

# COMMUNICATING CLIMATE CHANGE IN MEDIA

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Meteorologist Lisa Meadows  
American Meteorological Society Annual Meeting 2024



# Communication Goal & Objectives:

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Goal: Identify best practices for communicating climate change to a non-scientific audience.

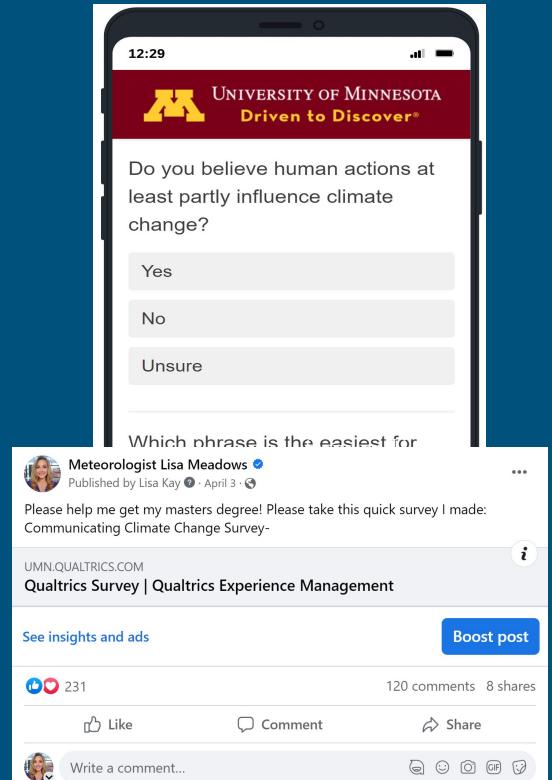
## Objectives:

1. Determine topics that matter most to viewers.
2. Discover topics most confusing to viewers.
3. Obtain suggestions for climate reporting stories.
4. Establish if there is an audience for long-form climate change stories on digital platforms.

# U of M Capstone: Communicating Climate Change with CBS

## Research Approach:

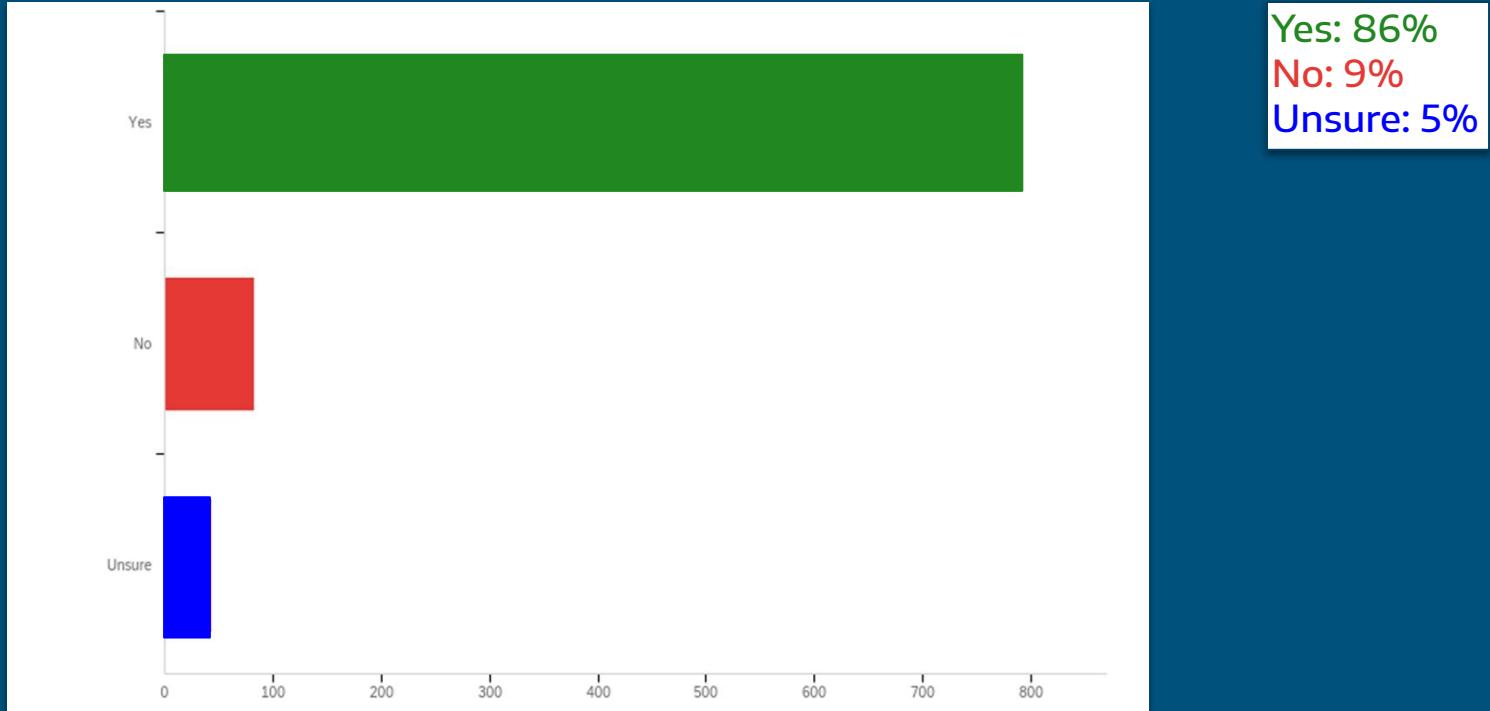
- Qualtrics climate change survey.
- 10 multiple choice (unsure option) & two fill-in blank.
- Posted on professional Facebook & Twitter.
- ~1K respondents.



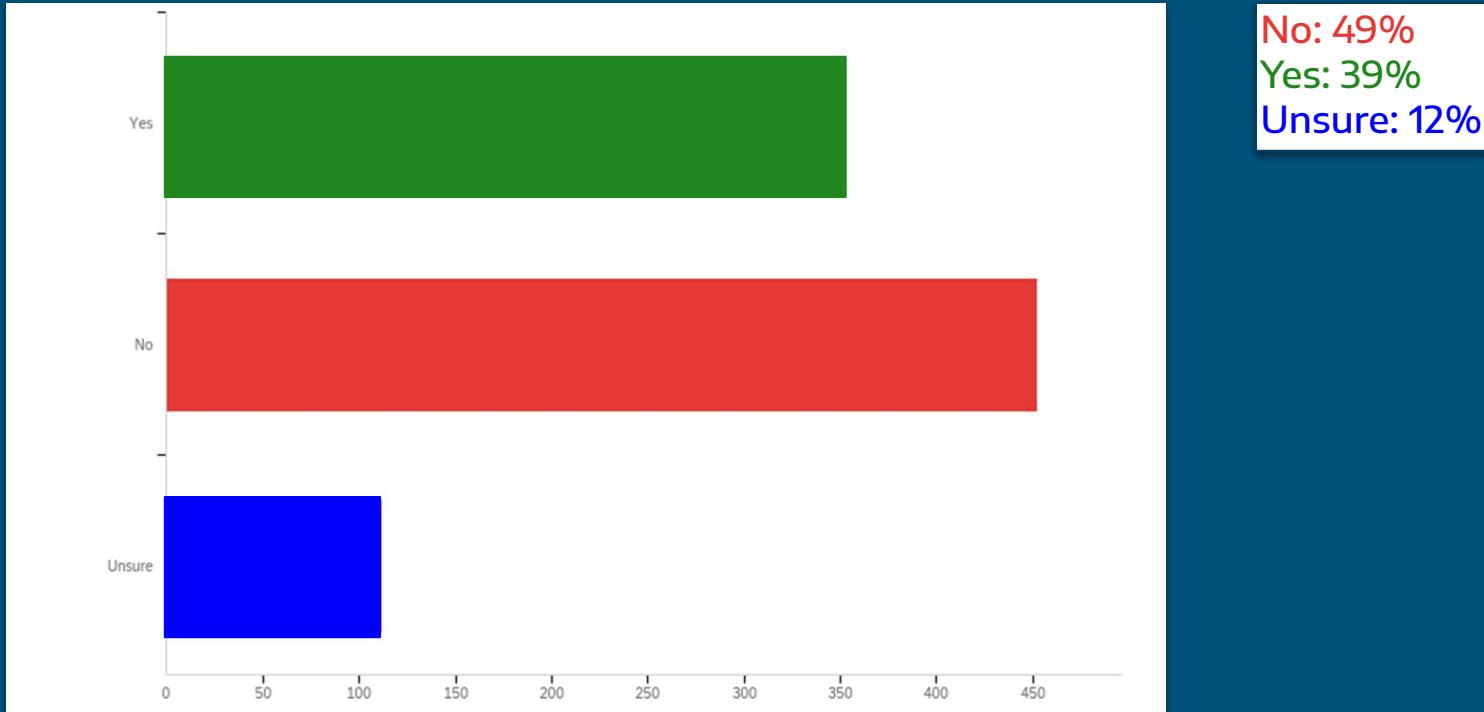
The image shows a composite of two screenshots. The top screenshot is a mobile phone displaying a Qualtrics survey. The survey question is: "Do you believe human actions at least partly influence climate change?" Below the question are three options: "Yes", "No", and "Unsure". The bottom screenshot is a Facebook post from "Meteorologist Lisa Meadows". The post text reads: "Please help me get my masters degree! Please take this quick survey I made: Communicating Climate Change Survey-". It includes a link to "UMN.QUALTRICS.COM" and "Qualtrics Survey | Qualtrics Experience Management". The post has 231 likes, 120 comments, and 8 shares. There are also "See insights and ads" and "Boost post" buttons.



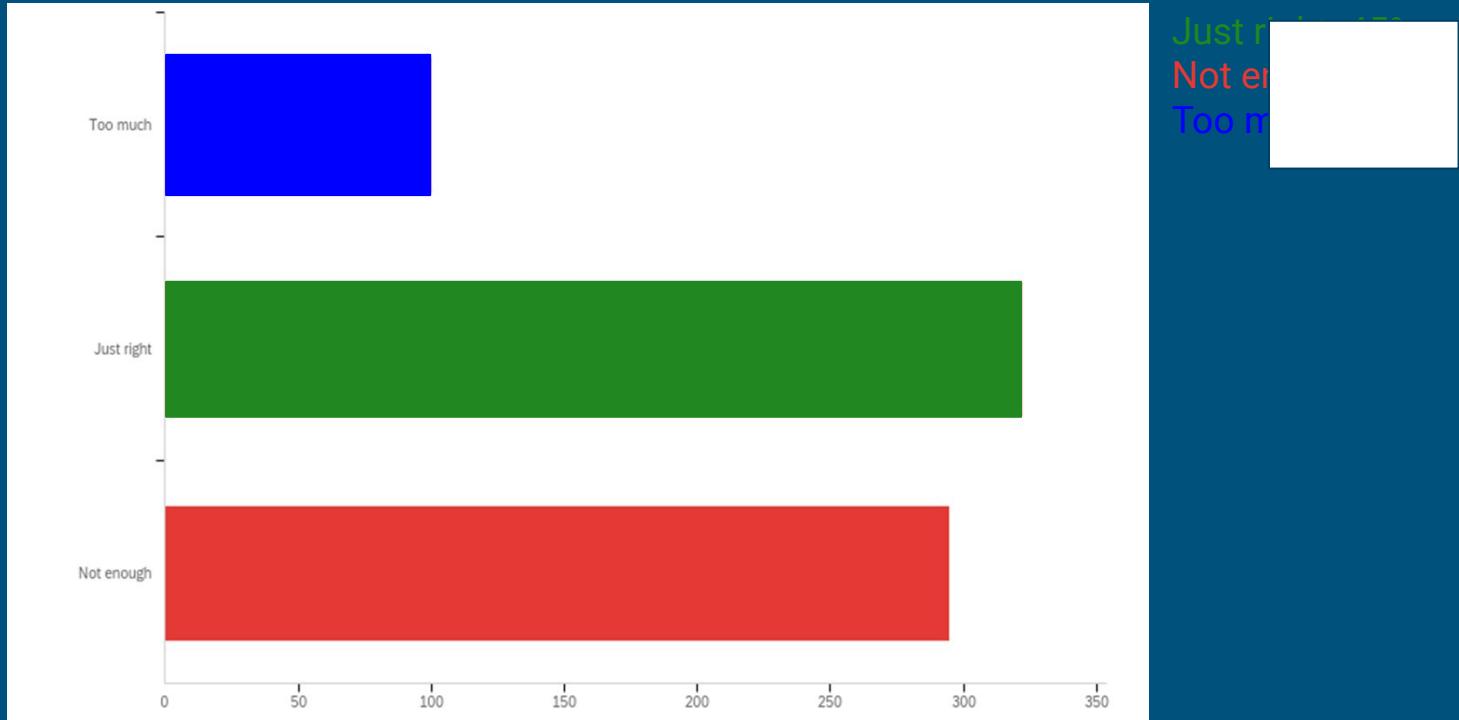
# Do you believe human actions at least partly influence climate change?



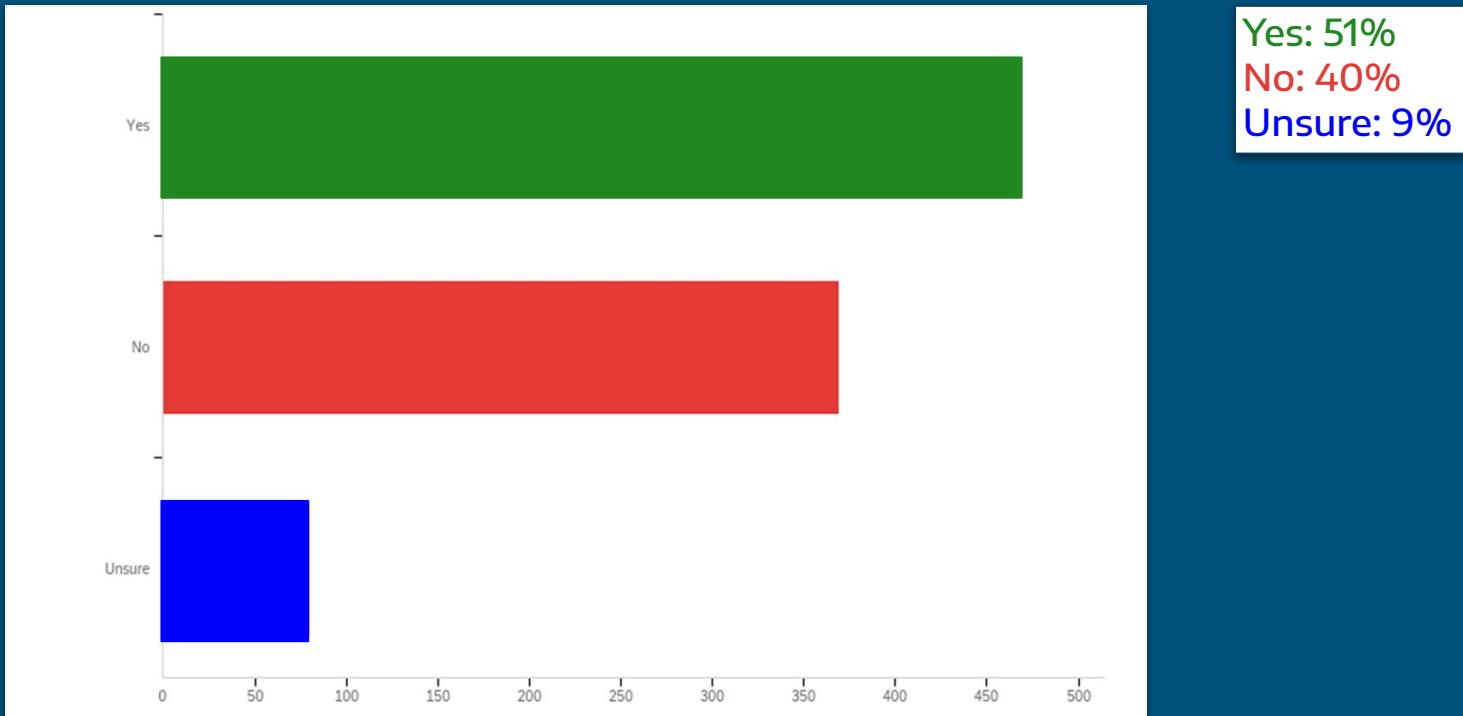
# Do you feel local news stations do enough coverage of climate change?



# How do you feel WCCO CBS News Minnesota covers climate change?



# Do you feel the information the media provides about climate change is confusing?



# What part of climate change is most confusing to you?

1. Extreme cold and snow with global warming?
2. What can humans do?
3. How much is human-influenced vs naturally occurring?

*“Scientist need to communicate the science of climate change better to the public in perhaps language more suited outside of the scientific community.”~Anonymous Response*

# What matters the most to you when it comes to climate change?

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1. The impact on humans.
2. What humans can do, especially locally.
3. The impact on the Earth/animals.

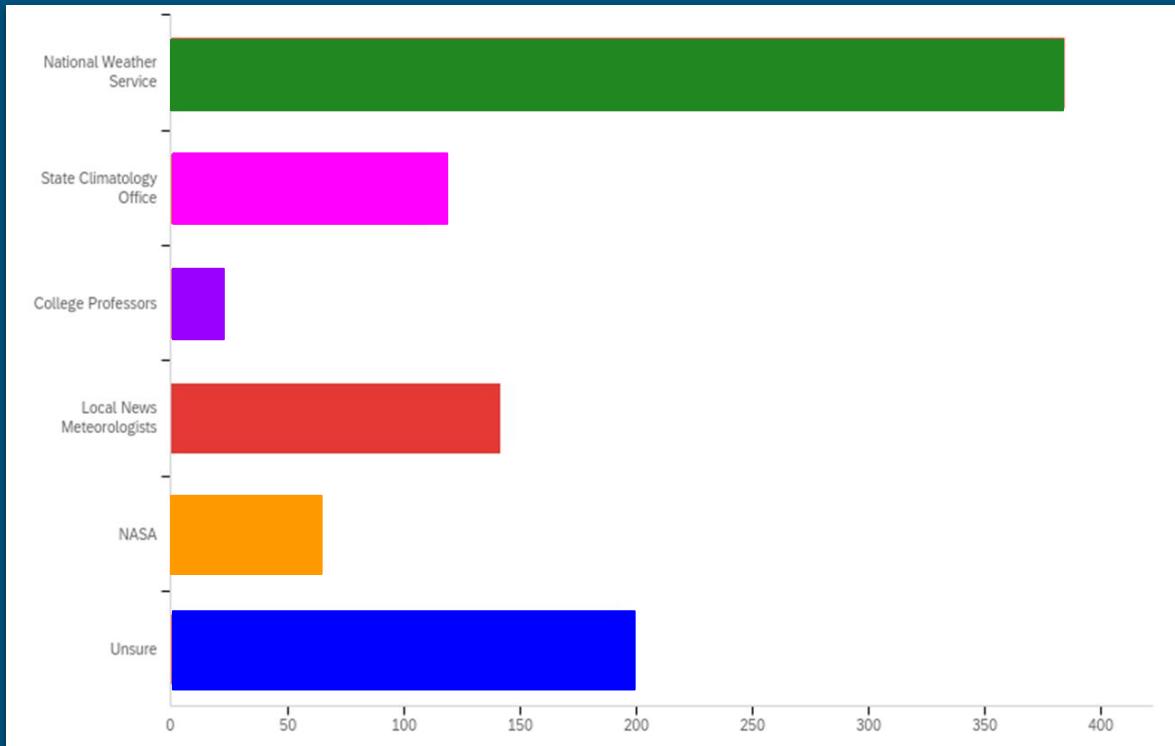


Source: CBS

*"Minnesota's North Country-  
it defines our state and we must  
preserve it."*

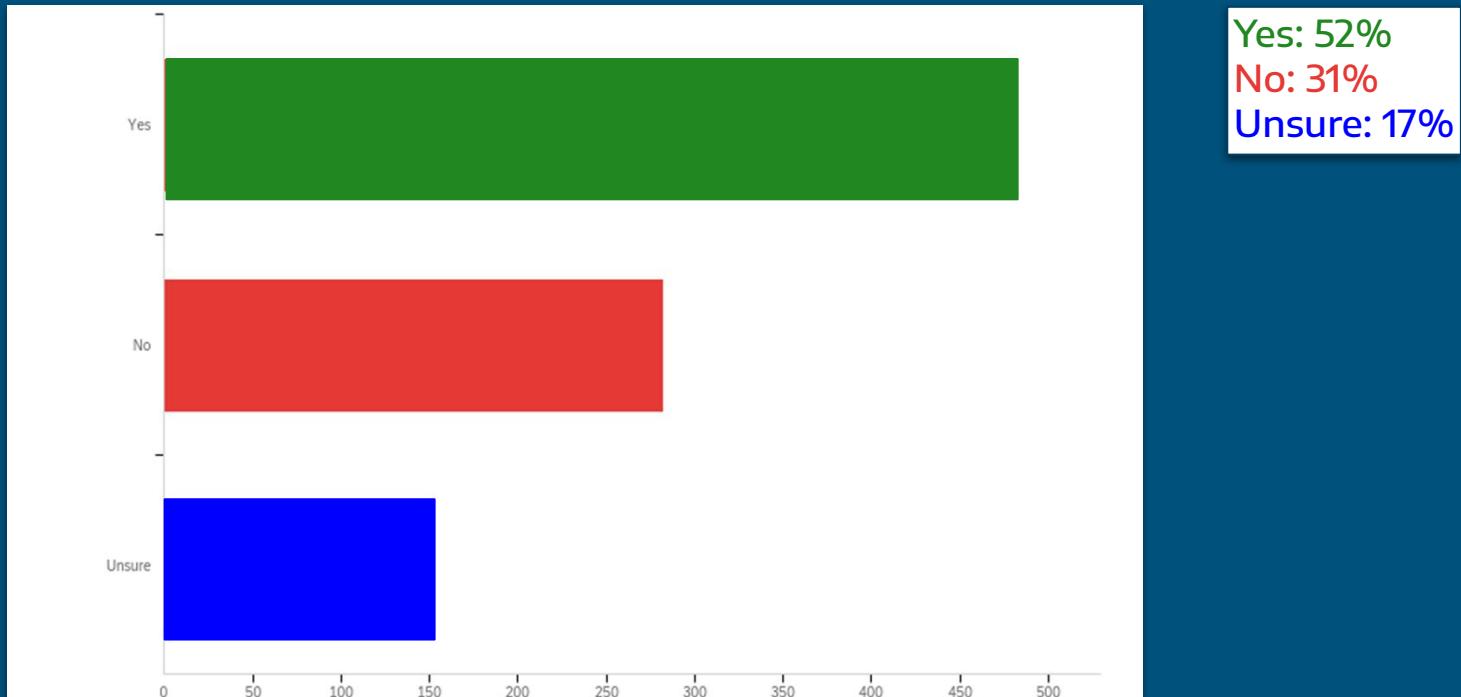
*~Anonymous Response*

# Who do you trust the most to give you climate change information?

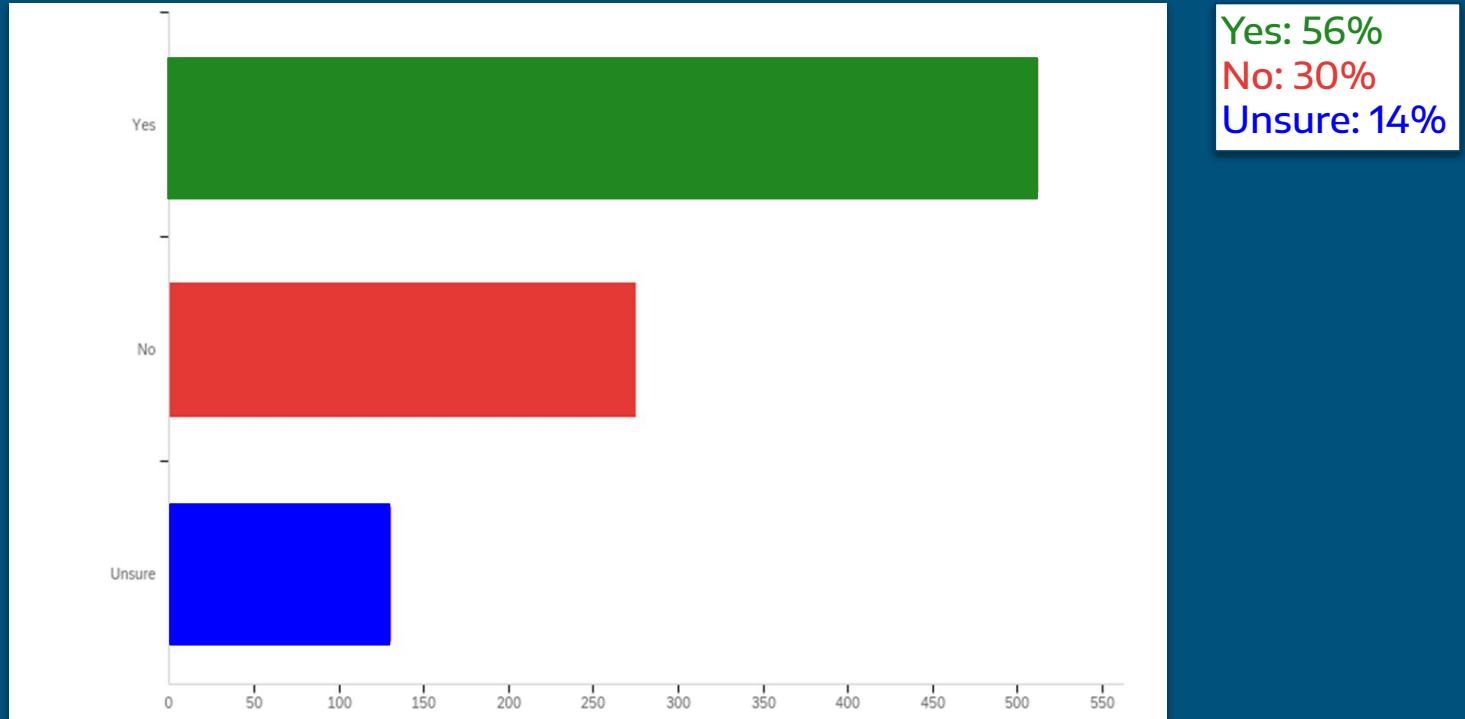


NWS: 42%  
Unsure: 21%  
Local News  
Meteorologists: 15%  
State Climatology  
Office: 12%  
NASA: 7%  
College Professors: 3%

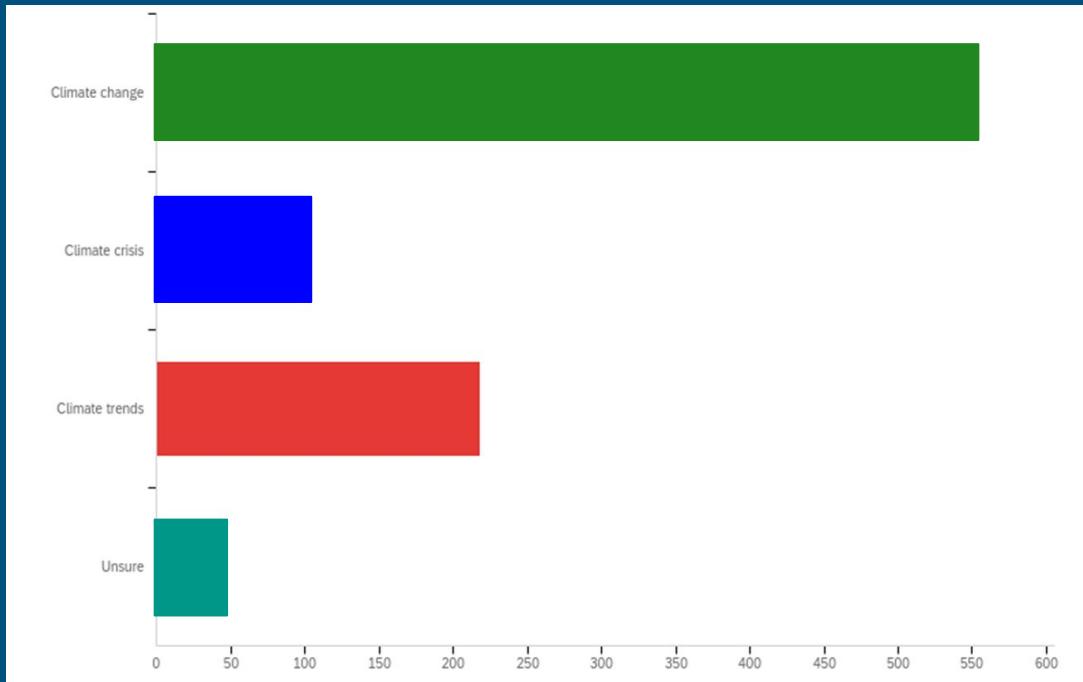
Would you go to your local news station's online news stream to watch an expanded climate change story you saw on the news?



# Would you go to your local news station's website to read more about a climate change story you heard on the news?

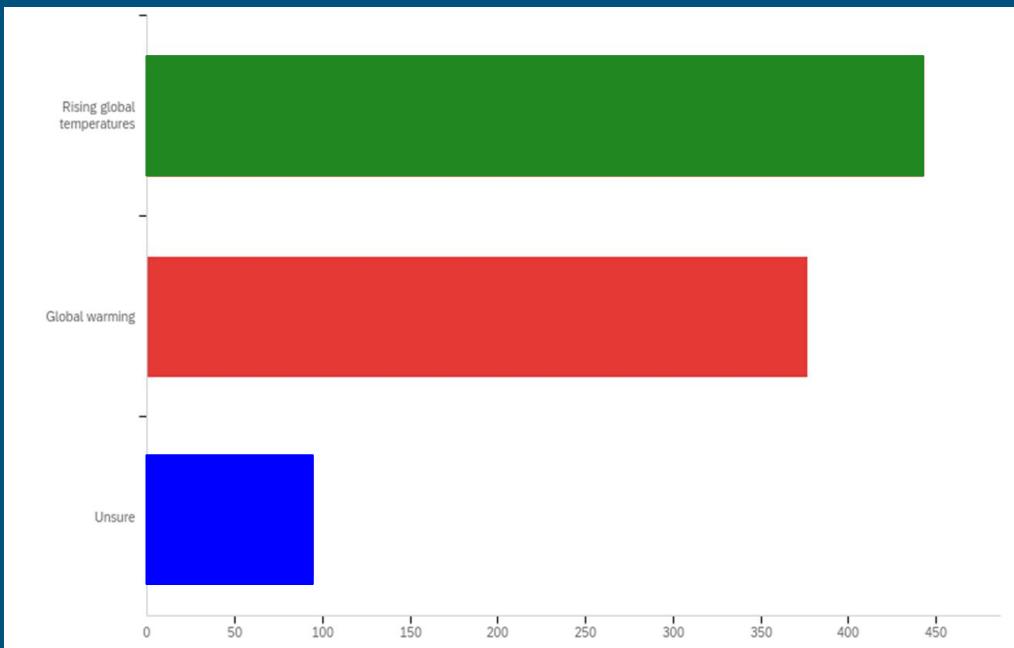


# Which phrase is easiest for you to understand?



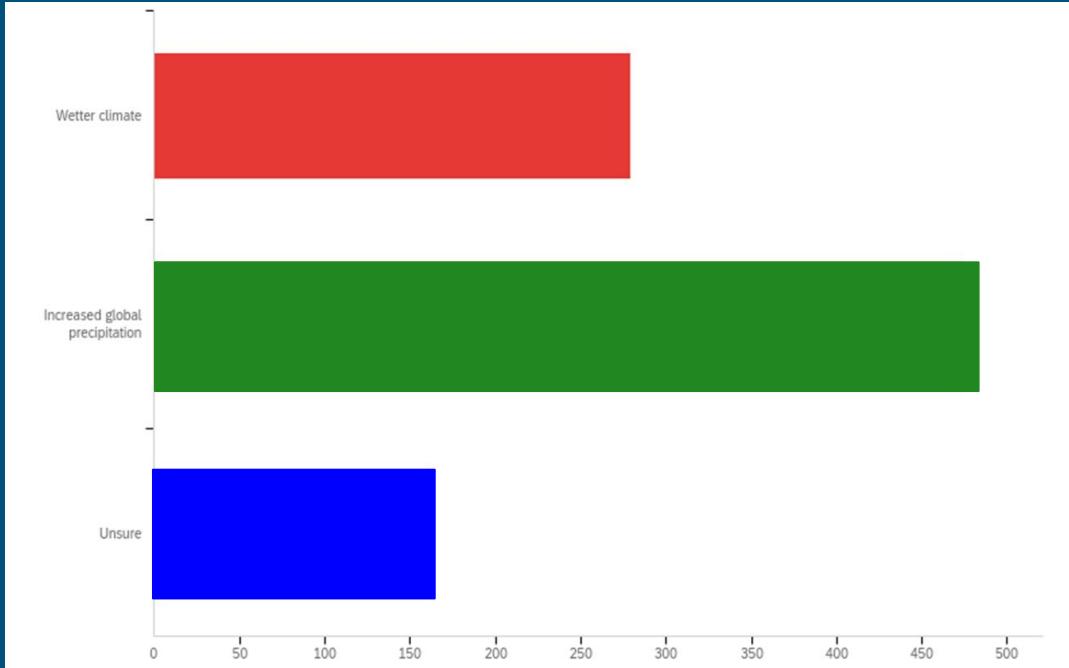
Climate change: 560  
Climate crisis: 110  
Climate trends: 220  
Unsure: 5%

# Which phrase is easiest for you to understand regarding climate change?



Rising global temperatures: 48%  
Global warming: 38%  
Unsure: 11%

# What do you think about regarding climate change?



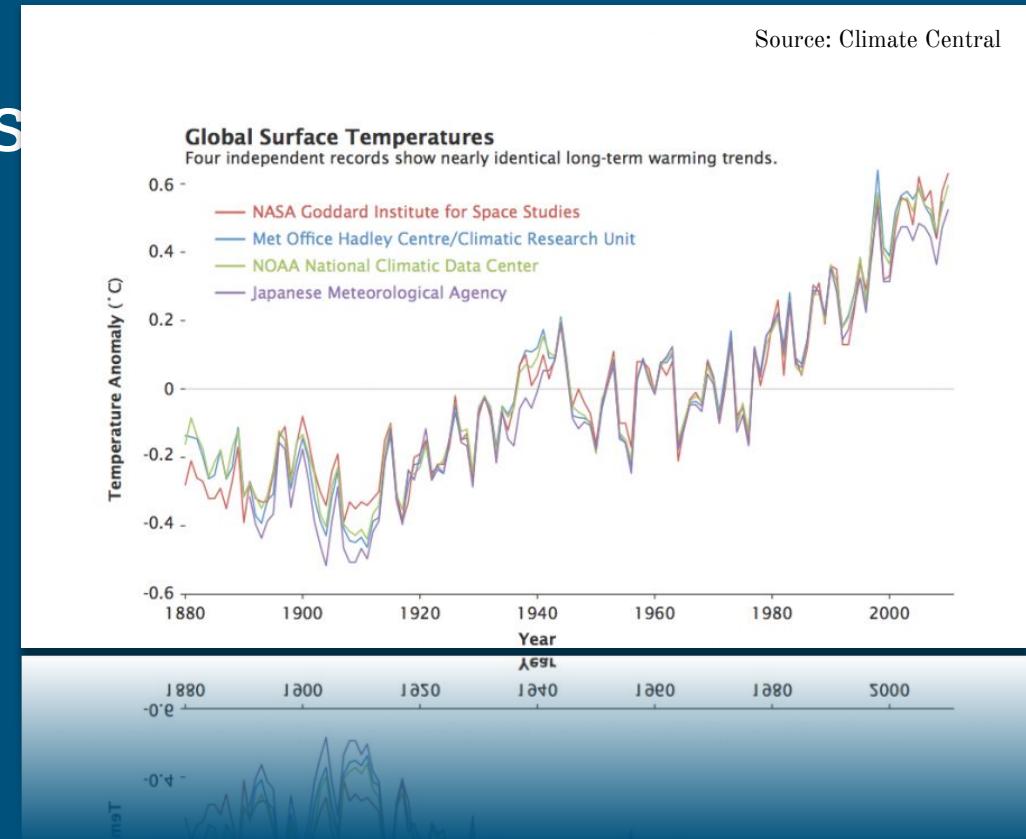
Increased global precipitation: 50%  
Wetter climate: 50%  
Unsure: 18%

# Interview Findings

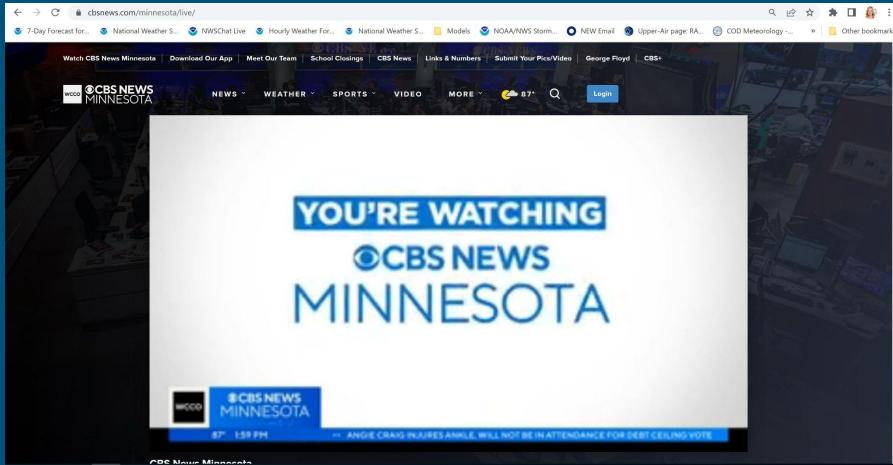
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- Explain variability.
- Rewording could be key.
- Not all doom and gloom.

Source: Climate Central



# Key Findings:



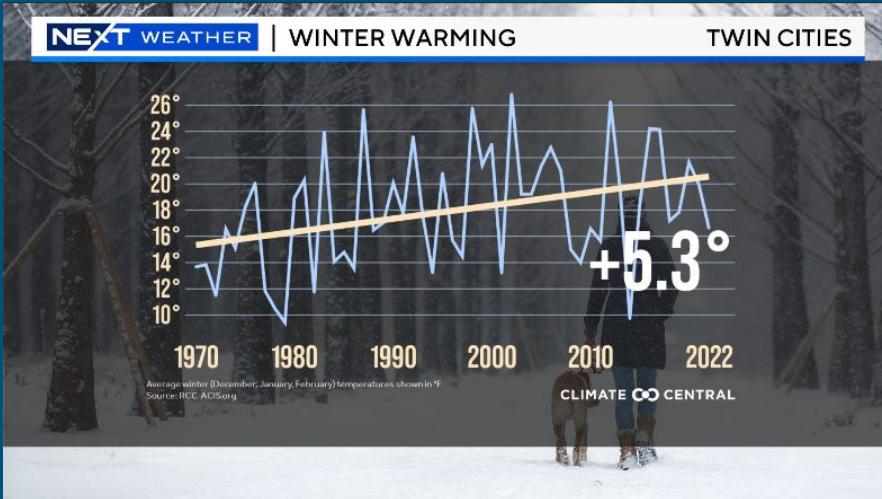
Source: WCCO

Local News Viewers feel...

- not enough climate change coverage on the news.
- climate change coverage is confusing.
- digital mediums should expand upon climate change coverage.
- trust NWS & broadcast mets the most.

# Key Findings:

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## News Viewers...

- want to know what they can do.
- will trust NWS & broadcast mets.
- don't understand cold weather extremes.
- want more info on natural variability vs human influence.
- want human impact stories.
- will utilize digital platforms.

# Key Findings:

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Vocabulary recommendations:

- Rising global temperatures
- Increased global precipitation
- NOT climate crisis or climate trends

Who do you trust?

1. NWS
2. Unsure
3. Local broadcast meteorologists



Source: NWS



Source: WCCO

# Key Findings:

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- What they can do about it is key!
- Impact on humans followed by animals & Earth.
- How there is extreme cold on a warming Earth.
- Natural variability vs human influenced.

# The Solutions & Recommended Strategy

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- Expand climate change coverage to include digital elements.
- Interview NWS and Next Weather Team Meteorologists for stories.
- Build trust in climate scientists, NASA & university researchers.
- Don't just show the problem, give answers.
- Focus on human impact stories.
- Explain cold extremes in a warming climate.
- Explain natural variability.

# Sources

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- Blumenfeld, K. (unpublished). Communicating Climate Change Interview, (March 14, 2023).
- Boulay, P. (unpublished). Communicating Climate Change Interview, (March 22, 2023).
- Meadows, L. (Unpublished). Capstone Research: Communicating Climate Change with CBS [Dataset: Qualtrics].
- Schechner, David. Communicating Climate Change Interview, (March 18, 2023).

Contact:

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Climate Central:

