

Climate Science Communication and Challenges for a Professional Society: Perspectives from the AMS President



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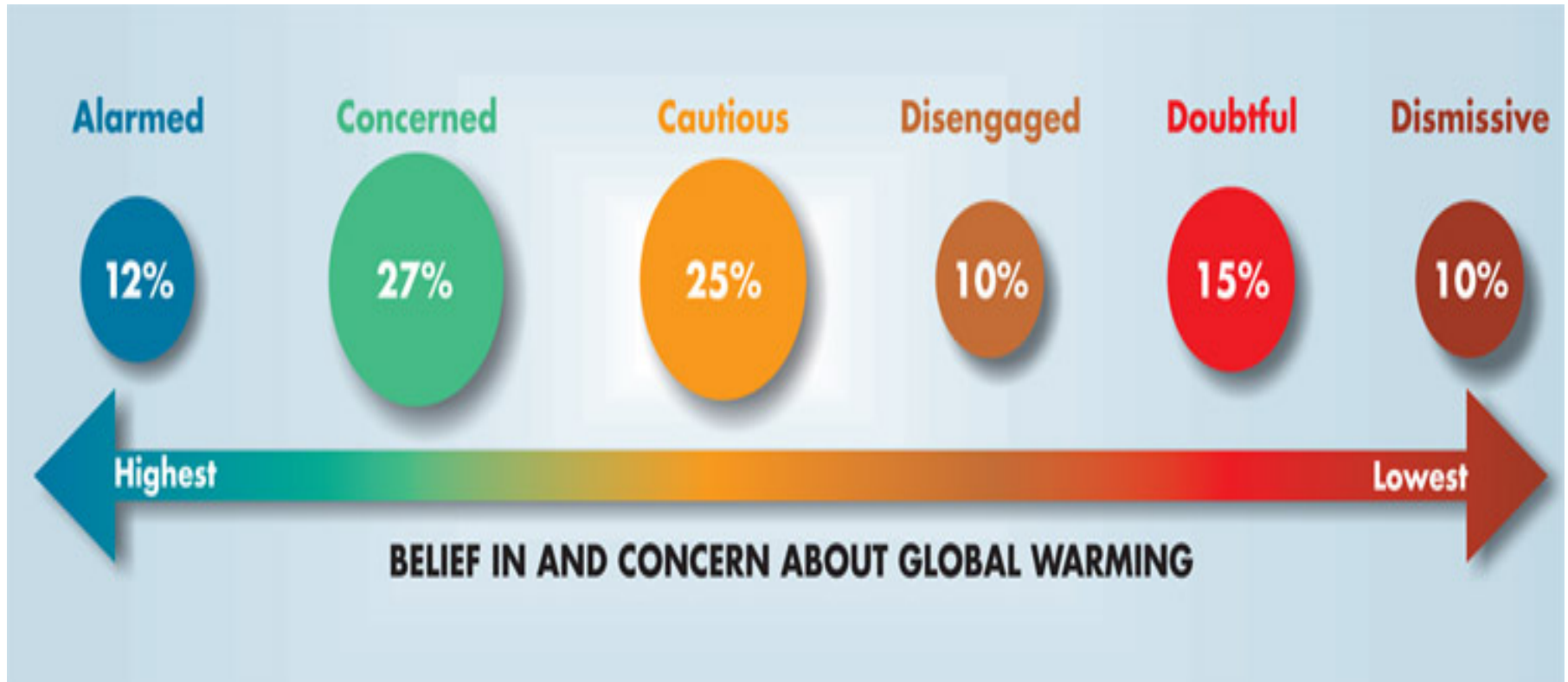
2013 International Forum of Meteorological Societies

Global Meeting

April 12, 2013



The 6-Americas Study: Shapes views on climate change



Yale-George Mason Study (2011)

Are AMS Members different than 6-Americans?

1 SEPTEMBER 2012

American Meteorological Society Issues Updated Statement On Climate Change

Posted by [Dan Satterfield](#)



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The AMS has released its updated statement on climate change, and as expected, it is considerably more direct than the previous one issued in 2007. This is no surprise since the last 5 years have seen a remarkable increase in understanding, along with 5 more years of observations and measurements. Full disclosure here: I've been a proud member of the American Meteorological Society for around 35 years. I also serve on the AMS Committee for Station Science.

For someone wanting a non-political look at what we know, I highly recommend reading the statement. It's well done and to be honest on the conservative side. A good example is the portion that talks about sea level rise of 10-28 inches. If sea level continues to rise only at the rate it is rising now it will exceed 10 inches. The next IPCC summary of the science will (from everything I've read over the past year or so) forecast a likely rise of over a foot by the end of this century.

What is good about this statement is that it gives the public a yardstick to measure online rhetoric from. If someone tells you something that is far outside the bounds of this statement in either direction, then you are likely getting political opinion dressed up to look like science. Be VERY wary of that. NASA, NOAA, the USGS and the IPCC (which basically summarizes the peer reviewed science) are reliable sources.

The AMS Statement in it's entirety is reprinted below:



Particular challenges from AMS Perspective

- ~14,000 members, all don't agree.
- Particular challenge with some in the Broadcast Meteorology Community.
- AMS adopts a non-political, non-advocacy stance but does inform via AMS Policy Program, AMS Education Program, and Broader Science/Society Activities.
- Slower to engage Social Media which is shaping public/political viewpoint (better now though)
- Science trumps all, but is deliberate.



2013 – AMS Issued A New Statement on Climate and Science Standards

Climate Science is Core to Science Education

A Policy Statement of the American Meteorological Society
(Adopted by the AMS Executive Committee, 23 May 2013)

[PDF Version](#)

So how do our policy, information, statement processes work?



Other AMS Approaches and Tools

- **Our Peer-Reviewed Journals disseminate sound science**
 - Several ranked in the top 20 with Bulletin of the AMS (BAMS, #1) and Journal of Climate typically ranked in the top 5
 - <http://www.ametsoc.org/2012extremeeventsclimate.pdf>
- **Our Annual and Specialty meetings do to!**



Other AMS Approaches and Tools

- **Our Website, Front Page Blog, and Social Media Presence**
 - ❑ <http://blog.ametsoc.org/>
 - ❑ www.ametsoc.org
 - ❑ @ametsoc on Twitter
 - ❑ Find us on Facebook



Other AMS Approaches and Tools

■ Committee on Climate Change Communication (CICCC)

- A relatively new addition that attempts to foster open dialogue irrespective of viewpoint and to evaluate ways to communicate climate science
- Co-Chairs: Bob Ryan and Jenny Dissen
- Host Climate Cafes, engages with Peer organizations, etc.



Other AMS Approaches and Tools

■ AMS Policy Program Activities

- ❑ Climate Briefing Series on Capitol Hill
- ❑ Geosciences Days on Capitol Hill
- ❑ Policy Publications
- ❑ Leadership in Policy Statement Procedures



■ AMS Education Programs

- ❑ Online Climate Studies
- ❑ Datastream, Maury Project, etc.

The AMS goal is that all students become scientifically literate. To this end, AMS:

- provides up-to-date teacher training, produces instructional resource materials,
- conducts activities to make the information highway an avenue for learning,
- promotes minority participation in science via its Promoting Minority Participation in Science initiative.



Other AMS Approaches and Tools

- **Science-based, non-political, “honest broker” of atmospheric and related sciences information**
 - Partner on letters and initiatives with peer organizations
 - Provide experts for media and broader forums
 - Voice or “science reason” not agendas or funding streams
 - Best Practices
 - Certification Programs: CCM, CBM, etc
 - News You Can Use



Concluding Thoughts for IFMS Partners

- Remain Anchored in Science
- Embrace Social Media or you will be fighting an uphill battle to communicate beyond the science community
- Find a middle ground
- Be an honest broker of information
- Don't lose sight of the signal because of “noise”

