Carbon Use-Phase Offsets

Research Summary Findings

Carrie Snyder, More Than Sustainability
John Rooks, The SOAP Group

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Agenda

- Research objectives
- Data from the applications
- Findings
- Recommendations

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Research overview

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Carbon use-phase offsets research objectives

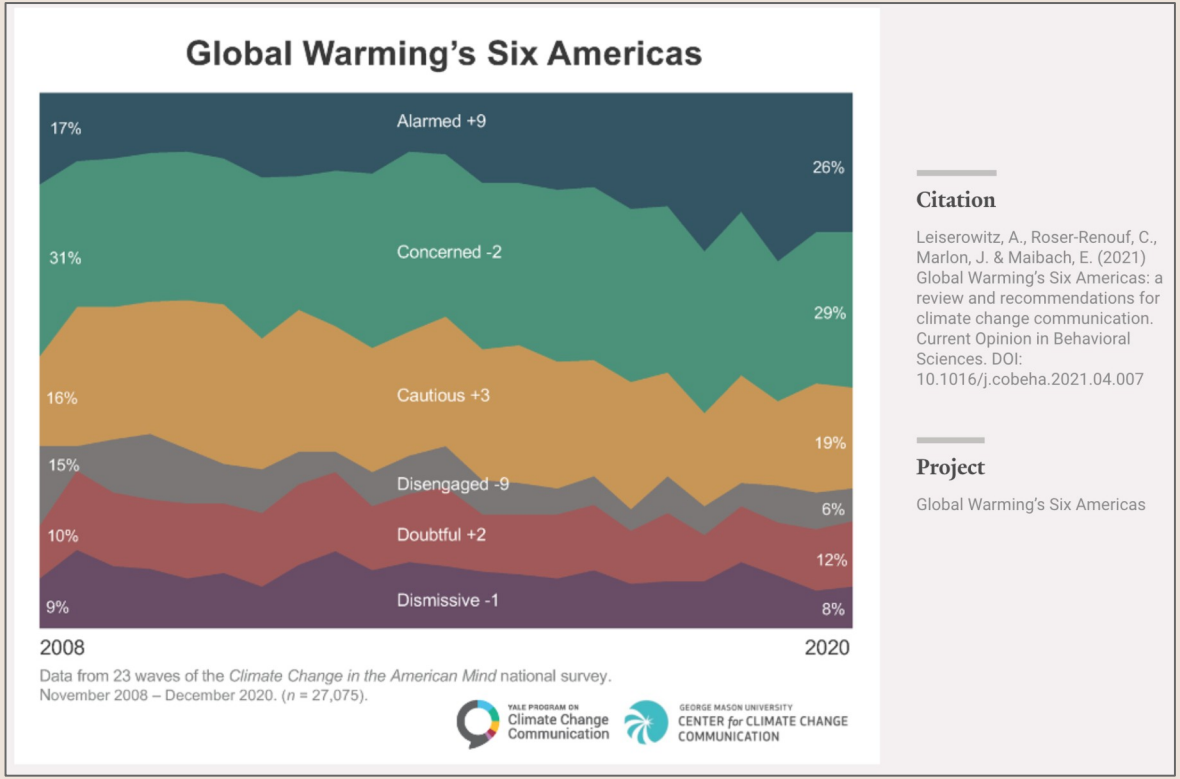
Learn more about US consumers' views about the carbon emissions of their electronic products to better communicate with about potential programs for brands to pay for use-phase offsets. Understand differences between consumers with different levels of concern about the environment.

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Data from applicants

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The applicants for this study (n=300) have greater concern about climate change than the general US population



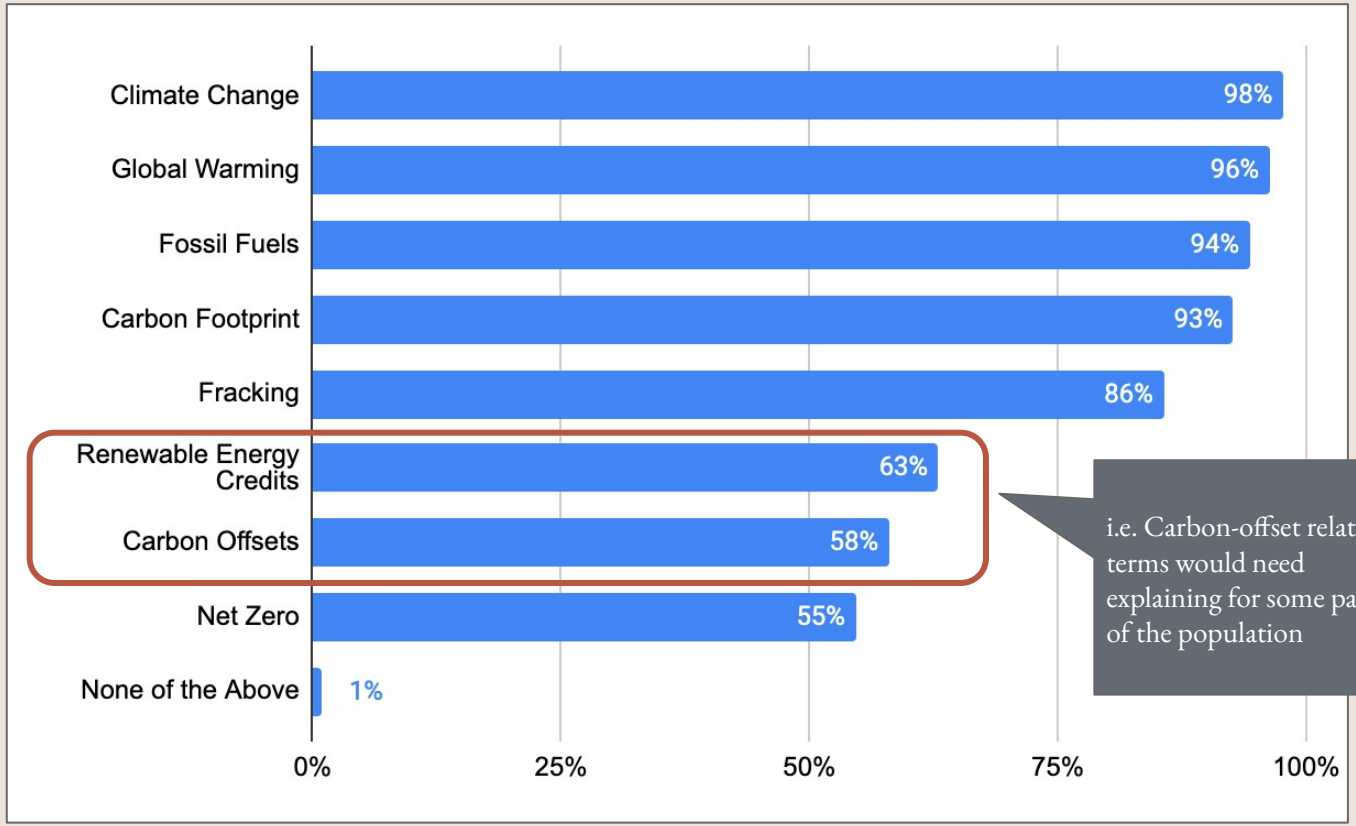
	Applicants	Yale/GMU Study (2020)
Alarmed	**30%**	26%
Concerned	**54%**	29%
Cautious	12%	19%
Disengaged	2%	6%
Doubtful	1%	12%
Dismissive	1%	8%

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Even so, the terms “renewable energy credits” and “carbon offsets” are not known by all the applicants

Which of the following terms have you heard of?

Select all that apply.



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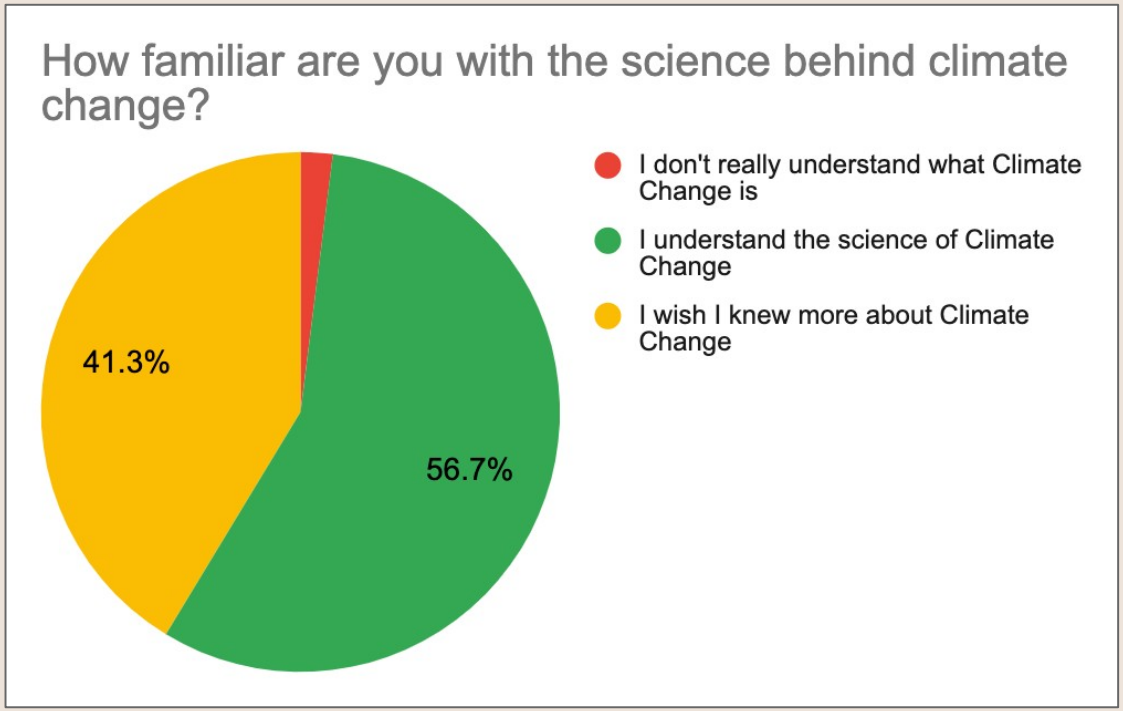
Attitudes about climate change vary with awareness of the terms “renewable energy credits” and “carbon offsets” among the applicants

Which of the following terms have you heard of? (Renewable Energy Credits)	Alarmed	Cautious	Concerned	Disengaged	Dismissive	Doubtful
Yes	56	18	110	3	1	1
No	33	17	52	4	3	2
	63%	51%	68%	43%	25%	33%

Which of the following terms have you heard of? (Carbon Offsets)	Alarmed	Cautious	Concerned	Disengaged	Dismissive	Doubtful
Yes	62	13	92	3	1	3
No	27	22	70	4	3	0
	70%	37%	57%	43%	25%	100%

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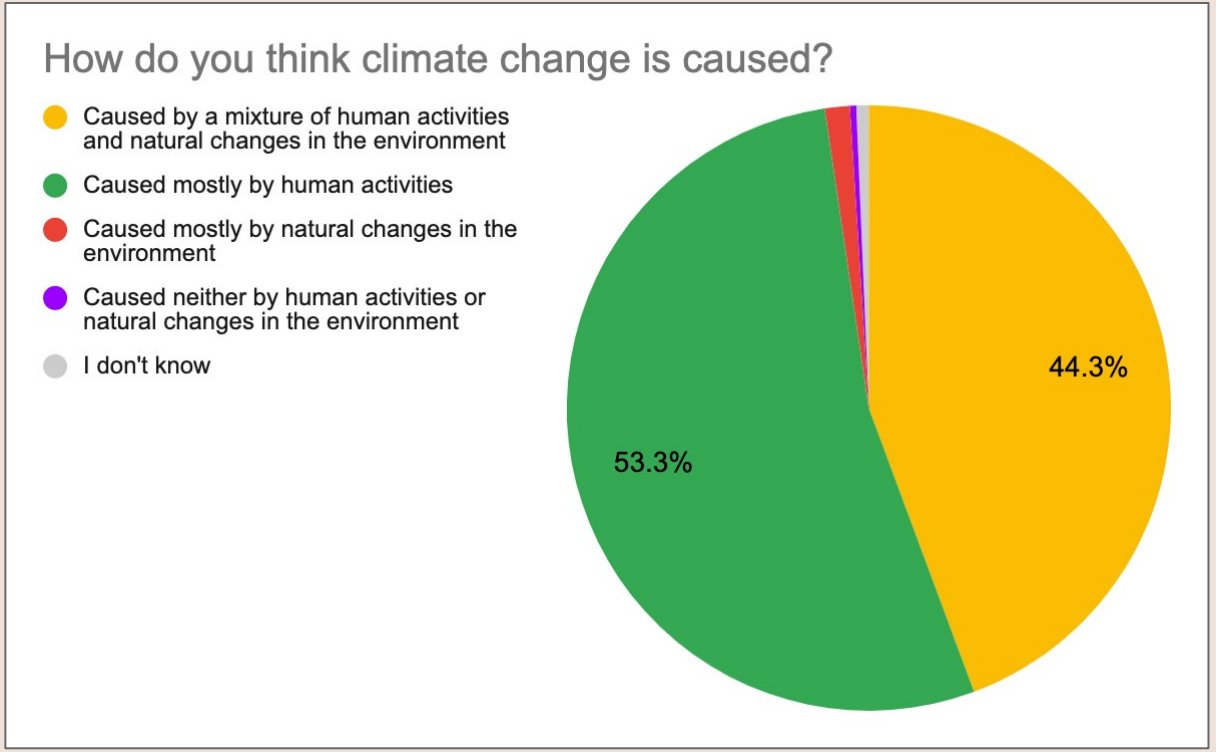
Similarly, about 40% of people who applied for this study don't all feel they have clear understanding of the science behind climate change



In order for consumers to appreciate the value / significance of carbon offsets *might* first require them getting additional education about climate change in general

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Almost all people who applied for this study believe human activities are at least one cause of climate change *(about half also believe it comes from natural changes, too)*



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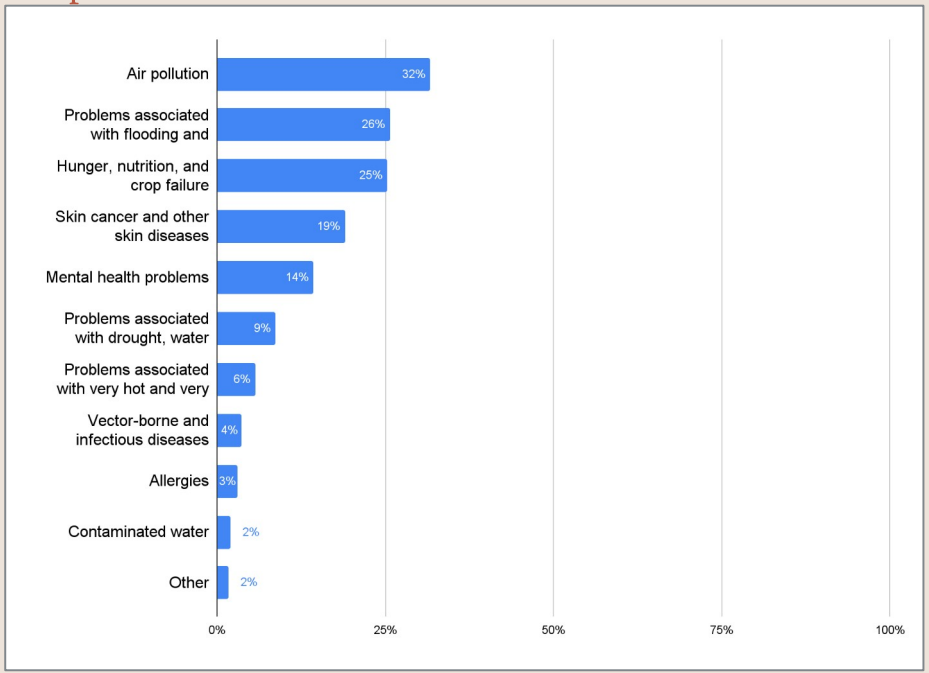
The more applicants believe they understand the science of climate change, the more likely they believe it is caused by humans

		Have you been *personally* affected by climate change?	
How familiar are you with the science behind climate change?	How do you think climate change is caused?	Yes	No
I don't really understand what Climate Change is	Caused mostly by human activities		
	Caused mostly by natural changes in the environment		
	Caused by a mixture of human activities and natural changes in the environment		4
	Caused neither by human activities or natural changes in the environment		
	I don’t know		2
I wish I knew more about Climate Change	Caused mostly by human activities	25	29
	Caused mostly by natural changes in the environment		
	Caused by a mixture of human activities and natural changes in the environment	25	44
	Caused neither by human activities or natural changes in the environment		1
	I don’t know		
I understand the science of Climate Change	Caused mostly by human activities	65	41
	Caused mostly by natural changes in the environment	2	2
	Caused by a mixture of human activities and natural changes in the environment	34	26
	Caused neither by human activities or natural changes in the environment		
	I don’t know		

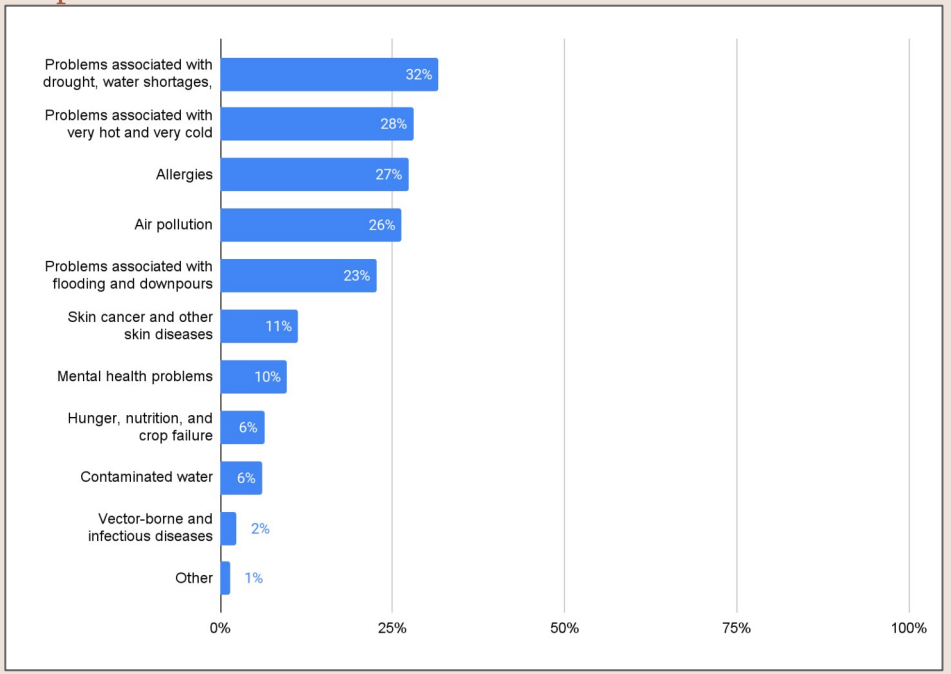
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How the applicant has been personally affected by climate change differs somewhat from how they've seen climate change affecting others

Impact to self



Impact to others

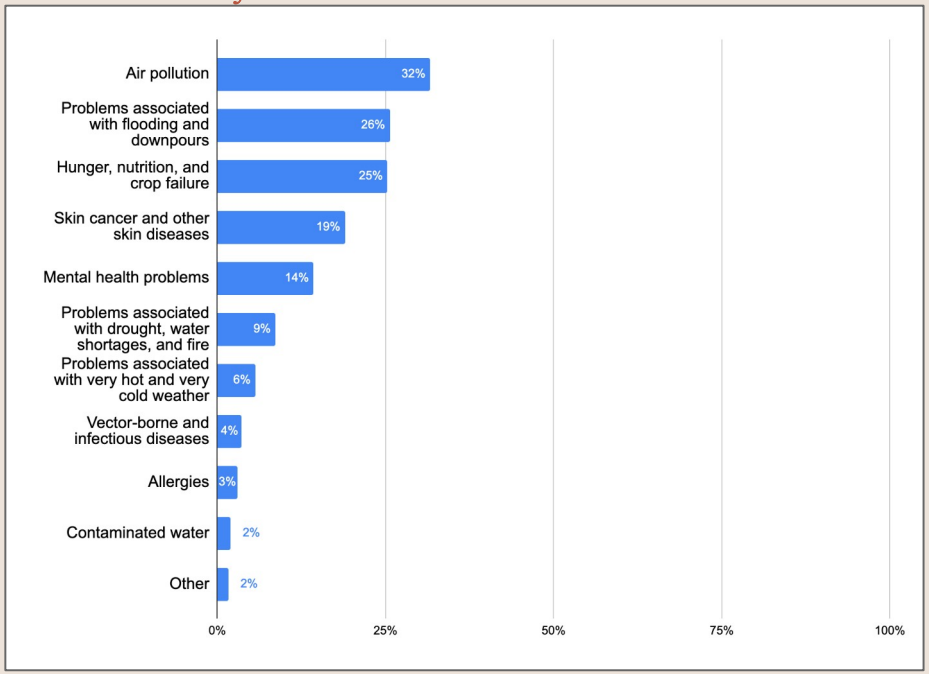


multiple answers allowed

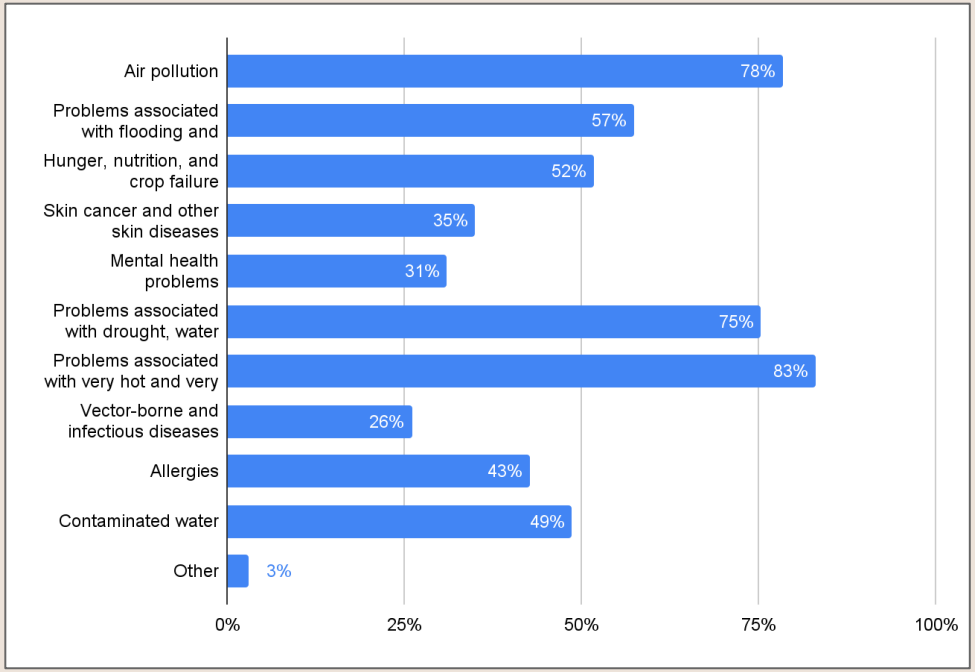
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Applicants expect to be personally significantly more affected by climate change in the future, across every single type of impact

So far (currently)



In the future

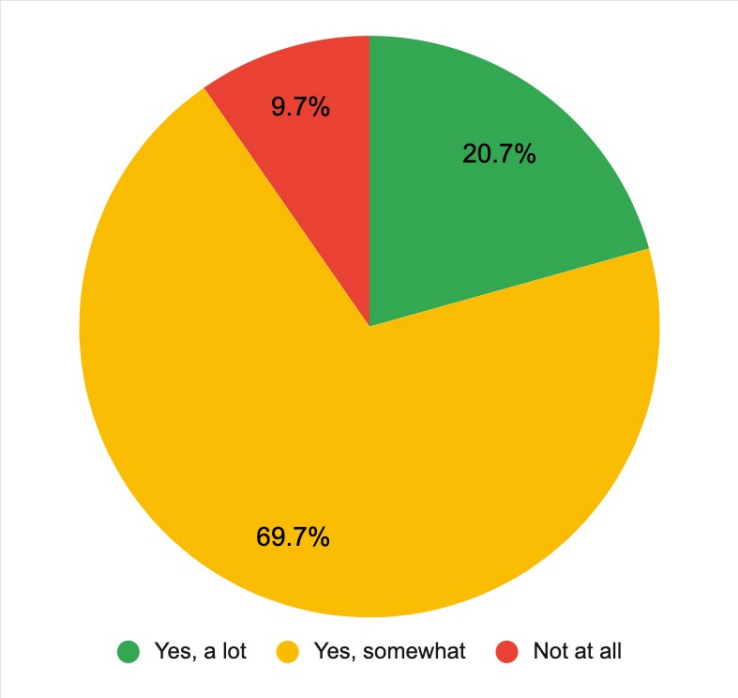


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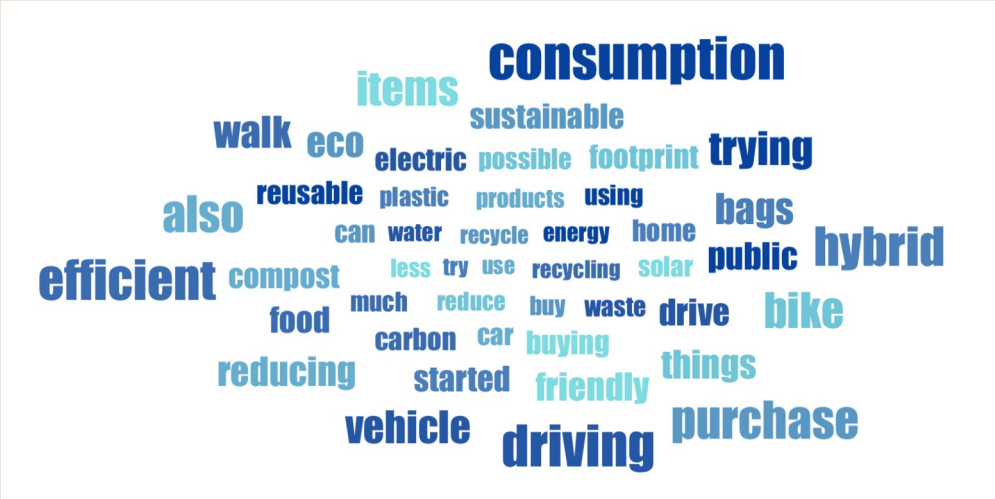
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Some applicants are taking some action to prepare for climate change or reduce their carbon footprint

Have you taken steps to prepare for climate change or reduce your carbon footprint?



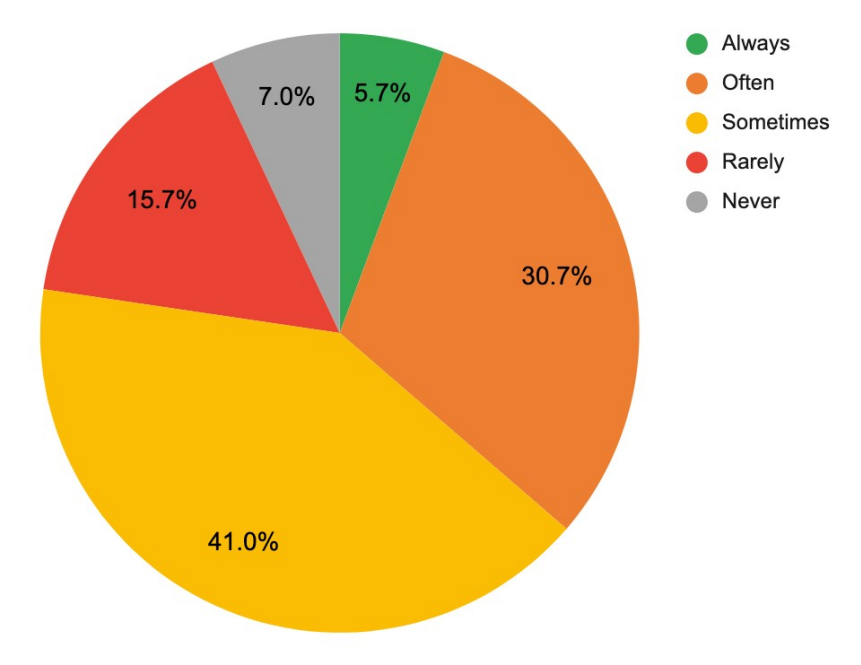
What steps have you taken to prepare for climate change: most used words



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Many applicants consider carbon footprint at least some of the time when making purchasing decisions

When making a purchase have you ever considered the carbon footprint of that product?



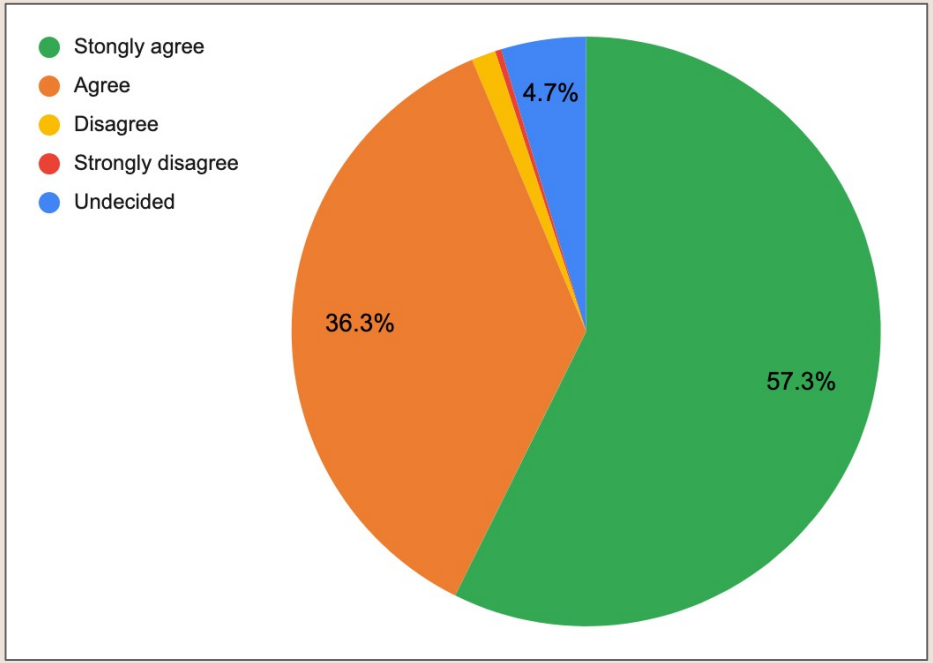
Tell us more about how and when you've considered the carbon footprint of a purchase: most used words



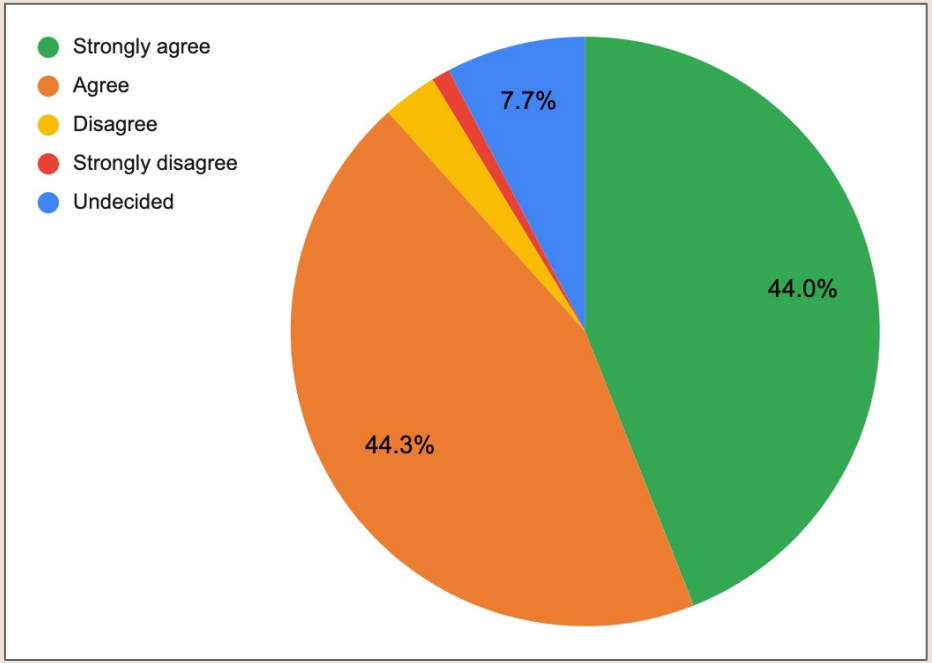
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Over 90% of the applicants strongly agree or agree that manufacturers have a responsibility to voluntarily minimize their environmental impact, slightly more than consumers' responsibility

Product manufacturers have a responsibility to voluntarily minimize their environmental impact on the planet



Consumers have a responsibility to voluntarily minimize their environmental impact on the planet



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How should product manufacturers minimize their environmental impact on the planet: most used words



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Three Groups of Consumers

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Three groupings of people created, based on their attitudes toward climate change

	Number of Interviews	Grouping
Alarmed	4	The Believers
Concerned		
Cautious	6	The Skeptics and the Uninterested
Disengaged		
Doubtful	3	The Resistors
Dismissive		

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The Believers

- Alarmed about climate change
- Understand the science behind climate change
- Believe it is the result of human activities
- Usually have seen impacts of climate change already to themselves and others
- Have taken “a lot” of steps to prepare for climate change
- Anticipate multiple impacts of climate change to them personally in the future
- Consider their personal carbon footprint
- Often make purchase decisions with carbon footprint in mind

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Quote from a Believer

Interviewer: How much responsibility does the consumer have when it comes to before you buy it, making the decision of what to buy? How does the product manufacturer's marketing sort of factor into that?

Interviewee: It is the responsibility of the consumer to buy products that are ethically and responsibly made, and if every consumer did that, then there would only be a market for products that were ethically and responsibly made. Ultimately, I would say probably 90 percent of the onus - 85 percent of the onus, let's go with - is on the consumer, on buying products that are responsibly made. Then the rest of it falls on retailers and manufacturers to produce, and sell, and clearly advertise, and market these products as being made responsibly.

Interviewer: You feel like certifications are an important part of that marketing.

Interviewee: Yeah, I would say a certification from a company, a third-party company that has verified whatever the statement is, is worth infinitely more with that little green badge than the company saying that they did that because it’s verified, presumably.

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Summary of the Believers

- These consumers seem to just expect companies to do the right thing sustainability-wise. So while it makes them happy to see companies doing offsets and the like, it isn't any sort of amazing surprise to them
- In particular, they would be glad to see corporations offering offsets for electronics (for all phases, including the use phase), but they also see all the stakeholders (manufacturers, retailers, consumers, and the government) as having a role to play. So they would also be ok, too, with it being the consumer's responsibility to cover/manage their own use phase
- Even these very savvy people don't fully understand where/how GHGs are emitted for electronics. Production GHGs are particularly confusing, and they usually think the transportation %'s would be higher
- They would appreciate more education on electronics carbon emissions, in the form of infographics. There is an opportunity for manufacturers to educate consumers about the impact of the products they use in a positive way
- Because they think holistically about their carbon footprints, they may not see electronics as one of their top concerns. They seem to be most focused on food and personal energy use, and reducing their consumption overall

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The Skeptics and the Uninterested

- Cautious or disengaged about climate change
- A mix between understand the science behind climate change and wish they knew more
- Believe it is the result of a mixture of human activities and natural changes in the environment
- Usually have not seen impacts yet of climate change to themselves and others
- Have somewhat taken steps to prepare for climate change
- A mix of think climate change will impact them personally in the future and not
- Half have considered what their personal carbon footprint is
- Rarely to never make purchase decisions with carbon footprint in mind

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Quote from a Skeptic

Interviewer: [If a company said] So, we're gonna offset your electronic footprint, the carbon footprint created by your electronic use. And they said, "You should take a look and see what other things you do have a footprint." Would that make you curious at all about using a carbon footprint calculator?

Interviewee: Yeah, I might, actually. Just because if I'm seeing they're doing something, I'm doing something, what are other steps that I do? And then it'd be interesting to see the calculator and see what other people do. So, that's if all these people are putting in their data, if I could have 100 devices and I drive, here's my footprint. And just seeing what the impact of that might be,of seeing what impact you are having and what you can mitigate, if possible. People have got to work, so there's no way out of that one, for the most part.

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Summary of the Skeptics

- The skeptics seem to put less responsibility on the consumers to do right, and more on the manufacturers (to the extent that they even worry about climate change)
- The skeptics might have higher standards/skepticism, but at the same time they want companies to do something real and praise-worthy. They want to see third-party certification of claims, for example, because they are wary of greenwashing
- They seem resigned to the idea that solving climate change is incredibly complex and are stuck a bit in inaction and pessimism as a result
- While these groups can make some connection to their own environment (temperature, for example) and climate change, it does not reach a level of urgency for them
- At the same time, the skeptics don't seem opposed to learning more, even about their own footprint. But information, and the offer of climate-neutral products, may or may not change their action, depending on the convenience of taking action and the features of the products in question

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Summary of the Uninterested

- The uninterested don't really seem to strongly place the responsibility anywhere, as they don't seem to think about climate change and carbon much. They often have other environmental concerns like pollution, though, which they and the skeptics both care about
- It seems unlikely the uninterested would change their purchasing behavior based on a climate-offsetted product; all other factors would have to be absolutely equal and they'd have to be paying attention
- Both groups are turned-off with apocalyptic messages about the urgency of climate change

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The Resistors

- Doubtful or dismissive about climate change
- A mix of understand, wish they knew more, and not knowing the science behind climate change
- Don’t know or believe it is the result of a mixture of human activities and natural changes in the environment
- None have seen impacts yet of climate change to themselves and others
- Have not at all or somewhat taken steps to prepare for climate change
- Think climate change will impact them somewhat or very little in the future
- None have considered what their personal carbon footprint is
- Rarely to never make purchase decisions with carbon footprint in mind

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Quote from a Resistor

Interviewer: Tell me a little bit about- what do you know about climate change, or what have you heard, and what do you believe? It's a big question. I'm going to start off with a hard one.

Interviewee: I obviously have heard a lot. Everything gets blamed on climate change, right? Do I believe it? No. I don't know how detailed you want me to get on that ...

Interviewer: What things have you seen being blamed on climate change?

Interviewee: I'm in Texas. It's 100 degrees here, and they say it's climate change that has created this. All my life, it has always been 100 degrees in Texas, but I realize climate change is that big giant thing, but I also know for a fact that the earth shifts and things- it's a natural progression.

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Summary of the Resistors

- Climate change for them is a political weapon, which turns them off or causes them to react
- They aren't against some environmental actions especially if they are framed in terms of environmental stewardship, e.g. pollution reduction ("replace your divots")
- They don't have a clear understanding of climate change, but they believe they are well informed and backed up by science
- While they can be engaged in long-form conversation to agree with the usefulness of climate change actions (without them being called as such), they are likely not willing to pay more, take additional actions, or have their freedoms of consumption restricted in order for this to happen
- They will support brands whose cause they share, but climate change is not one of those causes
- Company's action around climate change wouldn't necessarily be offensive (as long as not politically framed), but would barely register their attention
- In some way, covering use phase carbon emissions for this group is good, because they are quite unlikely to take any action on their own

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Recommendations for Use-Phase Carbon Offsetting Messaging

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Recommendations for Use-Phase Carbon Offsetting Messaging

- Educate consumers on the impacts of electronics, highlighting the use phase. Think infographic-level education
- Focus on specific efforts, not the abstract idea of climate change
- Provide a link to learn more about carbon footprinting and offsets and ways they can reduce even more of their footprint
- Third-party validation will help with trust issues
- Work to keep messaging practical, apolitical and non-judgmental. Where possible and logical, link to a topic like pollution which every group seems to have some concern about
- Back-up offsets with examples of other things the company is doing to reduce their carbon footprint
- Overall, there is a great educational opportunity to:
  - **inform customers** about carbon impacts of electronics, especially the use-phase (which they usually don't think about)
  - **showcase existing efforts to reduce footprint** in the other phases (production, transportation, end-of-life) and **communicate the company's commitment to offset** the rest

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Thank you

Carrie Snyder
carrie@morethansustainability.com

John Rooks
jrooks@thesoapgroup.com

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