

## Interviewer guide

*The following guide was presented to interviewers for this study. Its contents were lightly edited for style, formatting and punctuation prior to release of the report.*

### Pew Research Center – Interview on climate change skepticism

4-18-2023

| INTRODUCTIONS AND HOUSEKEEPING<br>3 mins  | INTERVIEWER NOTES                                   |
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| <p>We are here to understand your views about climate and environmental issues. We are looking to hear your views on these issues – there are no right or wrong answers – there are just your answers.</p> <p>.... I’m [fill in here]. The work is being done on behalf of Pew Research Center to understand how Americans feel about this topic.</p> <p>We are recording this interview and will also transcribe our conversation. This is to make sure we accurately capture everything that you say. These recordings will be made available to Pew Research Center after the interview, but they will not be shared outside that organization and your personal details will be kept confidential.</p> <p>[Warm up question optional]</p> | <p>Consent form also covers some of the basics.</p> |

| <b>BELIEFS ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE AND SOURCE OF CREDIBLE/NOT CREDIBLE INFORMATION</b><br>12 mins   | <b>INTERVIEWER NOTES</b>  |
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| <p>Let's start with climate. There has been some discussion about climate change – that the Earth's temperature is getting warmer over time.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Walk me through your thinking about this idea.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ What are some of the reasons behind your views?</li> <li>○ [If not clear: PROBE to distinguish whether belief is that the climate is not changing or that it is changing due to natural patterns/cycles.]</li> <li>○ [PROBE as necessary If holds climate is changing but due to natural patterns/cycles view] Tell me more about how you came to the view that changes in the climate are because of natural cycles? How do you think about the question of whether society should try to take steps to limit changes to the Earth's climate?</li> <li>○ [PROBE as necessary If holds view climate is not changing] Tell me more about how you came to the view that the climate is not changing?</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>[re: information / trusted sources]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are some sources providing information about climate that you see as less trustworthy or less reliable? [PROBE for specific groups and sources if needed]</li> <li>• What about sources of information about climate that you find trustworthy or reliable? [PROBE for specific groups and sources if needed]</li> <li>• What about information from climate scientists, how much confidence do you have in them on this topic?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ PROBE for clarity. What makes you say this? Tell me more about your thinking about the information from scientists or in reports of scientific findings.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• What information do you feel is missing or that you would want to know more about regarding climate change?</li> </ul> <p>How do you think most people feel about climate change – do you think most people feel like you on this issue?</p> <p>What bothers you the most about the topic of climate change?</p> | <p>Key goals:</p> <p>Reasons for skepticism about climate change and need for action on climate.</p> <p>What information about climate change is trusted.</p> <p>Attitudes toward the scientific consensus and scientists on climate.</p> |

| <b>VIEWS ABOUT ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS</b><br>8 mins   | <b>INTERVIEWER NOTES</b>   |
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| <p>I'm going to shift from talking about climate change to your thinking about the environment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are your thoughts about the best ways to protect the environment?</li> <li>• What role do you think government should play? Are there other groups that can play an important role protecting the environment?</li> </ul> <p>What's going on in your local community – are there any particular environmental challenges in your area? [PROBE as needed to be as specific as possible]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What's being done to address that issue? [Probe for specifics on who's involved in addressing, what they are doing, and whether too much, too little is being done] Are you optimistic or pessimistic they will help make it better?</li> <li>• Let me ask specifically about government's role in this – how do you see government efforts – local, state or federal government – in helping to address environmental problems like this?           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ [PROBE if little/no government role] Who do you think is primarily responsible for addressing these issues?</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Some people say that the way we live – our housing, transportation, and all sorts of things we rely on – will need to change if we want to protect the environment. What are your thoughts about that?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• [PROBE if need for change] What are some ways you think our lives will change?</li> <li>• [PROBE if NO need for change] Tell me more about why you say that. (Distinguish between there are no environmental problems and there will be other solutions to environmental problems that don't involve changing modern life)</li> <li>• [PROBE on energy sources] Some people have suggested changing our energy sources to rely less on sources like oil and natural gas for how we heat and cool houses or for cars and trucks. What do you think about that idea? Is this something that you think you might do in the future? Why or why not?</li> </ul> | <p>Key goals:</p> <p>What should be done to protect the environment?</p> <p>What role do ordinary people play in protecting the local environment? What role for government?</p> <p><i>Environmental issues we are interested in hearing about:</i></p> <p><i>Air quality</i><br/> <i>Drinking water quality</i><br/> <i>Water quality in rivers/lakes/ocean</i><br/> <i>Land use</i><br/> <i>Trash disposal/landfills</i><br/> <i>Toxic chemicals</i><br/> <i>Animal/wildlife habitats and animal control issues</i><br/> <i>Availability of natural resources</i><br/> <i>Availability of parks and open space</i></p> |

| <b>VIEWS ABOUT EXTREME WEATHER</b><br>6 min   | <b>INTERVIEWER NOTES</b>   |
|---|--|
| <p>Recently, there have been events that are sometimes called extreme weather, such as floods, severe storms or droughts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What do you think about these kinds of extreme weather events? Do you get the impression that these are happening more or less often than they used to?</li> <li>• Has your local community experienced any damage because of extreme weather events?</li> <li>• What are your thoughts about the connection between climate change and extreme weather events?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ [PROBE for any reasons behind skepticism about connection between climate change and extreme weather]</li> <li>○ [PROBE for certainty] How sure are you about how this works? What other information would you want to know to better understand the reasons behind extreme weather events?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Has your local community been doing anything to help your area withstand extreme weather events? Do you think your area should be doing more to prepare for extreme weather events?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ [PROBE If yes for specifics on what they are doing/should be doing and who should be doing this]</li> </ul> </li> </ul> | <p>Key goals:</p> <p>Views on extreme weather and explore their reaction to the idea that climate change is causing more extreme weather events.</p> |
| <b>CLOSING AND THANK YOU</b><br>1 min   |  |
| <p>One last question, if you could tell the people doing this study one thing to describe how you feel about the topics we've discussed today, what would you say?</p> <p>Thank you for taking the time to talk with me today. This has been so helpful.</p>  |  |