

As public process begins to create plan for climate change, survey shows majority of Delawareans say it is time to act

DOVER, Del. – With public input sessions beginning next week to create Delaware’s plan to mitigate, adapt and respond to climate change, most Delawareans believe climate change and sea level rise are happening, and a majority say the state should act now to address both issues, [according to a survey commissioned by DNREC’s Division of Climate, Coastal & Energy](#).

Residents surveyed also support a range of key strategies to reduce climate change and respond to rising sea levels. The survey, supervised by the [University of Delaware’s Center for Political Communication](#), was conducted in late 2019 by Standage Market Research with the results announced today by DNREC.

On [March 3](#), [4](#) and [5](#), public input sessions will be held to provide an opportunity for Delawareans to learn more about how to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and better prepare the state for climate impacts. Workshop attendees will also have a chance to provide their thoughts on choices the state can make to more effectively take action on climate change. These workshops are the start of public interaction in creating Delaware’s Climate Action Plan, which will review what’s being done in Delaware to reduce the impacts of climate change that the state already is experiencing, such as sea level rise and increased flooding in some areas, and to provide a comprehensive “road map” of steps to help mitigate those impacts on Delaware communities.

“More and more Delawareans are experiencing the impacts that climate change and sea level rise are having on our state, and this survey shows they support actions to reduce this growing threat,” said DNREC Secretary Shawn M. Garvin. “The next step for Delawareans is to take part in conversations to help Delaware decide where and how we must act.”

The key findings of the survey include:

- **Delawareans believe in climate change.** Three in 4 Delawareans (77 percent) are completely or mostly convinced that climate change is occurring, and 70 percent say the state should take immediate action to reduce its impact. Almost as many (71 percent) are completely or mostly convinced that sea level rise is happening, and almost two-thirds (63 percent) say we should take immediate action to reduce its impacts.
- **More Delawareans have personally experienced or observed local impacts of climate change.** Fifty-six percent report personal experience with the impacts of climate change, compared to 53 percent from a 2014 survey sponsored by DNREC. Meanwhile, a growing proportion of Delawareans (47 percent) now say they have personally experienced sea level rise. That figure represents a 19-point increase from the 2014 climate survey (28 percent) and a 25-point increase from a 2009 survey conducted by Responsive Management (22 percent).
- **Delawareans are concerned about the future of climate change.** A combined 56 percent of Delawareans think climate change will personally harm them a great deal (21 percent) or a moderate amount (35 percent). That grows to a combined 77 percent when respondents were asked if they think climate change will harm future generations a great deal (61 percent) or a moderate amount (16 percent).

“Future generations will judge us based upon the actions we take today,” Secretary Garvin said. “Failure to take action

now increasingly locks us into a future with increased flooding, more intense heat waves and threats to our quality of life.”

Standage Market Research interviewed a representative sample of 1,126 registered Delaware voters for the study either by telephone (601 respondents) or online (525 respondents). Interviewees were selected through random sampling. Statistical results are weighted by demographic factors to reflect population values. The margin of sampling error for the complete set of weighted data is ± 2.9 percentage points.

A full report of the survey results will be released in March.

Three Climate Action Plan public input sessions are planned next week, one in each county, from 4:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. each evening. The first session will take place Tuesday, March 3, at the CHEER Community Center, 20520 Sand Hill Road, Georgetown. The session will move to the Wilmington Public Library, 10 East 10th Street, Wilmington, DE 19801, on Wednesday, March 4, and a final session will take place Thursday, March 5, at Del Tech’s Del-One Conference Center, 100 Campus Drive, Dover, DE 19901.

View the complete summary report of the climate perceptions survey at de.gov/climatesurvey.

About DNREC

The Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control protects and manages the state’s natural resources, protects public health, provides outdoor recreational opportunities and educates Delawareans about the environment. The Division of Climate, Coastal & Energy uses science, education, policy development and incentives to address Delaware’s climate, energy and coastal challenges. For more information, visit the [website](#) and connect with @DNREC on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) or [LinkedIn](#).

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