



## Opinion Poll

### Entrepreneurs Believe Climate Change a Problem that Can Hurt Small Businesses, Disrupt Economy

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## Executive Summary

Climate change and extreme weather events have been dominating the news more and more. The tragedy, loss and heartbreak is felt not only by those personally impacted, but by the nation as a whole. The physical impacts of these events are devastating, but often the economic effects are just as destructive, and can be felt for many years after.

Small businesses are especially susceptible to financial ruin after an extreme weather event. Countless small businesses had to close after events like Hurricane Sandy or Irene, and too many weren't able to recover. These extreme events are happening more and more. In 2011, a record 14 disasters struck the U.S., each costing a billion dollars or more in damage.<sup>i</sup> And 2012 is on record as having the most extreme temperatures of any year since record keeping began in 1895<sup>ii</sup>

Extreme weather and climate change have become real business threats for small entrepreneurs across the country. It's not surprising that recent polling conducted by Public Policy Polling for Small Business Majority found nearly six in 10 entrepreneurs believe climate change and extreme weather events are an urgent problem that can disrupt the economy and harm small businesses. Four in 10 believe this *strongly*.

A full third of American small businesses have personally seen examples of extreme weather impacting their business, or someone around them. There are 28 million small businesses in this country. That's too many businesses, employees and families impacted by climate change and extreme weather.

What's more, another 42% believe the Small Business Administration should track small business claims related to extreme weather events as a way to increase the amount of aid the government provides small businesses affected by such events (21% said they weren't sure if the SBA should track claims and 37% said it shouldn't).

While climate change has inflamed partisan debate, it's important to note that small businesses don't see this issue through an ideological lens. The political breakdown of the poll was varied, with 37% identifying as Republican, 30% identifying as Democrats and 33% as independent.

## Main Findings

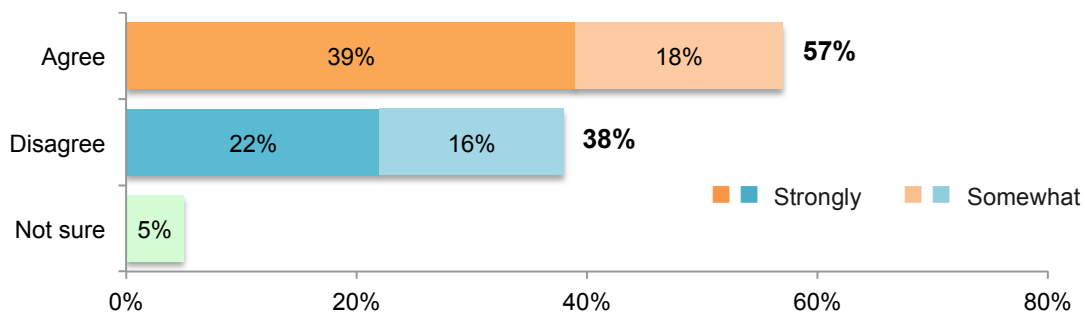
- **Small businesses believe climate change and extreme weather are an urgent problem that can disrupt the economy and harm small businesses:** 57% of small businesses believe climate change and extreme weather events like Hurricane Sandy are an urgent problem that can disrupt the economy and harm small businesses. Four in 10 *strongly* believe this.
- **One-third of small business owners across the country have been affected or know someone affected by extreme weather:** One-third (34%) of small business owners have personally seen examples of extreme weather impacting their small business, or someone around them.
- **Small business owners believe the Small Business Administration should track small business claims related to extreme weather events to increase government aid to small businesses:** 42% of small businesses believe the SBA should track small business claims related to extreme weather events as a way to increase the amount of aid the government provides small businesses affected by such events; 21% were not sure whether this should be tracked and 37% said it should not.
- **Respondents were politically diverse:** 37% identified as Republican, 30% as Democrat and 33% as independent or other.

## Small Businesses Believe Climate Change and Extreme Weather Disrupts Economy, Hurts Small Businesses

Small businesses believe climate change and extreme weather are an urgent problem that can disrupt the economy and harm small businesses. More than half of small businesses (57%) believe climate change and extreme weather events like Hurricane Sandy are an urgent problem that can disrupt the economy and harm small businesses. Four in 10 strongly believe this. A 38% minority do not agree that extreme weather and climate change are a problem for small businesses and the economy.

**Figure 1: Owners agree climate change and extreme weather is an urgent problem that disrupts the economy and hurts small businesses**

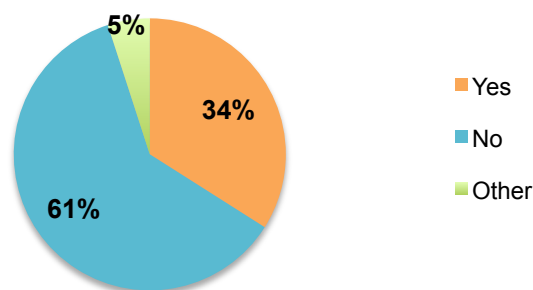
Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: Climate change and extreme weather events like Hurricane Sandy are an urgent problem that can disrupt the economy and harm small businesses?



A full third of small business owners said they have personally seen examples of extreme weather impacting their small business, or someone around them. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) estimates about 40% of businesses don't reopen after a disaster. That's far too many job creators, and the people they provide jobs to, being affected. It's not surprising, then, that more small business owners believe the Small Business Administration should track small business claims than those who think this data shouldn't be tracked. Four in 10 small businesses believe the SBA should track small business claims related to extreme weather events as a way to increase the amount of aid the government provides small businesses affected by such events; 21% were not sure whether this should be tracked and 37% said it should not.

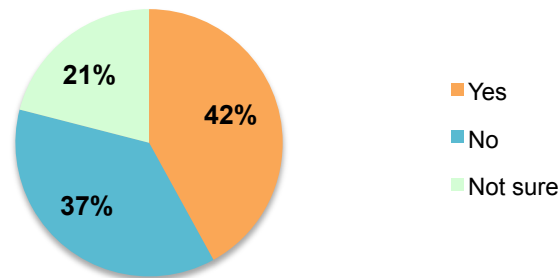
**Figure 2: One-third of small firms have personally seen examples of extreme weather impacting their small business**

Have you personally seen examples of extreme weather impacting your small business or those around you, or not?



■ **Figure 3: Four in 10 small businesses believe the SBA should track small business claims related to extreme weather events as a way to increase the amount of government aid given to small firms**

Do you think the Small Business Administration SHOULD track small business claims related to extreme weather events as a way to increase the amount of aid the government provides small businesses affected by such events, or not?



## Conclusion

As stated earlier, debates around climate change are often overshadowed by partisan rhetoric. But lets leave rhetoric out of it and instead look at some statistics:

- Last year, 11 extreme weather events caused at least \$1 billion in losses;<sup>iii</sup>
- 2012 was the warmest year in the United States since recordkeeping began in 1895.<sup>iv</sup>
- Natural disasters accounted for more than half of 2012 global economic losses.<sup>v</sup>
- Two extreme weather events in particular, Hurricane Sandy and a yearlong drought, accounted for two-thirds of all 2012 insurance losses globally and nearly half of all global economic losses for the year.<sup>vi</sup>

These are real events, causing real damage to real people. Extreme weather and climate change is something small business owners have to deal with more and more. Lawmakers in Washington and across the nation should listen to our job creators and start proposing smart policies that can help reduce the effects of climate change and aid small businesses that are impacted by it. Our recovering economy needs it.

## Methodology

This poll reflects a telephone survey of 858 small business owners across the country, conducted by Public Policy Polling for Small Business Majority with a margin of error of +/- 3.4%. The survey was conducted from April 12-14, 2013.

## Poll Toplines

**April 12 – April 14, 2013**

858 Small business owners of 100 or less employees

1) Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: Climate change and extreme weather events like Hurricane Sandy are an urgent problem that can disrupt the economy and harm small businesses?

<i>Strongly agree</i>	39%
<i>Strongly disagree</i>	22%
<i>Somewhat agree</i>	18%
<i>Not sure</i>	5%
<i>Somewhat disagree</i>	16%

2) Do you think the Small Business Administration SHOULD track small business claims related to extreme weather events as a way to increase the amount of aid the government provides small businesses affected by such events, or not?

<i>Yes</i>	42%
<i>Not sure</i>	21%
<i>No</i>	37%

3) Have you personally seen examples of extreme weather impacting your small business or those around you, or not?

<i>Yes</i>	34%
<i>No</i>	61%

4) Are you the owner of a small business?

<i>Yes</i>	100%
<i>No</i>	0%

5) How many people are directly employed by your business, including yourself?

<i>1</i>	25%
<i>2-5</i>	50%
<i>6-10</i>	12%
<i>11-25</i>	8%
<i>26-50</i>	3%
<i>51-100</i>	2%
<i>More than 100</i>	0%

6) If you are a woman, press 1. If a man, press 2.

<i>Woman</i>	44%
<i>Man</i>	56%

7) If you are a Democrat, press 1. If a Republican, press 2. If you are an independent or identify with another party, press 3.

<i>Democrat</i>	30%
<i>Republican</i>	37%
<i>Independent/Other</i>	33%

8) If you are Hispanic, press 1. If white, press 2. If African-American, press 3. If other, press 4.

<i>Hispanic</i>	6%
<i>White</i>	83%
<i>African-American</i>	4%
<i>Other</i>	7%

9) If you are 18-29 years old, press 1. If 30-45, press 2. If 46-65, press 3. If older than 65, press 4.

<i>18-29</i>	2%
<i>30-45</i>	10%
<i>46-65</i>	66%
<i>Older than 65</i>	22%

## Endnotes

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<sup>i</sup> “2011 a Year of Climate Extremes in the United States,” National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), January 19, 2012

<sup>ii</sup> National Climatic Data Center, “State of the Climate.” As accessed on March 8, 2013

<sup>iii</sup> National Climatic Data Center, “Preliminary Info on 2012 U.S. Billion-Dollar Extreme Weather/Climate Events”, December 20, 2012

<sup>iv</sup> National Climatic Data Center, “State of the Climate.” As accessed on March 8, 2013

<sup>v</sup> Aon Benfield and Impact Forecasting. “U.S. natural disasters account for more than half of 2012 global economic losses, according to Impact Forecasting annual catastrophe study” January 24, 2013

<sup>vi</sup> Aon Benfield and Impact Forecasting. “U.S. natural disasters account for more than half of 2012 global economic losses, according to Impact Forecasting annual catastrophe study” January 24, 2013