such as erecting sea walls or changing building codes to prevent new construction in risk-prone areas.

### Method

The survey was conducted via the Internet with a nationally representative probability sample of 1,174 American adults aged 18 and older by GfK Custom Research from March 7 to 18, 2013. The survey was administered in both English and Spanish. It had a margin of error of +/- 4.9 percent at the 95 percent confidence level. The survey was directed by Jon Krosnick, Senior Fellow at the Stanford Woods Institute for the Environment and Professor of communication, political science and psychology at Stanford University.

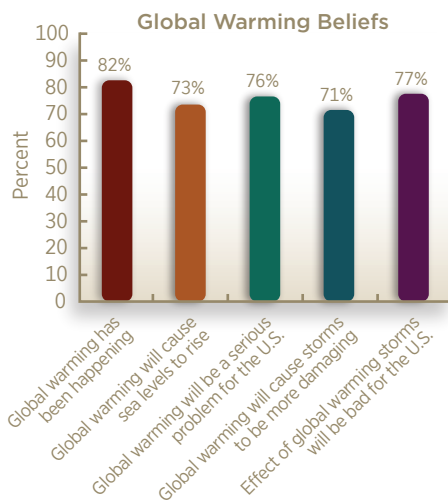


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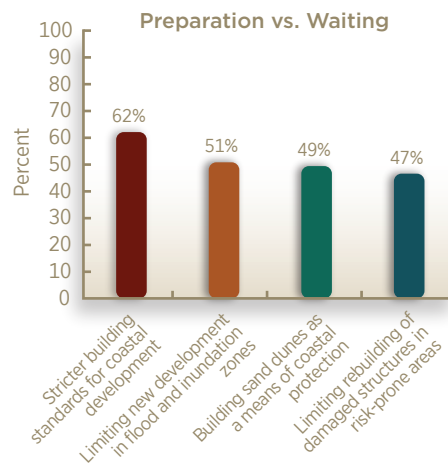
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## Overarching findings

- The public believes that:
  - Global warming has been happening (82%).
  - Global warming will cause sea levels to rise (73%), and this will be a serious problem for the U.S. (76%).
  - Global warming will cause storms to be more damaging (71%), and these storms will be bad for the U.S. (77%).



- The public overwhelmingly supports *preparing now* for the impacts of global warming (82%), rather than waiting (16%).
- The public is *most* supportive of adaptation strategies that include:
  - Stricter building standards for coastal development (62%)
  - Limiting new development in flood and inundation zones (51%)
  - Building sand dunes as a means of coastal protection (49%)
  - Limiting rebuilding of damaged structures in risk-prone areas (47%)



- The public is *least* supportive of adaption strategies involving sand replenishment, sea walls and purchasing coastal property to induce retreat (favored by 33%, 33% and 37%, respectively).
- The public believes that adaptation action will have a positive impact on jobs nationwide (60%).
- The public thinks that the people and businesses that would be affected by sea level rise and storms should pay for preparation (60%), rather than the government (38%).
- When asked about specific coastal preparation strategies, 4 out of 5 Americans think that coastal property owners should foot the bill, rather than the government.

## Conclusions

The public strongly supports taking action now to prevent negative impacts of climate change. The public believes steps taken to implement adaptation will be beneficial for jobs nationally. The majority of the public supports stricter building standards for coastal development as well as limiting new development in future hazard zones. Americans think that coastal home and business owners who locate in high-risk areas should pay for coastal preparation measures.



### For more information:

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