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Majority of New Jerseyans Feel Their Home Is Protected From Extreme Weather, but Are Concerned About Repair Costs and Foresee Upgrades

Large majority believe the Earth’s climate is changing; partisan divide persists on weather and climate-related issues

NEW BRUNSWICK, N.J. (February 9, 2024) – As extreme weather events become more common, New Jerseyans feel their homes are protected but are concerned they could be facing rising costs and believe upgrades will be needed in the future, according to the latest Rutgers-Eagleton Poll.

About three-quarters say their current housing is “very” (18 percent) or “somewhat” (57 percent) protected from extreme weather events such as hurricanes, major storms and flooding; 18 percent say their residence is “not very” protected, and 5 percent say “not at all.” Nevertheless, 7 in 10 say they feel either “very” (33 percent) or “somewhat” (36 percent) concerned about rising housing costs because of extreme weather events.

Moreover, a majority of residents think that most homes and buildings in New Jersey will need some kind of upgrade because of extreme weather occurrences in the next couple of decades, whether they are major (43 percent) or minor (41 percent); 8 percent don’t believe upgrades are needed and 9 percent are unsure.

“While majorities across the board believe they are protected, and are concerned about future costs and upgrades, intensity of views on each of these issues varies among key groups,” said Ashley Koning, an assistant research professor and director of the [Eagleton Center for Public Interest Polling](#) (ECPPI) at [Rutgers University–New Brunswick](#). “Significant demographic disparities emerge that reflect, and are no doubt influenced by, the real-life inequalities faced by many New Jerseyans based on where they live and why they live there.”

Climate and Housing Rutgers-Eagleton Poll

White residents (79 percent) are more likely to feel protected than Black residents (61 percent), Hispanic residents (71 percent) or residents who are multiracial or of other backgrounds (70 percent). Similarly, Hispanic residents (82 percent) and Black residents (76 percent) are more concerned than residents who are multiracial or of other backgrounds (69 percent) or white residents (63 percent) about rising costs.

Feeling protected increases as household income rises: Those in the lowest income bracket (63 percent) are less likely to feel protected than those in any other bracket by double digits. Conversely, concern over costs decreases as income rises – 78 percent among the lowest income bracket versus 60 percent among the highest income bracket.

“It’s a vicious cycle: Those who face economic barriers often reside in areas more prone to extreme weather events due to cost and lower desirability but are unable to relocate or pay for repairs and upgrades associated with these events, causing even more financial hardship,” Koning said.

Fewer women feel their housing is “very” or “somewhat” protected (70 percent) and are more concerned about housing costs (75 percent) than men (78 percent and 63 percent, respectively). Cost concerns decline as educational attainment increases. Additionally, Republicans feel more protected (83 percent) and less concerned (59 percent) about cost than Democrats (71 percent and 77 percent, respectively) or independents (73 percent and 68 percent, respectively).

Demographic differences on whether structural upgrades will be needed in the future follow similar patterns as views on protection and cost concerns. Black residents (67 percent) are far more likely to say that houses and properties will need major upgrades, compared with white residents (35 percent) and, to a lesser extent, Hispanic residents (50 percent) and residents who are multiracial or of other backgrounds (44 percent).

Those living in urban areas are most likely to feel major upgrades are needed (59 percent) compared with residents in other regions of the state. Additionally, nearly half of women believe major structural improvements will be needed because of extreme weather events (49 percent), compared with just over a third of men (37 percent). The perceived need for major upgrades declines as income increases.

Republicans are the least likely partisan group to foresee the state needing major upgrades in the wake of extreme weather events in the future: 28 percent think “major” upgrades are needed, while 51 percent say “minor” and 13 percent say none at all. Independents are more split – 41 percent “major,” 39 percent “minor.” Fifty-three percent of Democrats think “major” structural upgrades will be needed and 37 percent say “minor” upgrades are likely needed.

Slightly more than three-quarters (77 percent) of New Jerseyans believe the Earth’s climate is changing; 12 percent don’t and 11 percent are unsure. At least 7 in 10 within every demographic group believes the Earth’s climate is changing, except for Republicans. They are

the least likely of any group by double-digits to believe the Earth’s climate is changing – albeit it is still their majority response at 56 percent – and the most likely to say it isn’t (30 percent).

“Partisanship, once again, pervades everything – especially on an issue like Earth’s changing climate,” said [Jessica Roman](#), a research associate at ECPIP. “Even in a state like New Jersey, the partisan divide on this issue is stark. Nevertheless, majorities of partisans of all stripes share similar opinions on climate’s present and future impact on housing, even if it is at varying levels of intensity.”

Results are from a statewide poll of 1,657 adults contacted through multiple modes, including by live interviewer on landline and cell phone, MMS text invitation to web, and the probability-based [Rutgers-Eagleton/SSRS Garden State Panel](#) from Dec. 13 to Dec. 23. The full sample has a margin of error of +/- 2.8 percentage points. The registered voter subsample contains 1,451 registered voters and has a margin of error of +/- 3.0 percentage points.

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Broadcast interviews: Rutgers University–New Brunswick has broadcast-quality television and radio studios available for remote live or taped interviews with Rutgers experts. For more information, contact Jessica Ronan-Frisch at jronan@eagleton.rutgers.edu.

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Rutgers University–New Brunswick is where Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, began more than 250 years ago. Ranked among the world’s top 60 universities, Rutgers’s flagship university is a leading public research institution and a member of the prestigious Association of American Universities. It is home to internationally acclaimed faculty and has 12 degree-granting schools and a Division I Athletics program. It is the Big Ten Conference’s most diverse university. Through its community of teachers, scholars, artists, scientists and healers, Rutgers is equipped as never before to transform lives.

ABOUT THE EAGLETON CENTER FOR PUBLIC INTEREST POLLING

Home of the Rutgers-Eagleton Poll, the Eagleton Center for Public Interest Polling (ECPIP) was established in 1971 and is the oldest and one of the most respected university-based statewide polling operations in the United States. Now in its 52nd year and with the publication of over 200 polls, ECPIP’s mission is to provide scientifically sound, nonpartisan information about public opinion. To read more about ECPIP and view all of our press releases, published research and data archive, please visit our website: eagletonpoll.rutgers.edu. You can also visit our [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

ABOUT THE EAGLETON INSTITUTE OF POLITICS

The Eagleton Center for Public Interest Polling is a unit of the Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers University–New Brunswick. The Eagleton Institute studies how American politics and government work and change, analyzes how the democracy might improve and promotes political participation and civic engagement. The Institute explores state and national politics

through research, education and public service, linking the study of politics with its day-to-day practice. To learn more about Eagleton programs and expertise, visit eagleton.rutgers.edu.

ABOUT THE RUTGERS-EAGLETON/SSRS GARDEN STATE PANEL

[The Rutgers-Eagleton/SSRS Garden State Panel](#) is a probability-based panel of New Jersey adults age 18 or older. Members are recruited randomly based on statewide representative ABS (Address Based Sample) design. The ABS sample is drawn from the Delivery Sequence File (DSF) maintained by the U.S. Postal Service. Population coverage of the DSF is in the 98%-99% range. During the recruitment process, full demographic information on panelists is collected. This data is stored securely and used to determine eligibility for specific studies (if needed). The Rutgers-Eagleton/SSRS Garden State Panel is a multi-mode panel. Internet households participate via web while all non-internet households (including those who have internet but are unwilling to take surveys online) participate via phone. Panelists also have the option of taking surveys in their preferred language (English or Spanish).

QUESTIONS AND TABLES START ON THE FOLLOWING PAGE

Questions and Tables

The questions covered in this release are listed below. Column percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding. Respondents are New Jersey adults who self-reported being registered to vote unless otherwise noted; all percentages are of weighted results. Interpret groups with samples sizes under 100 with extreme caution.

H1 In general, do you think the earth's climate is changing, not changing, or are you not sure?

Changing	77%
Not changing	12%
Don't know	11%
Unweighted N=	1654

	Party ID			Gender		Race or Ethnicity				Age			
	Dem	Ind	Rep	Man	Woman	Wht	Blk	Hisp	Other	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+
Changing	93%	75%	56%	75%	80%	75%	80%	77%	85%	85%	76%	72%	75%
Not changing	3%	11%	30%	14%	11%	14%	9%	12%	8%	9%	12%	16%	12%
DK	5%	14%	14%	11%	10%	11%	12%	11%	7%	6%	12%	12%	13%
Unwt N=	604	657	380	853	789	1073	159	213	180	439	359	455	399

	Income				Region					Education			
	<\$50K	\$50K- <\$100K	\$100K- <\$150K	\$150K+	Urban	Suburb	Exurban	Phil/ South	Shore	HS or less	Some college	College grad	Grad work
Changing	76%	78%	79%	77%	81%	80%	76%	72%	73%	74%	75%	80%	83%
Not changing	11%	13%	13%	12%	13%	10%	12%	15%	14%	11%	15%	13%	10%
DK	13%	9%	8%	11%	6%	10%	12%	13%	13%	15%	10%	7%	7%
Unwt N=	333	457	297	423	225	616	255	286	272	382	391	410	468

**Climate and Housing
Rutgers-Eagleton Poll**

H3 How protected do you think your current housing is from extreme weather events like hurricanes, big storms, and flooding? Would you say...?

Very protected	18%
Somewhat protected	57%
Not very protected	18%
Not protected at all	5%
Don't know	3%
Unweighted N=	1656

	Party ID			Gender		Race or Ethnicity				Age			
	Dem	Ind	Rep	Man	Woman	Wht	Blk	Hisp	Other	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+
Very	15%	18%	21%	17%	18%	19%	14%	15%	15%	17%	15%	17%	24%
Somewhat	56%	55%	62%	61%	52%	60%	47%	56%	55%	50%	56%	61%	60%
Not very	21%	18%	13%	16%	20%	15%	21%	20%	22%	23%	22%	17%	9%
Not at all	5%	7%	2%	5%	6%	3%	13%	7%	4%	8%	5%	4%	3%
DK	3%	2%	2%	2%	3%	2%	5%	2%	4%	3%	3%	1%	4%
Unwt N=	604	657	382	854	790	1075	159	213	180	439	359	455	401

	Income				Region					Education			
	<\$50K	\$50K- <\$100K	\$100K- <\$150K	\$150K+	Urban	Suburb	Exurban	Phil/ South	Shore	HS or less	Some college	College grad	Grad work
Very	15%	17%	17%	20%	21%	17%	18%	17%	16%	18%	18%	16%	19%
Somewhat	48%	62%	58%	60%	49%	59%	63%	52%	59%	54%	58%	56%	60%
Not very	23%	16%	20%	16%	20%	17%	13%	20%	18%	17%	19%	21%	14%
Not at all	12%	3%	4%	2%	8%	4%	3%	7%	5%	8%	4%	4%	3%
DK	3%	2%	1%	2%	2%	2%	3%	3%	2%	3%	1%	3%	3%
Unwt N=	333	457	297	424	225	617	256	286	272	382	393	410	468

H4 How concerned are you about rising housing costs due to changing climate conditions?

Very concerned	33%
Somewhat concerned	36%
Not very concerned	17%
Not concerned at all	11%
Don't know	2%
Unweighted N=	1648

	Party ID			Gender		Race or Ethnicity				Age			
	Dem	Ind	Rep	Man	Woman	Wht	Blk	Hisp	Other	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+
Very	40%	32%	27%	29%	38%	25%	52%	42%	40%	41%	34%	31%	26%
Somewhat	37%	36%	32%	34%	37%	38%	24%	40%	29%	32%	36%	38%	37%
Not very	15%	16%	24%	20%	15%	22%	9%	5%	22%	14%	16%	21%	18%
Not at all	5%	14%	15%	16%	7%	13%	11%	8%	6%	8%	11%	11%	16%
DK	3%	2%	2%	2%	3%	1%	3%	4%	2%	4%	2%	0%	2%
Unwt N=	602	653	380	853	783	1070	159	211	179	439	357	451	399

	Income				Region					Education			
	<\$50K	\$50K- <\$100K	\$100K- <\$150K	\$150K+	Urban	Suburb	Exurban	Phil/ South	Shore	HS or less	Some college	College grad	Grad work
Very	43%	37%	33%	20%	39%	34%	27%	37%	30%	37%	33%	36%	28%
Somewhat	35%	33%	36%	40%	36%	36%	38%	33%	35%	37%	37%	31%	36%
Not very	11%	17%	17%	25%	14%	16%	21%	17%	21%	13%	16%	19%	24%
Not at all	8%	10%	12%	15%	9%	12%	12%	11%	14%	10%	12%	13%	12%
DK	4%	2%	2%	0%	2%	2%	2%	3%	2%	3%	3%	1%	1%
Unwt N=	330	455	296	422	225	613	254	285	271	379	393	406	467

**Climate and Housing
Rutgers-Eagleton Poll**

H5 Do you think most homes and buildings in New Jersey will need major upgrades, minor upgrades, or no upgrades at all to withstand extreme weather events over the next 25 years?

Major upgrades	43%
Minor upgrades	41%
No upgrades at all	8%
Don't know	9%
Unweighted N=	1651

	Party ID			Gender		Race or Ethnicity				Age			
	Dem	Ind	Rep	Man	Woman	Wht	Blk	Hisp	Other	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+
Major	53%	41%	28%	37%	49%	35%	67%	50%	44%	51%	47%	35%	37%
Minor	37%	39%	51%	43%	39%	45%	24%	36%	46%	34%	38%	47%	44%
No upgrades	3%	8%	13%	11%	4%	10%	6%	4%	3%	5%	8%	9%	9%
DK	6%	11%	8%	9%	8%	10%	4%	10%	6%	9%	7%	9%	11%
Unwt N=	602	655	381	852	787	1071	159	213	179	439	358	452	400

	Income				Region					Education			
	<\$50K	\$50K- <\$100K	\$100K- <\$150K	\$150K+	Urban	Suburb	Exurban	Phil/ South	Shore	HS or less	Some college	College grad	Grad work
Major	56%	46%	40%	31%	59%	44%	31%	42%	35%	45%	42%	42%	42%
Minor	31%	39%	43%	50%	28%	41%	49%	38%	48%	38%	42%	42%	42%
No upgrades	2%	9%	8%	11%	6%	8%	9%	8%	7%	7%	7%	8%	8%
DK	11%	6%	8%	7%	7%	7%	11%	13%	10%	10%	8%	8%	8%
Unwt N=	332	456	296	422	223	615	256	285	272	381	393	407	467

Methodology

This Rutgers-Eagleton Poll was conducted from December 13 to 23, 2023 with a scientifically selected random sample of 1,657 New Jersey adults, 18 or older. Three samples were used for this study – a dual-frame RDD landline and cell samples, a separate cell RDD sample, and sample from the [Rutgers-Eagleton/Garden State Panel](#).

The Rutgers-Eagleton/Garden State Panel is a probability-based panel of New Jersey adults age 18 or older. Members are recruited randomly based on statewide representative ABS (Address Based Sample) design. ABS sample is drawn from the Delivery Sequence File (DSF) maintained by the U.S. Postal Service. Population coverage of the DSF is in the 98%-99% range. During the recruitment process, full demographic information on panelists is collected. The Rutgers/SSRS Garden State Panel is a multi-mode panel. For this poll, only Internet households were invited to participate via web; non-internet households were not included.

This study employed three recruitment methods: calling with live interviewers (n=521), one-to-one push-to-web texting (n=532), and web recruitment (n=604). Distribution of recruitment method in this sample is:

Call	31%
Text-to-Web	22%
Web	37%

Each of the three samples was base weighted and calibrated separately. The three samples were also combined and calibrated together, overall and by form.

The data were weighted to be representative of the residential adult population of New Jersey. The weighting balances sample demographics to target population parameters. The sample is balanced, by form and overall, to match parameters for sex, age, education, race/ethnicity, region and phone use. The sex, age, education, race/ethnicity, and region parameters were derived from 2022 American Community Survey PUMS data. The phone use parameter was derived from estimates provided by the National Health Interview Survey Early Release Program.¹

The base weight for the dual-frame RDD sample corrects for different probabilities of selection across the telephone samples associated with the number of adults in each household and each respondent’s telephone usage patterns. This adjustment also accounts for the overlapping landline and cell sample frames and the relative sizes of each frame and each sample.²

Base weights for the Garden State Panel were the base weights associated with the initial recruitment sampling and the sampling from the panel for this particular data collection. The base weights for the RDD cell sample were set to 1.0.

The final stage of weighting calibrates sample demographics, overall and by form, to match target population benchmark distributions. This weighting was accomplished using SPSSINC RAKE, an SPSS

¹ NCHS, National Health Interview Survey, 2018–2020; U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2017–2019.

² Buskirk, T. D., & Best, J. (2012). Venn Diagrams, Probability 101 and Sampling Weights Computed for Dual Frame Telephone RDD Designs. *Journal of Statistics and Mathematics*, 15, 3696-3710.

extension module that simultaneously balances the distributions of all variables using the GENLOG procedure. Weights were trimmed to prevent individual interviews from having too much influence on survey estimates. The use of these weights in statistical analysis ensures that the demographic characteristics of the sample closely approximate the demographic characteristics of the target population.

Post-data collection statistical adjustments require analysis procedures that reflect departures from simple random sampling. We calculate the effects of these design features so that an appropriate adjustment can be incorporated into tests of statistical significance when using these data. The so-called "design effect" or *deff* represents the loss in statistical efficiency that results from a disproportionate sample design and systematic non-response. The total sample design effect for this survey is 1.39.

All surveys are subject to sampling error, which is the expected probable difference between interviewing everyone in a population versus a scientific sampling drawn from that population. Sampling error should be adjusted to recognize the effect of weighting the data to better match the population. In this poll, the simple sampling error for 1,657 New Jersey adults is +/-2.4 percentage points at a 95 percent confidence interval. The design effect³ is 1.39, making the adjusted margin of error +/- 2.8 percentage points. Thus, if 50 percent of New Jersey adults in this sample favor a particular position, we would be 95 percent sure that the true figure is between 47.2 and 52.8 percent (50 +/- 2.8) if all New Jersey adults had been interviewed, rather than just a sample.

Sampling error is only one possible source of error in a survey estimate. Sampling error does not consider other sources of variation inherent in public opinion studies, such as selection bias, non-response bias, question wording, context effects, or reporting accuracy, which may contribute additional error.

This Rutgers-Eagleton Poll was fielded by SSRS through the Rutgers-Eagleton/SSRS Garden State Panel, Braun Research, Inc., using live interviewers, and Response Now using one-to-one push-to-web texting. Sample was provided by Dynata. The questionnaire was developed and all data analyses were completed in house by the Eagleton Center for Public Interest Polling (ECPiP). Jessica Roman assisted with analysis and preparation of this report. The Rutgers-Eagleton Poll is paid for and sponsored by the Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, a non-partisan academic center for the study of politics and the political process. Full questionnaires are available on request and can also be accessed through our archives at eagletonpoll.rutgers.edu. For more information, please contact poll@eagleton.rutgers.edu.

³ Post-data collection statistical adjustments require analysis procedures that reflect departures from simple random sampling. We calculate the effects of these design features so that an appropriate adjustment can be incorporated into tests of statistical significance when using these data. The so-called "design effect" or *deff* represents the loss in statistical efficiency that results from a disproportionate sample design and systematic non-response.

Weighted Demographics
1,657 New Jersey Adults 18+
Overall Margin of Error = +/- 2.8 percentage points

Please note: Totals may equal slightly more or less than 100% due to rounding.

		deff	MOE			deff	MOE
Man	49%	1.38	+/- 3.9%	White	55%	1.34	+/- 3.5%
Woman	51%	1.39	+/- 4.1%	Black	12%	1.32	+/- 8.9%
18-34	27%	1.45	+/- 5.6%	Hispanic	20%	1.28	+/- 7.6%
35-49	24%	1.32	+/- 5.9%	Other	14%	1.28	+/- 8.3%
50-64	27%	1.39	+/- 5.4%	<50K	25%	1.38	+/- 6.3%
65+	22%	1.36	+/- 5.7%	50K-<100K	31%	1.42	+/- 5.5%
Democrat	36%	1.41	+/- 4.7%	100K-<150K	19%	1.37	+/- 6.7%
Independent	42%	1.37	+/- 4.5%	150K+	25%	1.35	+/- 5.5%
Republican	22%	1.38	+/- 5.9%	Urban	16%	1.36	+/- 7.6%
HS or Less	32%	1.27	+/- 5.7%	Suburb	35%	1.38	+/- 4.6%
Some College	26%	1.36	+/- 5.8%	Exurban	14%	1.39	+/- 7.2%
College Grad	20%	1.35	+/- 5.6%	Phil/South	18%	1.38	+/- 6.8%
Grad Work	22%	1.32	+/- 5.2%	Shore	17%	1.39	+/- 7.0%