

Are Canadians Climate Doomers?

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This report was written in collaboration with Re.Climate.

Key Takeaways

- 11-12% of Canadians identify as climate doomers, meaning they think climate action no longer matters and it is too late to make a difference. When you look at breakdowns by social media use, up to 37% of Bluesky users are climate doomers.
- Canadians vastly overestimate the prevalence of climate doomers in Canada, with the average estimate being 42% of the country. This gap, between the real and perceived size of the climate doomer community, shows that our conversations on climate doom in Canada overstate the group's size.
- 18% of Canadians heard about David Suzuki's doomer stance reported this past summer. Since Suzuki is a household name in Canada — 67% of Canadians report familiarity with him and 79% know Suzuki's name — and is largely trusted on environmental matters, his words carried an impact.
- 54% of those who came across the Suzuki headline discussed it with their community. The most common emotional reactions were frustration, helplessness and anxiety.

Context

Climate doom — the belief that climate change is an unstoppable catastrophe and that it is too late to take effective action against — has gained some popularity in recent years, and for understandable reasons.

If you paid attention to the news in the past decade, you may have noticed some grim headlines:

- Learning to Die in the Anthropocene: Reflections on the end of civilization (2015)
- The Uninhabitable Earth: Famine, economic collapse, a sun that cooks us: What climate change could wreak — sooner than you think. (2017)
- We have 12 years to limit climate change catastrophe. Urgent changes needed to cut risk of extreme heat, drought, floods and poverty, says IPCC (2018)
- What If We Stopped Pretending? The climate apocalypse is coming. To prepare for it, we need to admit that we can't prevent it. (2019)
- 56 Percent of Young People Think Humanity Is Doomed (2021)

- More people not having children due to climate breakdown fears (2023)

And it is against this broader context that Canadian academic, science broadcaster, and environmental activist David Suzuki received attention for his iPolitics interview this past summer (July 2025) featuring the headline:

“‘It’s too late’: David Suzuki says the fight against climate change is lost”

This was a chord change in Suzuki’s public image. Before, one might have associated Suzuki with his love of the environment and inspiring calls to protect it. To witness an environmental icon in Canada project fatalism was noteworthy. We decided to dig more and see what Canadians thought about the idea that it is too late to make a difference when it comes to climate change. Perhaps Suzuki’s comments were just the tip of the iceberg.

Key questions

- Is climate doomerism prevalent in Canada?
- Did Suzuki’s headline resonate with Canadians?

Approach & Considerations

To understand Canadian attitudes on climate doomerism, we fielded an original survey to a nationally representative sample of 1,431 Canadians, between Aug 28th and Sept 3rd, 2025. The margin of error for a comparable probability-based random sample of the same size is +/-2.6%, 19 times out of 20.

Is climate doom prevalent in Canada?

To measure climate doom in Canada, we first attempt to define the phenomenon. We should first recognize that there are ongoing conversations about what constitutes climate doom. This is evident in discussions amongst the climate community following Bill Gates’ recent memo leading into CoP 30 which explicitly calls for a reorientation away from the doomsday outlook. So while there is significant nuance within the concept of climate doom and varying definitions, most feature the futility of action.

We focus on the futility of action as a point of research. As climate doom is not a settled concept, we deployed two questions in our survey to get at the core of this concept. First, we ask respondents:

Doomer question 1

When it comes to climate change and actions to address it, which statement is closer to your view?

- It’s already too late to make a practical difference
- Action still matters, even if the problem is serious
- I don’t know / Prefer not to say

Respondents who selected the first response are deemed climate doomers.

And in order to be more direct, we also ask, as a follow up question:

Doomer question 2

Some people use the term “climate doomer” as a way to say it’s too late to stop major harms from climate change and that action no longer matters. Would you describe yourself as a climate doomer?

- Yes
- No
- I don’t know / Prefer not to say

Respondents who selected yes are deemed climate doomers.

Our findings show that approximately 11-12% of Canadians identify as climate doomers, regardless of the question. Figure 1 shows a breakdown of doomerism prevalence in Canada across various demographics and attitudes. While this topline finding holds regardless of question phrasing (without rounding, the ‘all’ category values are within .2 percentage points), there are some notable differences when you dig into demographic breakdowns, especially gender, age and social media habits.

Figure 1. Climate doom prevalence in Canada. Demographic breakdown.

For the first doomer question, where people are reporting it is already too late to make a difference without using the moniker of ‘climate doomer’ attached, men exhibit more climate doom than women (15% to 8%). As well, users on Bluesky and X, defined as respondents who report using the platform at least weekly, are the most likely to embrace climate doom at 20% and 16%, respectively. While other demographics show some variation in our first question, no other difference is statistically significant.

For the second question phrasing, we interestingly see a generational difference in our findings. Younger generations, gen Z-ers and millennials, are approximately 10 percentage points more doomer than older generations (~18% for younger generations vs 5-8% for older generations). And perhaps most strikingly, a whopping 37% of Bluesky users identify as climate doomers. While it is difficult to explain the difference in distributions between these questions, perhaps the question explicitly asking about the phenomenon with the moniker ‘doomer’ is more cognizable to younger people, as the term is likely coded as spending time online. More research is needed to understand this nuance and the differences in responses. Conveniently, the topline numbers are strikingly similar, showing potential robustness to the 11-12% figure.

We were also curious about Canadians’ perception of climate doom amongst their compatriots. In an immediate follow up question to whether survey respondents self-identify as climate doomers, we then asked respondents to estimate the doomer population across Canada. We asked:

If you had to guess, what percentage of Canadians do you think are “Climate doomers”? Please indicate the percentage through the slider below where 0 indicates you think there are no Canadian climate doomers (0%) and 100 means you think all Canadians are climate doomers (100%).

Whilst answers varied widely, the average response was 42%. This is a striking result. Survey respondents overestimating minority groups is a common phenomenon, but the perception gap is still a very large figure at 30 percentage points. Figure 2 demonstrates this overestimation across demographics. Younger people are more likely to think this figure is higher, approaching 50% for the youngest generations. Bloc Quebecois respondents, Bluesky and TikTok users also estimate this figure at higher levels. Most notably, climate doomers, defined as respondents who indicated so in either of the prior two questions in figure 1, are most likely to overestimate their presence, assuming 52% of Canadians are doomers versus 40% for non-doomers.

Figure 2. Climate doomerism expectations in Canada. Demographic breakdown.

It is worth reflecting on the public discourse impact that such an overestimated perception of climate doomerism might have in Canada. Despite Canadians thinking climate doomers are approximately 42% of the country, only 11-12% actually report it being too late to make a difference.

Did Suzuki’s headline resonate with Canadians?

When asked if respondents recall seeing or hearing the iPolitics interview headline where Suzuki was quoted, 18% of respondents respond yes, 76% respond no and 6% are unsure. Nearly one fifth of Canadian adults coming across the headline translates to approximately 6 million people encountering this headline. Figure 3 displays these results with a breakdown by demographics and social media habits.

Figure 3. Who heard David Suzuki’s headline? Demographic breakdown.

Most notably, 47% of Bluesky users reported being aware of the headline. As well, we find that climate doomers were more likely to have heard the headline (34% vs 15% for non-doomers). This provides evidence of a possible climate doom information ecosystem, where these news items circulate and amplify more within the community. With such high Bluesky user awareness, and to a lesser extent X users (29%), Suzuki’s article likely circulated widely on these social media platforms.

Of those who recalled the headline, 40% reported feeling frustrated reading it, 30% helpless and 25% anxious. As well, we asked if respondents recall acting on the information in the form of expression and discussion with their community. While nearly half (46%) who encountered the headline said they did no further engagement, 54% of those aware of the headline did take further action. While each of the following actions are non-exclusive, 30% said they talked about it with friends and family, 22% said they talked about it with coworkers or classmates and 13% said they engaged on social media with the content.

It is worth noting that two-thirds of Canadians report familiarity with David Suzuki and this number grows to 79% if you include people that recall his name without knowing many details about him. So it is fair to say that Suzuki is a household name in Canada. Of those that know him, 70% give him ‘a fair amount’ or ‘a lot of trust’ on environmental matters. His trusted status on the environment meant this headline last summer had a larger resonance than if he was opining on topics outside the environment.

Conclusion

At 11-12% of the population, climate doom is not trivial, nor is it widely prevalent in Canada. Canadians do, however, massively overstate its presence, estimating it to be 42% of the overall population. This perception gap means we correspondingly underestimate the amount of Canadians who think climate action matters.

David Suzuki’s interview this past summer, where he projected climate doom, was seen by nearly a fifth of Canadians. As a widely known and trusted Canadian environmentalist, his views carried impact. When Canadians reacted to his message, they talked amongst their community, and often felt frustrated, helpless and anxious in their conversations.

Future research should examine the consequences of climate doom on climate action and policy. Does it matter to effective climate action? Does it affect policy agendas, funding priorities or

community initiatives? How is the concept employed, contested or exploited to impact collective action and public debates about addressing climate change?

Climate doom may evolve to become a more important factor in public discourse around climate change. We hope this research snapshot plants a constructive flag and generates productive conversations on the topic of climate doom.

Reflections by the Author

I do not think David Suzuki is a literal climate doomer in the sense that he genuinely thinks climate action no longer matters. Going beyond the headline in the iPolitics article, or following his communications after July 2025, demonstrate this clearly. The iPolitics article selected the notable part of the lengthy interview in which Suzuki is expressing the challenge of being a climate activist in 2025. The past 5 years have seen massive global events and changes such as the covid pandemic, inflation disruptions and major wars, reorienting the public's priorities away from the environment. Perhaps most doomer survey respondents, when pressed, might similarly admit climate action matters and should be done. Teasing out this nuance in a survey is methodologically difficult but worth pursuing.

This is all to say, these results should be taken seriously, but in an informed context. Climate doomerism is a powerful concept that is rippling across society. Dissecting who uses the term as an ideological signifier of values versus who literally thinks humanity is doomed is challenging. The climate change information ecosystem is a fraught area — highly contested, embedded with narratives used by bad faith actors to delay action, and subject to polarized voices having a large reach. Social media platform designs compound this.