

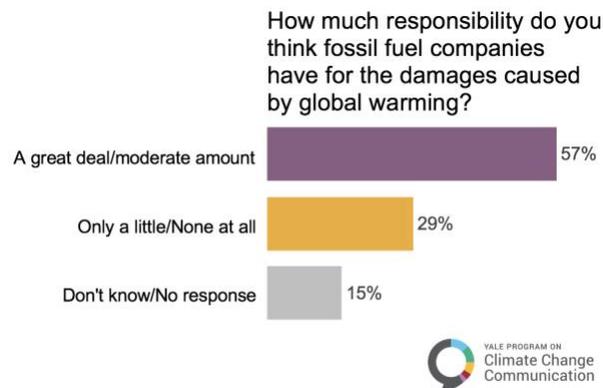
Yale Program on Climate Change Communication

For Immediate Release: June 19, 2019

Contact: Anthony Leiserowitz; (203) 432-4865; anthony.leiserowitz@yale.edu

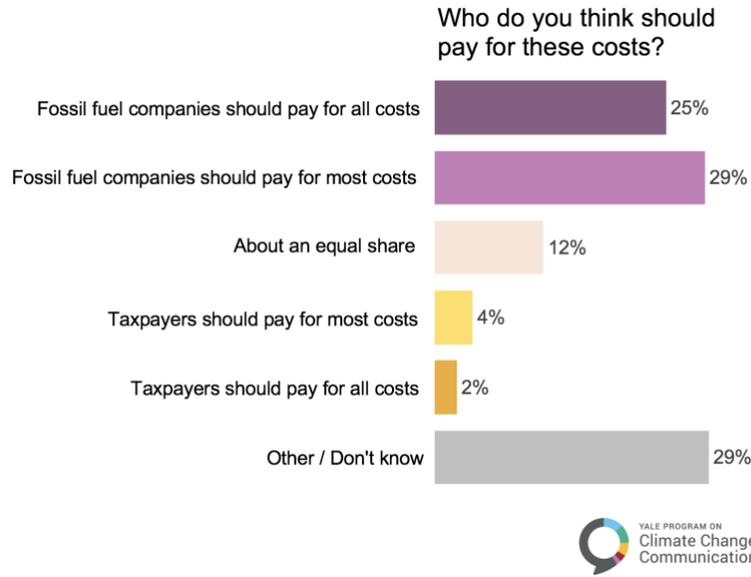
Majority of Americans Think Fossil Fuel Companies Responsible for Damages Caused by Global Warming

(New Haven, CT) – A new national survey finds that a majority of Americans think fossil fuel companies are at least partly responsible for the damages local communities are suffering from global warming impacts and that fossil fuel companies should pay for a portion of the damages to local communities.



“A majority of Americans say global warming is already harming their local community and hold the fossil fuel industry at least partly responsible for the damages,” said Anthony Leiserowitz of Yale University.

A majority of Americans (53%) think fossil fuel companies rather than taxpayers should pay for most or all of the costs of damages caused by global warming. Only 12% of Americans think taxpayers and fossil fuel companies should pay an equal share, and just 6% think taxpayers should pay for most or all of the costs. Many Americans (29%), however, say they do not know or provide alternative answers.



Climate science has found that the burning of fossil fuels (coal, oil, and natural gas) produced by fossil fuel companies is causing global warming. Global warming, in turn, results in more extreme weather, droughts, wildfires, flooding, and sea-level rise.

Such impacts are costly to many cities and states in the U.S., often requiring them to rebuild their communities and to develop protections against future damages. As a result, cities such as Baltimore (Maryland), Oakland (California), Boulder (Colorado), and New York City, among others, are suing oil and gas companies like ExxonMobil, BP, and Chevron for knowingly contributing to “[property damage, economic injuries and impacts to public health](#)” caused by climate change and sea-level rise.

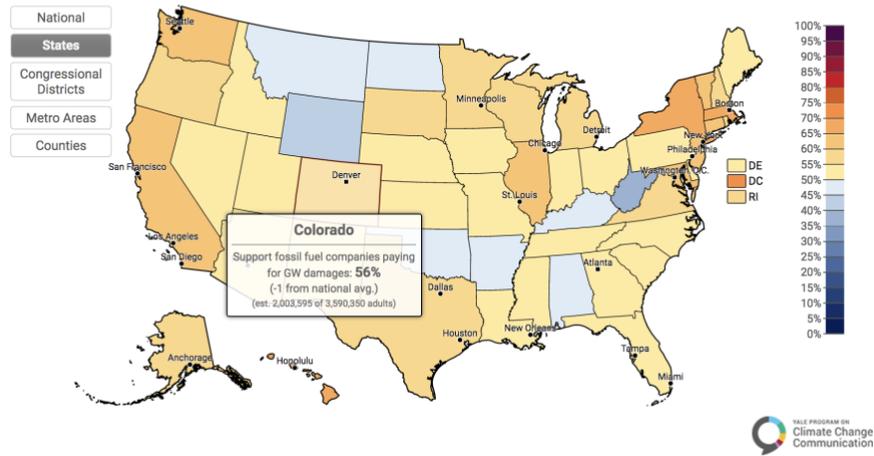
Half of Americans (50%) support their local officials filing a liability lawsuit against fossil fuel companies whose products contribute to climate change. Fewer (30%) oppose this idea, while the remainder do not have an opinion. In addition, two thirds of Americans (66%) distrust fossil fuel companies, while about one third (31%) trust them.

“Although lawsuits are decided in the court of law,” said Jennifer Marlon of Yale University, “the court of public opinion also plays a critical role in shaping the local, state, national, and international response to climate change.”

The study also includes [interactive maps](#) that depict the geographic variation in public opinion about who is responsible for paying for global warming damages.

Estimated % of adults who support fossil fuel companies paying for GW damages, 2019

Select Question: Support fossil fuel companies paying for GW damages | Absolute Value
Click on map to select geography, or: Select a State



In addition to Drs. Anthony Leiserowitz and Jennifer Marlon, the Yale research team includes Seth Rosenthal, Matthew Ballew, Matthew Goldberg, Abel Gustafson, and Xinran Wang, with support from the Union of Concerned Scientists.

For questions about the survey, please contact:

Anthony Leiserowitz, 203-432-4865, anthony.leiserowitz@yale.edu

For more information, including the methods of the study, please see the [Climate Note](#) on the Yale Program on Climate Change Communication's website.

###