

## *A Closer Look: the Influence of Health and Faith on Climate*

Are Americans looking to leaders outside of the political arena for guidance on climate change? **ecoAmerica** and **Lake Research Partners** set out to find this answer in the **May 2018 American Climate Perspective Survey**. The survey found that there is increasing opportunity for faith leaders and health professionals to lend their leadership to climate.

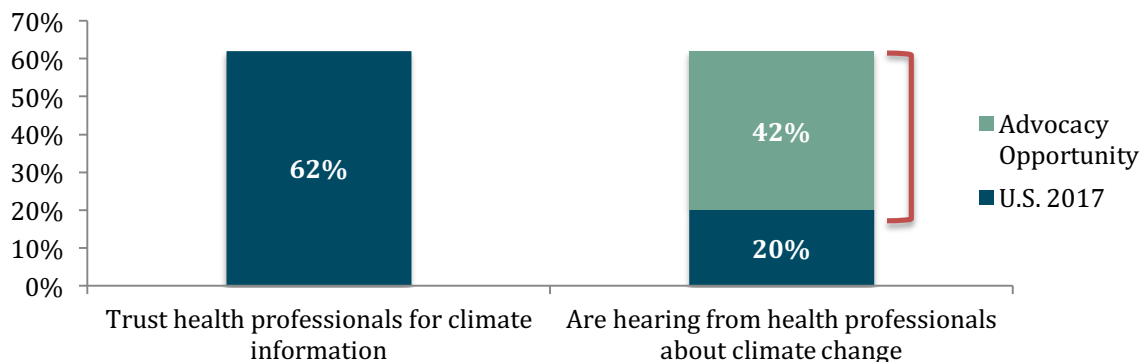
And the good news is that both health professionals and faith leaders are taking up the mantle. In addition to the American Public Health Association making the year of climate and health, the Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments (ANHE), who hosted [Climate, Health, and Nursing: A Call to Action conference](#) bringing nurses together to discuss climate impacts on health and strategize protecting vulnerable communities. And, in addition to Pope Francis' climate encyclical, *Laudato Si*, a diversity of faith leaders are elevating climate as a visible national issue. [American Baptist Churches USA](#)'s Rev. Dr. Lee B. Spitzer recently announced its recommitment to care for God's creation, including a call for clergy, congregations, and individual disciples to advocate for climate issues and solutions.

Despite all of this promising momentum, there is still work to do to fill the climate leadership gap. Relatively few Americans are currently hearing information from faith or health leaders, however, both are perceived as trusted for information on climate change (with trust ascending).

### **Opportunity: Americans trust health leaders for climate information, feel the health impacts from climate change, and tie climate action to health benefits.**

ecoAmerica and Lake Research Partners found that **Health professionals are the second most trusted messengers for information on climate change (62% nationally)**, just after scientists (70%), with a 5-point increase since 2015. Unfortunately, only 20% of Americans report hearing about the climate from health professionals. An added finding is that Americans are feeling the health-related impacts from climate change. More than half of Americans report related health impacts—and it's on the rise. For example, 50% of Americans are reporting breathing problems with a 7-point increase since 2015. Finally, considering **67% of Americans are increasingly correlating climate action with the benefit of better health** (40% strongly agreeing, which is up 16-points since 2015), the climate movement is faced with a profound opportunity to accelerate health leadership on climate. The good news is that organizations like ecoAmerica and the Climate for Health program are taking up this mantle.

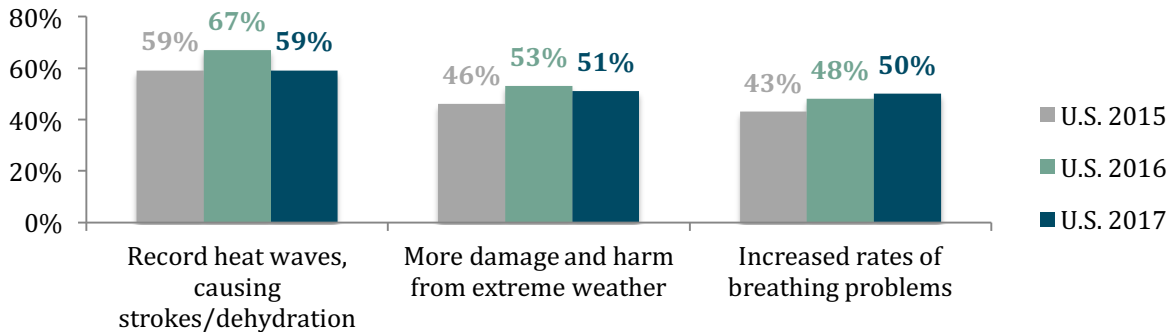
#### Trust



## Health Impacts

For each of the following, please indicate how they are personally affecting you.

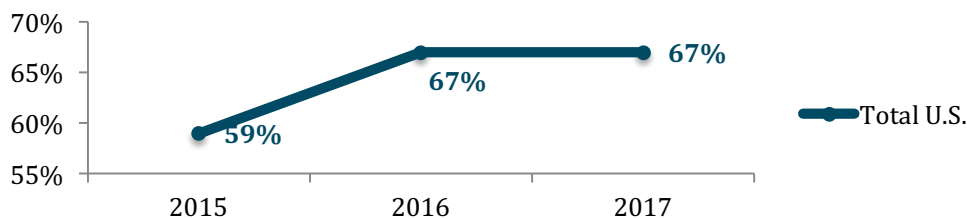
802 respondent(s) total nationally, % Total "A Lot / Some" and % "A Lot"



## Health Benefits of Climate Action

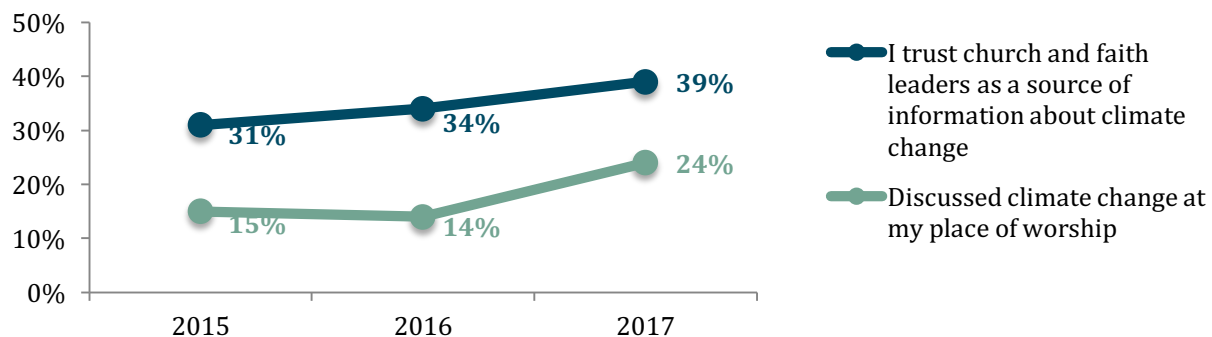
If the United States took steps to prevent future climate change, how would it affect your health?

802 respondent(s) total nationally, % Total "A Lot / Some"



## Hope in Faith: There is growing trust in faith leadership on climate, and climate discourse is becoming more frequent in places of worship

Although currently only 10% of Americans nationwide are hearing about climate change from faith leaders, four times as many people (39% nationally) trust faith leaders as messengers on the topic (an 8-point increase since 2015). And, nearly **one in four (24%) Americans are talking about climate change at their place of worship already** (a 9-point increase since 2015).



## Methodology

ecoAmerica and Lake Research Partners (LRP) designed and LRP administered this survey, which was conducted online September 25–27, 2017. The survey yielded a total of 802 adult responses. The sample was drawn from an online panel and the respondents were screened to ensure that they were over the age of 18. The national sample was weighted slightly by gender, region, age, and race.

The margin of error for the sample is +/-3.5%. In interpreting the survey results, it is important to note that all sample surveys are subject to possible sampling error. Thus, the results of a survey may differ from the results that would be obtained if the entire population was interviewed. The size of the sampling error depends upon both the total number of respondents in the survey and the percentage distribution of the responses to a particular question. For example, if 50% of the respondents in a sample of 802 respondents answered, “Yes” to a particular question, we can be 95% confident that the true percentage would fall within 3.5 points, or range from 46.5% to 53.5%.

## Special Thanks

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## Suggested Citation

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