

To: Interested Parties
Fr: Lake Research Partners
Re: Media Coverage of Climate Change
Date: August, 2020

Most Americans first learned about climate change in the news and follow the issue closely.

- People are most likely to have first learned about climate change in the news (60 percent), followed by the internet or social media (40 percent), in school (26 percent), from friends or family (25 percent, and from a political campaign (22 percent).
- A 58 percent majority of Americans follow climate change in the news (19 percent extremely closely, 17 percent very closely, and 22 percent moderately closely). Democrats are more likely to follow climate change closely than Republicans, (72 percent of Democrats follow climate change extremely, very, or moderately closely, compared to 52 percent of Republicans, and 37 percent of independents).

Americans think it is important for media coverage to mention the connection between climate change and extreme weather.

- A strong majority of Americans think it is important for news coverage of extreme weather events to make the connection between increased extreme weather and climate change. Overall, 57 percent of Americans say it is extremely or very important, and another 18 percent say it is moderately important.
- More than 7 in 10 Americans (72 percent) say if there is a connection between climate change and an extreme weather event, they want to hear about it in the news, including majorities of Democrats (85 percent), Republicans (62 percent), and independents (59 percent).
- Two-thirds (67 percent) of Americans including majorities across party lines agree that coverage of hurricanes and typhoons should mention its relationship to climate change, including 42 percent who strongly agree. By party, 79 percent of Democrats agree as do 60 percent of Republicans and 54 percent of independents.

People think news sources currently cover climate change too little and want them to cover it more.

- A 58 percent majority of Americans say they follow climate change in the news either extremely, very, or moderately closely. These Americans are more likely to say that news outlets cover climate change too little than too much. Thirty-one (31) percent of Americans who follow climate change closely say local TV news covers climate too little, 14 percent say too much, and 39 percent say the right amount.
- More than 3 in 4 Americans (76 percent) have seen coverage of hurricanes or typhoons in the last year. Of these, only half (50 percent) remember coverage mentioning its relationship to climate change while one third (33 percent) say it did not and 17 percent do not remember.

- A majority of Americans (54 percent) say they are more likely to use news sources that started covering climate change more, and just 14 percent say they are less likely. Similarly, 55 percent say they are more likely to use news sources that started mentioning climate change when reporting on events impacted by climate change.

People get their news more often from local TV news and Facebook than cable news.

- Americans say they are most likely to get their news from local TV news and Facebook with 40 percent saying they get their news every day from local TV news or Facebook.
- Cable news is in a second tier, with more saying they get their news from CNN and FOX compared to MSNBC. Roughly 1 in 5 Americans get their news every day from Fox News (22 percent) or CNN (19 percent), while 14 percent say they get their news every day from MSNBC.

Few Americans think Fox News covers climate change accurately.

- Just 29 percent of Americans say that FOX News covers climate change accurately (extremely or very).
- Only minorities of Republicans, who are more likely to watch FOX News, think that FOX's coverage of climate change is accurate (43 percent extremely or very accurate), but they are still more likely than Democrats (23 percent) to say that it is extremely or very accurate.
- Democrats are more likely to say Fox News coverage is not accurate at all. Twenty-seven (27) percent of Democrats say that Fox's coverage of climate change is not accurate at all, compared to 7 percent of Republicans.

Results are based on a survey of 1000 adults nationwide conducted online from August 21-24, 2020 using an opt-in panel of adults. The data were weighed slightly by gender, census region, age, race and ethnicity, and educational attainment to reflect census population estimates. The margin of error for the total sample is +/-3.1% at the 95% confidence interval.