



EESI UPDATE

A periodic update to EESI's friends on our work in policymaker education, coalition building, technical assistance, and policy development.

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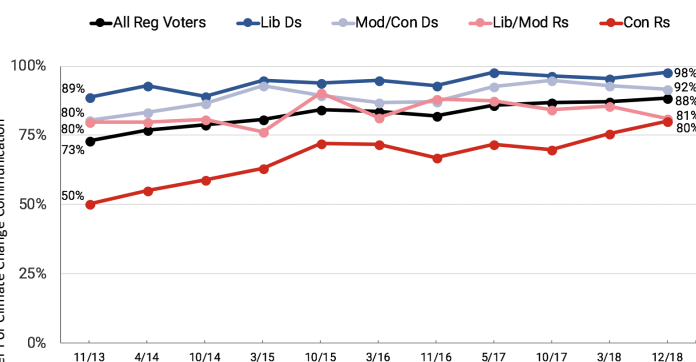
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American Perceptions on Climate Change Shifting Growing Numbers of Republicans Acknowledge Risk

ONE OF EESI'S recent powerful briefings examined public opinion trends on climate change. Featuring Yale Professor Dr. Anthony Leiserowitz, EESI's Congressional briefing—livecast and recorded for future viewing—highlighted for policymakers and the public a promising trend: **a record number of Americans—73 percent based on a December 2018 poll—acknowledge that climate change is happening.** Sixty-eight percent understand that it is human-caused. And an increasing number agree that something must be done about it.

Support for Funding Renewable Energy Research Has Increased Over the Last Five Years

- % who say "strongly" or "somewhat" support -



Credit: Yale Program on Climate Change Communication
GMU Center for Climate Change Communication

How much do you support or oppose the following policies: Fund more research into renewable energy sources, such as solar and wind power.

Nov. 2008 to Dec. 2018. Base: Registered American voters (n=19,441).



What we're seeing is a big uptick in overall public concern about climate change, within both major parties. The Democratic party, which has long accepted the reality of climate change, now sees its members and policymakers highlighting climate as a key priority for Members of Congress and the Democratic candidates for the presidency. Meanwhile, Republicans, including conservative Republicans, are more likely to acknowledge that climate change is happening and that it is human-caused. And, their support for clean energy is almost as enthusiastic as Democrats'. **Eighty percent of conservative Republicans support federal investment in renewable energy research, up from 50 percent in 2013.**

More Americans are now engaged with the issue of climate change due to their social connections, intensifying media coverage, and, sadly, increasingly visible climate impacts. Record-setting climate disasters—such as massive wildfires, hurricanes, and extreme flooding—happening across the nation are alarming those who did not accept the threat of climate change before. Americans are increasingly connecting the dots, and are asking themselves, **"What's going on with all this extreme weather? Could this have something to do with climate change?"**

EESI is known for bringing in top experts to speak to policymakers. Dr. Leiserowitz, who leads the Yale Program on Climate Change Communication (YPCCC), clearly fits the bill. Yale has created a data visualization site, Yale Climate Opinion Maps, which generates maps depicting climate change perceptions and support for renewable energy across the United States. **Substantial majorities in every single Congressional district think that climate change will harm future generations,** and huge majorities in every single district support climate actions like funding renewable energy research. **Relatively few Americans, however, realize that climate change is already affecting them personally.**



Dr. Leiserowitz discussed how there are "six Americas" with regard to climate change: those who are alarmed, concerned, cautious, disengaged, doubtful, and dismissive. Yale's research shows that **six in ten Americans are now either "alarmed" or "concerned" about global warming.** They want to take action, and are asking themselves "What should I do?" "What should we do?" "What CAN we do?" One thing—recommended by Dr. Leiserowitz—concerned Americans can do is to start **talking about climate change,** even if you think others aren't interested. And another thing is **make a donation to EESI,** to help get out important information and advance climate solutions on Capitol Hill and throughout the nation. □

Rear Admiral Says Resilience Is Critical for U.S. National Security

THE U.S. MILITARY IS IN FAVOR of both clean energy and resilience, to reduce its dependence on fossil fuels and maximize its readiness. It is also very concerned about climate change, which is already affecting our national security.

One of EESI's top priorities has been to share the national security community's perspectives and concerns about climate change as a way to show the consensus on the issue and rationale for action. Thus, we invited retired Rear Admiral Ann C. Phillips and other experts to speak at **EESI's Congressional briefing about making military bases and their communities more resilient**. Phillips is now special assistant for coastal adaptation and protection to the governor of Virginia. We sat down with Phillips to discuss the need for resilience in more detail.

All of Virginia and its communities are interconnected, Phillips explained. In Hampton Roads, Virginia, where the U.S. military has a massive presence (including the world's largest naval station), **rising sea levels are causing frequent flooding and grid-lock, making it difficult to bring crucial supplies in and out**. These challenges also affect commercial operations—Hampton Roads is a primary exporter for agricultural goods.



Federal support to help communities understand and prepare for climate change is crucial. "If we want to invest in ourselves, we're going to have to put some skin in the game, and then we'll get a return on that investment," Phillips said. She noted that, according to the National Institute of Building Sciences, **"a dollar spent for pre-disaster response saves six dollars in post-disaster repair"**—a point EESI has been driving home through its briefing series on the need for resilience.

Watch our full interview with Rear Admiral Ann Phillips here: www.eesi.org/EESI-Phillips. □

EESI Launches Series of Video Shorts Thanks to Volunteer



TOM BEACH, like so many of us, was **increasingly alarmed about climate change** and was feeling like there wasn't much he could do to help. But after learning about EESI through a friend, the former video producer and web developer saw an opportunity.

"Online video is one of the most effective ways of communicating these days; I thought it would help amplify the work that EESI is doing," explained Tom. Starting with interviews of the experts EESI brings to Capitol Hill for its briefings/livecasts, **Tom, a veteran videographer, is creating a series of short videos that seek to capture the main points of complicated topics**.

His work as a volunteer blends an interest in the environment with a passion for filmmaking, which he developed while growing up near the Eastman Kodak Company in Rochester, NY. He also enjoys traveling,

biking, and spending his time coding or editing in a local coffee shop. His favorite part about working at EESI is interacting with committed people and trying to make a difference with his skillset. We are excited to have him!

"Climate change can be scary and confusing," says Tom. **"But there's lots of good news that gets lost.** We try to show that, yes, we're facing an existential crisis, but there are **people taking steps to address climate change right now. That's a story that needs telling.**" Tom's new "video shorts" project brings additional exposure for the compelling stories we feature in our briefings! EESI is working to raise additional funds for better videography equipment, editing software, images, and music. Please consider making a gift today to help spread this work further! □



Hawaii Launches Innovative Financing Model for Clean Energy

EESI Provides Assistance in Starting Program

HAWAII NOW HAS a statewide initiative to make clean energy more affordable for homes and small businesses—and EESI is excited to have helped make it possible! Since 2017, **EESI has provided assistance to Hawaii, through our recently expanded Access Clean Energy Savings program.** EESI helps utilities make it easier for their customers to adopt clean energy systems and energy efficiency measures.

The Hawaii program's executive director, Gwen Yamamoto Lau, stressed that the program is “designed to democratize clean energy and reduce energy poverty by **expanding access and affordability of renewable energy and energy efficiency** to renters, low and moderate-income homeowners and nonprofit organizations.”

EESI helped Hawaii launch this statewide program using **on-bill financing**, an approach we have refined and championed since 2010! The program provides **easy-access financing** for cost-effective **clean energy upgrades**, including solar hot water heaters, heat pump water heaters, energy efficiency measures, and solar PV systems.



Courtesy: Shell Vacations Hospitality

The program makes these clean energy upgrades more accessible and less of a financial burden, and is available to almost all Hawaiians. It also contributes to the **state's goal of achieving 100 percent renewable energy by 2045!** EESI is delighted to play a part in making this possible.

Clean energy investments are conveniently repaid through a line item on the participant's monthly electric bill, with no upfront costs. Credit scores or debt-to-income ratios are not used to determine program eligibility, making financing more accessible to low- and moderate-income families. A good history of utility bill payment is enough.

Hawaii's program has been quietly running since June 2018, with 120 applications in pre-launch. There already have been four commercial solar projects and four residential projects approved—a good start. EESI's donors are the key to making programs like Hawaii's possible across the country! □

Former White House Advisor Explains Why He Gives to EESI

“I THINK EESI has been an enormously positive influence on understanding in the Congress and in the public of the nature of the climate change challenge, the nature of the solutions, what we can do with energy efficiency, and the ways in which clean energy can be brought to bear,” said Dr. John Holdren, a well-known climate change expert, in a video short that EESI produced.

Dr. Holdren, White House Science Advisor to former President Barack Obama, explained why he sees EESI as instrumental to the climate change discussion, and an organization he can feel confident giving to. As he explained, “It's a very lean, efficient, effective operation, so I think I'm getting the most bang for my chari-

table buck by giving it to EESI.” Indeed, Charity Navigator, the Yelp of nonprofits, has given EESI a perfect rating—awarding it 100 out of 100 in financial performance and accountability and transparency.

In Dr. Holdren's view, **EESI has “extraordinary leverage”** compared to other environmental and energy non-governmental organizations. Holdren noted that EESI's longstanding bipartisan work with Congress is a comparative advantage.



Though the dynamics and causes of climate change are global, the impacts are all local, Holdren explained. EESI's work continues to get that message across to people at local, community, and state levels, in addition to national and international policymakers. **EESI is thankful to Dr. Holdren and all our donors for making our work possible!** □

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You Make Climate Solutions Possible!



EVERYTHING YOU SEE in this issue of *EESI Update* is made possible by our donors! We are so thankful for you and invite you to continue to prioritize climate change and resilient solutions in your giving plans.

EESI was founded by a bipartisan group of members of Congress, but receives no funding from Congress. You are key to advancing win-win solutions on clean energy, community resilience, and so much more.

Give the way that's right for you!

- **Give online.** Consider setting up a *budget-friendly monthly gift* at eesi.org/donate
- **Become an EESI Associate** with a gift of \$1,000 per year (\$84 a month).
- **Give by mail:** 1020 19th St NW, Suite 650, Washington, DC 20036.
- **Name EESI as a beneficiary** in your 401(k), IRA, or will to make your climate solutions part of your legacy. ☐

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**Thank
you so
very
much!**