



Source: World Wide Views on Global Warming [www.wvviews.org](http://www.wvviews.org)

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## New Survey Finds Citizens in US and 37 Other Countries Demand More Aggressive Climate Change Action than Congress or Copenhagen Envision

[Boston, Massachusetts – October 22, 2009] The first-ever deliberative global survey of citizen opinion, [World Wide Views on Global Warming \(WWViews\)](http://www.wvviews.org) has found that people from diverse backgrounds in the US and worldwide overwhelmingly want faster action, deeper GHG emissions cuts and stronger enforcement than either US climate legislation proposals or Copenhagen treaty conference preparations are currently contemplating. Among the [survey's findings](#):

- 90% of U. S. participants say it is urgent to reach a tough, new agreement at the UN Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen in December and not punt to subsequent meetings;
- 89% said by 2020 emissions should be cut 25-40% below 1990 levels (the Kerry Boxer Senate bill would cut US emissions 20% below 2005 levels);
- 71% want nations that fail to meet their obligations under a new agreement to be penalized severely or significantly;
- 69% believe the price of fossil fuels should be increased.

These views were echoed across 37 other countries on six continents. In general, the global results showed WWViews participants wanted more aggressive action than their delegates to Copenhagen envision, including:

- strict targets of keeping global warming within 2 degrees Celsius (half of participants, especially in countries hardest hit by climate change, want measures to hold temperatures at the current level or even bring them down to pre-industrial levels);
- fairer and more proportionate burden sharing, including 2020 emissions reduction targets for fast-growing economies like India, China and Brazil, and low-income developing countries;
- sanctions against countries that do not live up to their emission reduction commitments;
- strong new international financial mechanisms and institutions to support these goals.

By contrast, in current policy negotiations these goals are either much less ambitious or absent altogether. Preparations for the Copenhagen conference and Congressional debate on US climate change legislation are both following a similar pattern of scaling back ambitions and expectations for a treaty or a bill, focusing instead on limited areas of current agreement and incremental steps, and deferring more contentious issues of targets, timetables, funding and enforcement until later.

“We are hearing from climate policymakers that it will take more time to do things right, and that we have to meet people where they are instead of imposing radical reforms from above,” said Dr. Richard Sclove, the US advisor to WWViews. “But these results show the people are way ahead of the policymakers. If Congress and Copenhagen delegates want to act in accordance with citizen views, they have to do far more and go far faster, not scale back and slow down.”

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World Wide Views gathered its data from citizen deliberations it held in Atlanta, Boston, Denver, Los Angeles, and Phoenix, as well as in cities throughout Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe and Latin America. It showed citizens of all 38 countries, even low-income ones, are willing to take responsibility for lowering emissions, and to pay to do so. Of the 38 countries, China's citizens were the least inclined to introduce 2020 targets for fast-growing economies, yet even so, 45% voted for it and 52% favored limiting emissions growth.

“Our deliberative method yielded very different results from polls, which purport to show much more diffident attitudes to climate change, and even some skepticism about it. But I'd argue our data is much more accurate” said Dr. Richard Worthington, WWViews U.S. coordinator. “For one thing, for a dozen countries, our data is the only data, because we worked in places so far excluded from international polling on climate change [including the Maldives, Saint Lucia, Uruguay, Norway, Switzerland, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Uganda, Vietnam]. For another, we elicited citizen opinion through informed, daylong deliberations, not through knee-jerk answers to carefully circumscribed questions.”

WWViews constituted the first ever-global “citizen consultation,” using a citizen deliberation methodology distinct from ordinary quantitative surveying or polling. Polls on climate change ask a random sampling of respondents one or two general questions about one's prior opinion on climate change and what one's national government should do. World Wide Views gathered people with diverse backgrounds and views, excluding climate change experts and those representing institutions with vested interests in climate policy. It gave participants balanced expert information in advance, based on the Fourth Assessment Report the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, and then allowed participants a day of deliberation together, after which they voted on their recommendations as to what delegates assembling from around the world in Copenhagen should do.

The project was initiated and coordinated by the Danish Board of Technology, the Danish Parliament's office of technology assessment ([www.tekno.dk](http://www.tekno.dk)), working with [partners](#) worldwide. US partners included Arizona State University's Consortium for Science, Policy and Outcomes; Colorado School of Mines; the Boston Museum of Science; Boston University; the Brookfield Institute; Georgia Institute of Technology; the Loka Institute; and Pomona College.

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## ***NOTES TO EDITORS AND PRODUCERS:***

*Dr. Sclove and Dr. Worthington are available for in-person or phone interviews on request. Project organizers and participants from the five US deliberation sites and from all 38 represented nations, as well as staff from the World Wide Views global secretariat in Denmark and expert commentators are also available. To arrange an interview or for more detailed information on the results of the World Wide Views project, contact Stephen Kent, 914-589-5988 or [skent@kentcom.com](mailto:skent@kentcom.com).*

*For photos and videos from the participating countries go to <http://teknologiraad.surfoffice.eu>; login at the bottom of the page with username: **WWVpress**, password: **269pressDown**. For example, you can download a photo from the World Wide Views meeting in Boston [here](#).*

*A detailed report with further analysis of results from the 38 nations will be delivered to government policymakers on November 19, 2009. Journalists can e-mail [JM@tekno.dk](mailto:JM@tekno.dk) for pre-release information.*