

## Environmental impacts of climate change

**Most Canadians believe that climate change is causing environmental changes such as melting sea ice, increased flooding, more intense storms and increased drought. But the level of certainty around these changes has been declining since 2008.**

Opinions about the reality and significance of climate change are likely grounded in large part on how this phenomenon is affecting weather patterns and environmental conditions. As on previous surveys, strong majorities of Canadians believe climate change is at least a likely cause of four specified environmental impacts in Canada, although a declining minority is definite about these impacts.

Close to eight in ten believe that climate change is definitely (48% or likely (38%) causing melting permafrost and sea ice in the arctic. The public is somewhat less likely to see climate change being the cause of more flooding of rivers and coastal areas (76%), more frequent and intense storms (71%), and increased drought conditions (72%) in Canada.

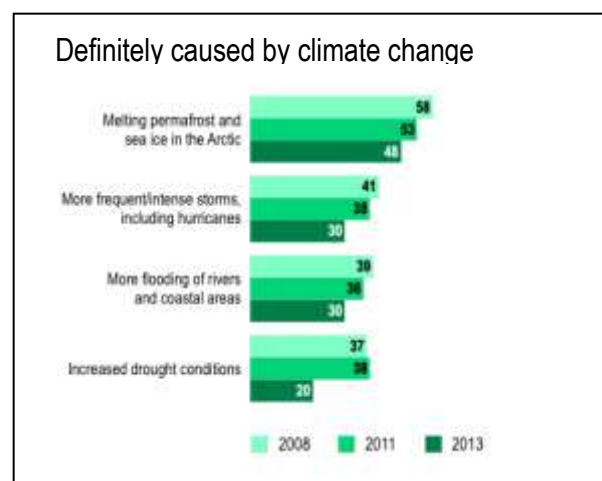
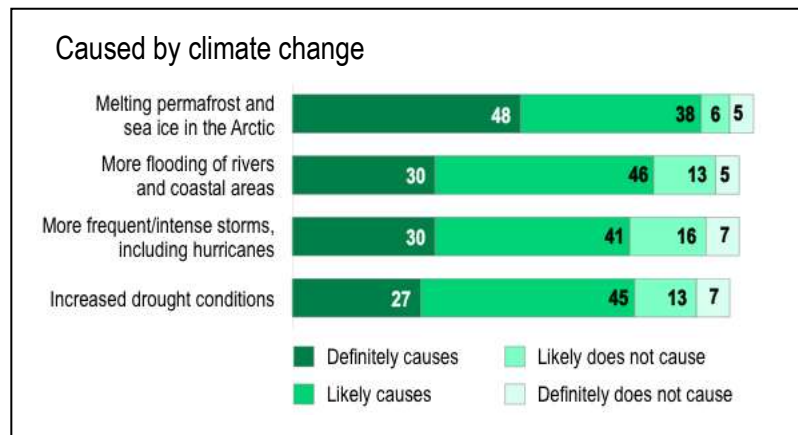
In all cases, the belief that climate change is definitely causing these environmental impacts is most widely voiced by Quebecers and Canadians with a university degree, while this is least apt to be case among residents of the Prairie provinces and Conservative Party supporters.

While Canadians are increasingly coming to the conclusion that climate change is real and the result of human activity, their level of certainty about the environmental consequences has weakened over the past couple of years. For each of four specified environmental impacts, the proportion who believes it is definitely the result of climate change has declined since 2011, and in three of four cases this continues a trend dating back to 2008.

This downward trend is evident across the country. Decline in the belief that climate change is causing increased drought is most evident in Atlantic Canada, while perceptions about the effect on permafrost/sea ice and storm activity has diminished most significantly in Ontario.

The link between climate change and increased flooding of rivers/coastal areas has declined since 2011 in provinces Saskatchewan and east, while increasing marginally in BC and Alberta.

Despite record flooding earlier this year, Albertans (25%) are still less likely than others to say that increased flooding is definitely the result of climate change, with the remainder saying this is a likely result (40%), or likely/definitely not a result of climate change (30%).

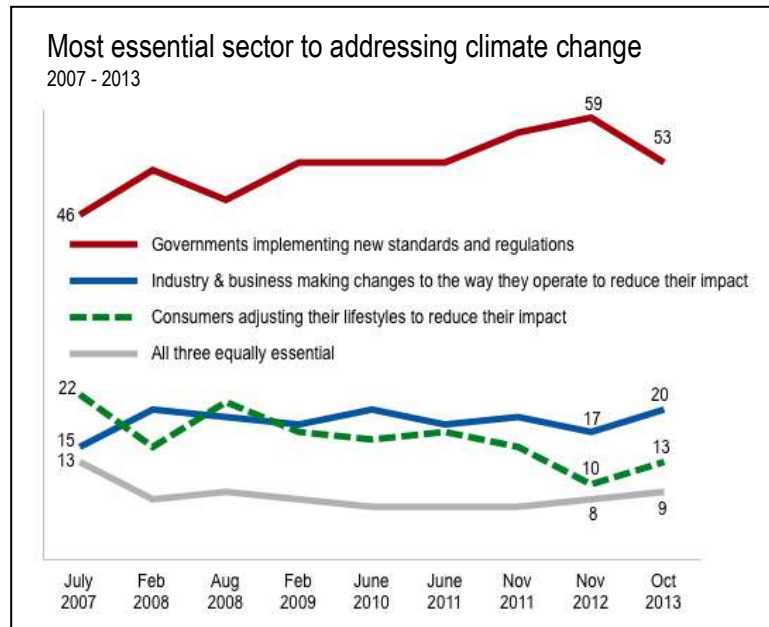


## Sector most essential to progress on climate change

**Canadians continue to believe the most essential progress on addressing climate change must come from government standards and regulations, rather than through the voluntary actions of industry or consumers. But confidence in government leadership has weakened noticeably over the past 12 months.**

Who does the public look to for making serious progress on tackling climate change in Canada? Over the past six years Canadians have looked primarily to governments to implement new standards and regulations, and this proportion had been increasing since 2011. Over the past 12 months, however, the public's confidence in government as the lead actor in addressing climate change has declined sharply (to 53%, down 6 points) and is now back to where it stood in June 2011.

By comparison, Canadians remain much less likely to say the essential actions on climate change must come from industry making new investments (20%) or from consumers making lifestyle adjustments (13%), although both views have strengthened modestly since 2012. One in ten (9%) continue to insist that all three sectors have an equally critical role to play in making progress on climate change in this country.



The declining confidence in governments as the essential sector on climate change has taken across the country, with the exception of Atlantic Canada (64%), where support for government action has grown since 2012. Belief in government as the lead actor is most widespread in Atlantic Canada (64%) and Montreal (65%), as well as among Canadians 18 to 29 years of age (60%), and those who support Federal opposition parties. This view is least evident in the Prairie provinces (44%) and among supporters of the Federal Conservative Party (37%), with most of the remainder largely split on whether the essential actions need to be taken by consumers or industry.