

There's been a lot of work on how to more effectively communicate about climate change with skeptical audiences. A [new study](#) indicates that such efforts may actually backfire: simply hearing about the evidence, regardless of how the issue is framed, makes Republicans even more opposed. The researcher suggests instead that we focus on persuading Independents and the minority of Democrats who are unconvinced of the urgency of climate change. That seems like shrewd advice.

What, then, about GOP opposition to climate action? This is only one study; perhaps some different way of framing the issue may turn out to be more effective. It's also possible that particular frames may actually succeed with specific subgroups, so the messaging needs to be more tailored. On the whole, however, it may be better to try to win Republican support on specific policies. For instance, at least some environmentalists believe that nuclear power should be part of our efforts to decrease carbon, and Republicans do tend to be pro-nuclear.

It's also possible that opposition to climate change will fade as a totemic symbol for Republicans. As recently as 2008, the Republicans nominated a presidential candidate who had favored cap-and-trade. What has changed once might change again, not because of outside persuasion but because of internal developments. The growing factionalism within the Republican Party could make lead people to be less likely to embrace positions simply because they are the party line. For instance, Republicans with a libertarian orientation might look at the Libertarian Party for guidance. Gary Johnson doubts whether taking action on climate change is cost-effective, but he does say that humans are probably causing climate change. Maybe that will cause some Republicans to soften their views on the science, possibly leaving them open to persuasion that some policies actually are cost-effective responses to a real problem.