

TO: Environmental Defense Fund, WEACT

FR: Morning Consult

DT: October 23, 2020

RE: Results: Differences in Adults' Concern and Perceptions of Climate Threats, Environmental Injustice

Morning Consult conducted a survey, on behalf of Environmental Defense Fund and WEACT, between October 10th – October 16th, 2020 among a national sample of 279 Detroit adults. The interviews were conducted online. Results from the survey have a margin error of plus or minus 6 percentage points.

The survey sought to measure concern for and perception of the impacts of climate change and other environmental threats like pollution, flooding, and storms, how these threats impact different racial/ethnic groups, and how adults' views on these issues vary by race and ethnicity.

KEY FINDINGS – POLLUTION AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Black Detroit adults (58%) are nearly twice as likely as white Detroit adults (30%) to say they are very concerned about air pollution in their local community.

Black Detroit adults are also *significantly more likely* than white Detroit adults to say they're very concerned about water pollution (56% vs 35%) in their community. Concern about climate change is also high among Black Detroit adults, with 47% saying they're very concerned, compared to 37% of white Detroit adults.

Over two thirds of Detroit adults (69%) are concerned about climate change, but Black adults (71%) are significantly more likely than white adults (55%) to say climate change is a *major problem*.

Perceptions of Climate Change Threat							
% Currently a Threat to... (Major + Minor)	The U.S. economy	My state's economy	The economy in my community	My housing	My life	My personal financial security	National Security
Detroit Adults	67%	61%	52%	33%	50%	39%	49%
White Detroit adults	64%	54%	47%	28%	44%	35%	45%
Black Detroit adults	84%	86%	62%	47%	67%	53%	63%

KEY FINDINGS – CLEAN ENERGY JOBS

Detroit adults largely support Congress investing in clean energy as it moves to address the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

65% of Detroit adults support congress investing in clean energy, support that spans racial demographics. 61% of white Detroit adults support Congress taking such action, and 75% of Black Detroit adults do as well.

Detroit adults recognize the potential that investing in clean energy could have for job growth in the U.S.

Two thirds of Detroit adults (66%) say COVID-19 financial relief that included investments in clean energy would contribute “a lot” + “some” to job growth in the U.S. That includes 62% of white Detroit adults and 81% of Black Detroit adults.

Clean Energy Job Agreement			
% Agree (Somewhat + Strongly)	Detroit Adults	White Detroit Adults	Black Detroit Adults
Clean energy jobs are for people like me	49%	47%	53%
Clean energy jobs are for people with my education level	62%	61%	68%
Clean energy jobs are for people with my skillsets	48%	43%	59%
Clean energy jobs are for people my age	45%	40%	55%
Clean energy jobs are for people with my background	50%	46%	60%
I would want a job in the clean energy sector	46%	42%	58%
I would want people in my family to have a job in the clean energy sector	60%	59%	68%
Clean energy jobs are for people in my region of the country	69%	68%	77%
Clean energy jobs are for people in my neighborhood	61%	61%	67%

Detroit voters think it should be a priority for Congress to pass legislation increasing the use of clean electricity and clean transportation in the U.S.

Three quarters of Detroit voters (73%) say it should be a priority (a top priority + an important but not top priority) for Congress to pass legislation to increase the use of clean electricity in the U.S., including 68% of Detroit independent voters and 80% of Detroit moderate voters. 68% of Detroit voters say the same about passing legislation to increase the use of clean transportation in the U.S., including 61% of Detroit independent voters and 78% of Detroit moderate voters.

Two thirds of Detroit voters say legislation increasing the use of clean energy (68%) and clean transportation (67%) in the U.S. would “definitely” or “probably” reduce air pollution in their community.

KEY FINDINGS – ENVIRONMENTAL INJUSTICE

Familiarity with the term “environmental injustice” varies by race/ethnicity among Detroit adults. Black adults in Detroit (44%) are slightly more likely than white adults 37% to say they’re familiar (very + somewhat) with the term “environmental injustice.”

Racial gaps in familiarity with the term “environmental injustice” reflect differences in attitudes toward it as well. Black Detroit adults are significantly more likely than white Detroit adults to say that environmental injustice is a major problem in the U.S.

While 61% of Black Detroit adults view environmental injustice as a major problem in the U.S., only 38% of white adults hold the same view, a significantly lower percentage. The same holds true at the state level, where Black (44%) Detroit adults are significantly more likely than white Detroit adults (26%) to say environmental injustice is a major problem in their state.

These gaps persist in Detroit adults’ understanding of their own exposure to pollution, as well as how they view other groups’ exposure to pollution.

Black Detroit adults (62%) are significantly more likely than white Detroit adults (47%) to say they experience a lot + some exposure to pollution in their daily lives. Additionally, in Detroit, white adults are less likely than people of color in Detroit to say that Black communities (30% vs 44%) experience a lot of exposure to pollution.

White adults seem to be less aware of the heightened levels of pollution communities of color face.

In fact, Black Detroit adults (84%) are more likely than white Detroit adults (44%) to agree (strongly + somewhat agree) that Latinos, Black Americans, Asian Americans and other people of color face greater exposure to pollution in their communities.

Despite demographic differences in perceived exposure to pollution, there is greater agreement among Detroit adults across racial groups about the causes of environmental injustice.

58% of Detroit adults say corporate decisions to pollute in certain areas play a large role in contributing to environmental injustice in the U.S., including 67% of Black adults and 56% of white adults. Additionally, 57% of Detroit adults say that government regulations that allow for pollution in certain areas play a large role, including 68% of Black adults and 54% of white adults in Detroit.

KEY FINDINGS – REDLINING

Although Detroit adults across racial groups are generally unfamiliar with the term “redlining,” there’s a strong belief that predominantly Black neighborhoods still experience the long-term effects of redlining.

While majorities of white (56%) and Black (83%) Detroit adults all say that predominantly Black neighborhoods still experience the long-term effects of redlining (definitely + probably), Black adults (53%) in Detroit are significantly more likely than white adults (23%) in Detroit to say Black neighborhoods *definitely* still experience these effects.

Redlining’s Impact on the Following:			
% Large + Some Impact on...	Detroit Adults	White Detroit Adults	Black Detroit Adults
My economic opportunities	38%	30%	67%
The economic opportunities of people in my neighborhood	42%	36%	69%
My neighborhood	41%	34%	67%
My health	33%	28%	55%
The health of people in my neighborhood	40%	30%	75%
My life	40%	29%	71%