When I was in Spain in 1993, an older man there complained to me about an unusual rain storm during the normally-dry summer. “It’s the fault of you Americans and radiation from your nuclear bomb,” he told me, half-teasingly. Little did he know that he was proving the thesis of a new study by NYU professors Megan Mullin and Patrick J. Egan. They found that people’s opinions on climate change tend to vary with local weather events.

> The estimated effect of weather on beliefs about climate change is significant and consistent: a shift in local temperature from the 5th to 95th percentile (that is, from 4.3°F below normal to 14.7°F above normal) increases the probability that Americans believe there is solid evidence for global warming by about six percentage points.

In other words, if you want to see a gas tax any time soon, pray for a heat wave in the swing districts.