

UK grows more skeptical on climate change: poll

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(Reuters) - Britain has become more skeptical about climate change, more supportive of nuclear power, and more worried about depending on energy imports, a poll by Cardiff University on Friday showed.

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Although the majority still believed climate change was happening, the percentage slipped compared to a similar study conducted five years ago, while worries about energy security and power costs were high, according to the report.

"The results do show a rise in those who hold doubts about the reality of climate change, although this may not be as significant as some had first feared," said Nick Pidgeon, one of the report's authors.

The report showed 78 percent of the 1,822 people surveyed thought the world's climate was changing compared to 91 percent in 2005, while 40 percent of people thought the seriousness of climate change was exaggerated.

And less than a third believed climate change was purely a result of human activity.

"The data do appear to show an opposite trend to our prediction, a finding which is consistent with other emerging evidence showing a small but significant decline in certainty about climate change amongst the public in recent years," the report said.

A U.S. Gallup poll in March showed nearly half of Americans believed global warming worries were exaggerated, although a June poll in the wake of the [Gulf of Mexico](#) oil spill indicated that interest in petroleum alternatives was growing too.

The Cardiff University report also showed that views on nuclear power plants had become more favorable, although they were still thought of as risky.

"In general, attitudes appear to have become somewhat more positive across a range of items when compared with the 2005 results, although the majority of people are still concerned about nuclear power, and public trust in the government and nuclear industry remains low," the report said.

Sixty percent of people agreed that nuclear power would benefit Britain compared with less than 50 percent in 2005, while 17 percent wanted more nuclear plants compared with 9 percent previously.

The number of people either fairly or very concerned about nuclear power in general decreased to 54 percent from 58 percent.

"In terms of developing a low carbon economy for Britain, renewables are clearly favored whilst nuclear power remains unpopular, but may be accepted alongside the development of a range of other energy sources," author Pidgeon said.

ENERGY IMPORTS

The survey also showed Britain was increasingly worried about depending on energy imports from other countries and about power costs, but most were also willing to spend taxes on projects to tackle climate change.

Just over 80 percent of people were concerned that Britain will become too dependent in the future on imported energy, while over three-quarters were worried that electricity would become unaffordable.

But 68 percent would probably vote to spend taxpayers' money on projects to combat climate change, while 52 percent were willing to pay 10 pounds (\$14.57) more per month to ensure their power came from renewable sources.

For renewable power generation, 88 percent regarded solar as most favorable, followed by 82 percent for wind and 76 percent for hydroelectric.

From fossil fuels, 56 percent most favored gas, followed by 36 percent for coal and 33 percent for oil.

(Reporting by Kwok W. Wan; editing by Keiron Henderson)