

Press release

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Vast Majority of Marylanders Say Climate Change is Happening and Support Policies to Address its Impact

*Climate change and universal pre-kindergarten rank as high priorities for the
General Assembly and Governor*

As Maryland's state political races heat up in advance of the November 4th general election, a new survey from George Mason University in partnership with the [Climate Communication Consortium of Maryland](#) demonstrates that the vast majority of Marylanders believe that climate change is happening, and that climate change should be a priority for the General Assembly and Governor. The full survey report can be downloaded [here](#).

“Despite an unusually cold winter and spring, almost three quarters of Marylanders continue to understand that climate change is happening,” said Prof. Edward W. Maibach, Director of the Center for Climate Change Communication at George Mason University and one of the study's authors. “Eight out of 10 Marylanders feel that addressing climate change should be a priority for the Governor and the General Assembly. The majority of Marylanders also support almost all of the state's current climate and energy policies.”

The study found that about three-quarters (77%) of Marylanders say that climate change is happening. By way of comparison, only 64% of Americans nationwide say that global warming is happening, according to nationally representative survey results using a similarly phrased question in April 2014. Moreover, a majority of Marylanders say that the past year's cold winter weather was evidence that climate change is happening (55%). Very few Maryland residents say that the cold weather is evidence that climate change is not happening (2%).

Climate change is ranked similarly to establishing universal pre-kindergarten as a priority for the General Assembly and Governor. Eight out of 10 Marylanders (79%) say that it should be a medium, high or very high priority for the state; 75% say the same for universal pre-kindergarten.

Statewide, majorities of residents support 7 of 8 climate and energy policies that were listed in the survey. The most popular are expanding rebates to help people purchase energy-efficient lighting and appliances (82%), and supporting the production and consumption of local agricultural products (82%). Other policies supported by a majority of Marylanders include: requiring new cars and other vehicles in Maryland to be less polluting (78%); requiring that Maryland's electricity suppliers provide 20% of their total electricity from renewable energy sources by 2022 (73%); doubling use of public transportation in Maryland by 2020 (65%); encouraging the development of more homes in our cities, with better access to public transportation, as a means to reduce sprawl (63%); and participating in a regional carbon emissions trading program to reduce overall production of greenhouse gases (54%).

For the past two years, George Mason University has partnered with the Climate Communication Consortium of Maryland on statewide surveys of climate change, energy and public health in the state. This report is one of four that will be released from the 2014 survey; other reports highlight attitudes, behaviors and policy preferences on public health and climate change, climate adaptation and sea level rise, and energy. The survey was mailed to 6,401 households in the state of Maryland. The survey was fielded from March 17 to June 10, 2014 with a response rate of 35%. The unweighted sample margin of error is +/- 2 percentage points at the 95% confidence interval.