



# NWS Hazard Simplification Project: *Major Change Coming to NWS' Watch, Warning and Advisory System*



Website: <https://www.weather.gov/hazardsimplification/>

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# The NWS “Watch, Warning and Advisory” System

## *How We Message for Weather & Water Hazards Today*

- **Watch**: Issued when a **life- and/or property-threatening** event is *possible* - but *not yet certain*
- **Warning**: Issued when a **life- and/or property-threatening** event is *happening* or *about to happen*
- **Advisory**: Issued when an event **less serious than a Warning** is *happening* or *about to happen*
- **Special Weather Statement**: Issued when an event **less serious (or of shorter duration) than an Advisory** is *happening* or *about to happen*

# What is the Planned Major Change?

- All Watches and Warnings will still be issued exactly as they are today, but...
  - All Advisories will be replaced with plain language headlines
    - *(Exception: Small Craft and Tsunami Advisories will become Warnings)*
    - *(Also, Center Weather Advisory, space weather and tropical cyclone advisories will remain; these are used to contain descriptive information only)*
  - All Special Weather Statements will be converted to plain language headlines
- These changes will not be made prior to 2024

# Visualizing the Major Change

What Will Remain the Same?

**WATCH**

*What should I do?* - **Prepare!**



**WARNING**

*What should I do?* - **Take action!**



What Will Change?

**ADVISORY**

&

**SPECIAL WEATHER STATEMENT**

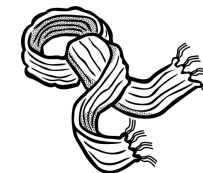
*Become*



**PLAIN LANGUAGE HEADLINES**

An event less serious than a Warning is *happening*

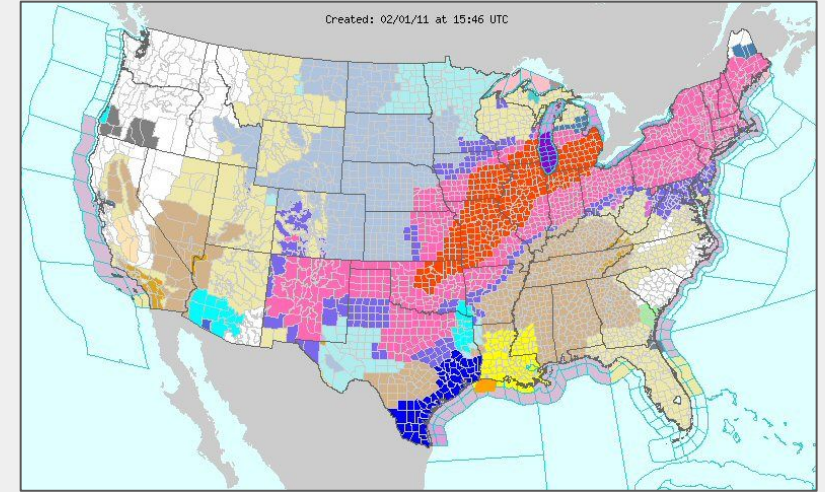
*What should I do?* - **Exercise caution** to avoid impacts.



# Why Make this Major Change?

## *Summary of Social Science Research*

- Too many products and product types
  - *Watches, Warnings, Advisories, Special Weather Statements*
- Advisory headline is very misunderstood and is also confused with “Watch”
- Emergency Managers prefer plain language headlines; they can be conveyed clearly and quickly
- Survey results from 2020 engagements with NWS partners and the public indicated strong support for plain language as well



# Replacing Advisories & Special Weather Statements

## *Initial Suggestions for Plain Language Headlines*

**"Wind Advisory in effect"**

*could become...*

**"WINDY: Westerly winds today gusting to 40 mph"**

=====

**"Coastal Flood Advisory in effect"**

*could become...*

**"CAUTION: Coastal flooding expected today"**

=====

**"Wind Chill Advisory in effect"**

*could become...*

**"VERY COLD TONIGHT: Wind chills between -5F and -10F"**

***These are just examples - stay tuned for feedback opportunities!***

# Transition to Plain Language Headlines

## Examples of Fully Formatted Messages

### Winter Weather Advisory transition

to...

### Plain Language Format

```
/O.NEW.KBMX.WW.Y.0001.200208T1000Z-200208T1700Z/  
Cherokee-  
Including the city of Centre  
815 PM CST Fri Feb 7 2020
```

```
...WINTER WEATHER ADVISORY IN EFFECT FROM 4 AM TO 11 AM CST SATURDAY...
```

- \* WHAT...Snow expected. Total snow accumulations of up to one inch.
- \* WHERE...Northern Cherokee County.
- \* WHEN...From 4 AM to 11 AM CST Saturday.
- \* IMPACTS...Plan on slippery road conditions.

```
/O.NEW.KBMX.WW.S.0001.200208T1000Z-200208T1700Z/  
Cherokee-  
Including the city of Centre  
815 PM CST Fri Feb 7 2020
```

**Plain language headline - Specific wording TBD**

- \* WHAT...Snow expected. Total snow accumulations of up to one inch.
- \* WHERE...Northern Cherokee County.
- \* WHEN...From 4 AM to 11 AM CST Saturday.
- \* IMPACTS...Plan on slippery road conditions.

VTEC

Bullet format

### Special Weather Statement transition

to...

### Plain Language Format

```
North Snowy Range Foothills-  
Including the cities of Arlington and Elk Mountain  
1143 PM MDT Mon Sep 23 2019
```

```
...Strong westerly winds until this evening...
```

```
Strong westerly winds will pick up this morning by 7 AM and  
continue through the day, finally diminishing by 6 PM. Sustained winds  
around 30 mph with gusts of 45 to 50 mph are possible.
```

```
/O.NEW.KCYS.WI.S.0001.190923T0543Z-190923T0000Z/  
North Snowy Range Foothills-  
Including the cities of Arlington and Elk Mountain  
1143 PM MDT Mon Sep 23 2019
```

**Plain language headline - Specific wording TBD**

- \* WHAT...Sustained winds of 30 mph with gusts of 45 to 50 mph.
- \* WHERE...North Snowy Range Foothills.
- \* WHEN...Tuesday 7 AM to 6 PM.
- \* IMPACTS...Light weight and high profile vehicles will be most impacted.

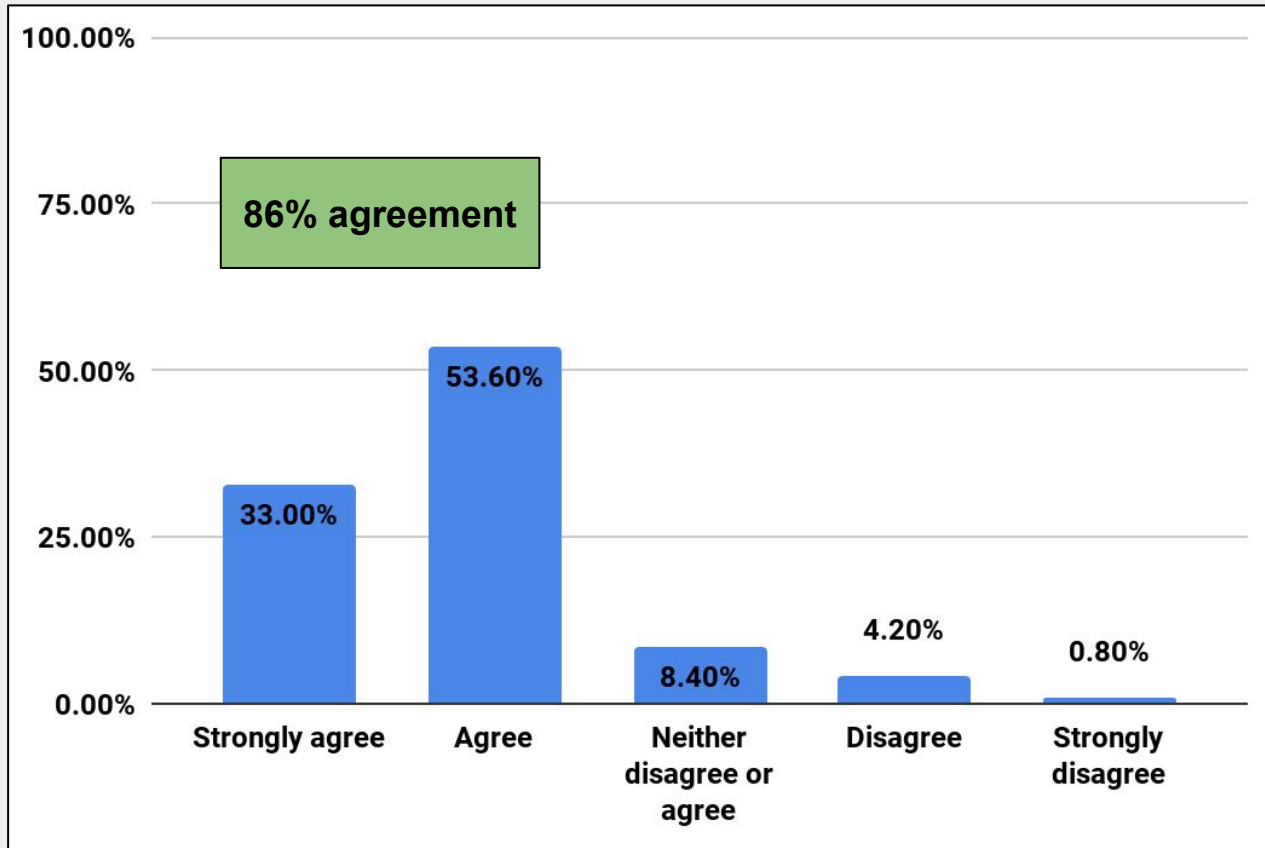
Now with VTEC!

Now with "3W" bullets!

# Justification for the Major Change

## *Partner Webinars & Focus Groups*

**Key Question:** Should we eliminate Advisories and Special Weather Statements in favor of plain language headlines?



**Partner Webinar Results**  
Total Participants: 2,150

### **Main Focus Group Themes:**

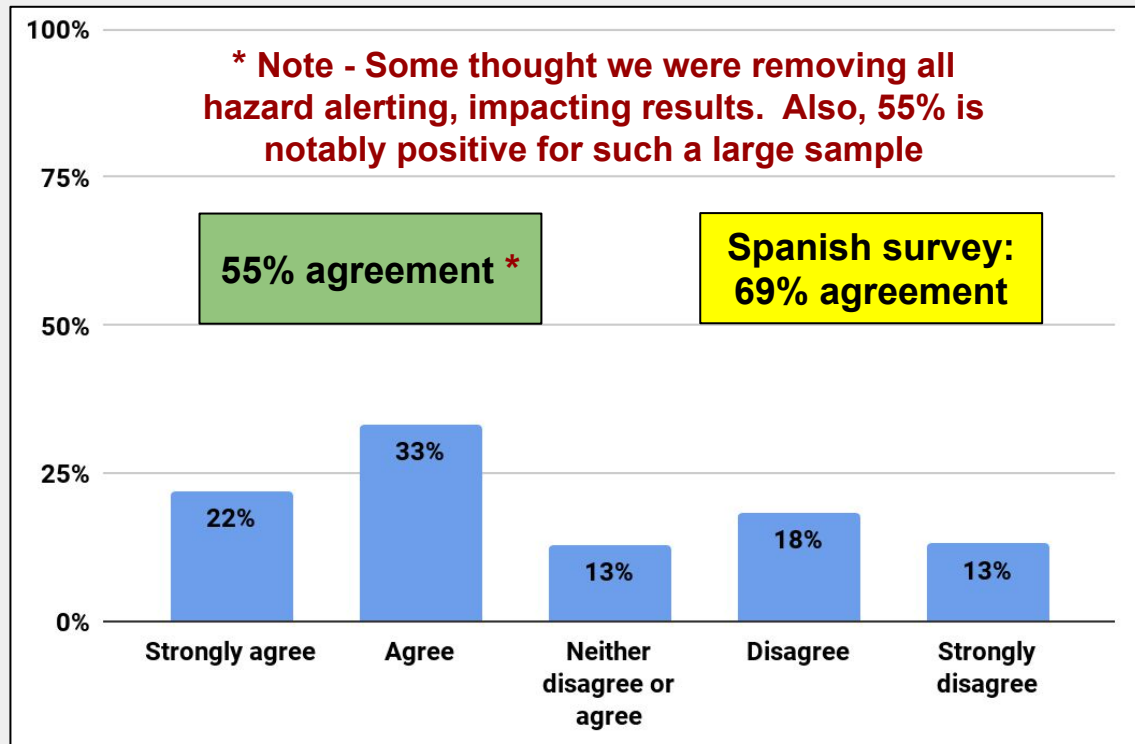
- Reinforced finding that “Advisory” headline is confused
- Most endorsed removal of the term and felt plain language was an improvement
- But - most also expressed concern that lack of the “Advisory” term could result in less attention or action
- Without a term, there was some concern that inconsistencies could arise and communication could be challenging



# Justification for the Major Change

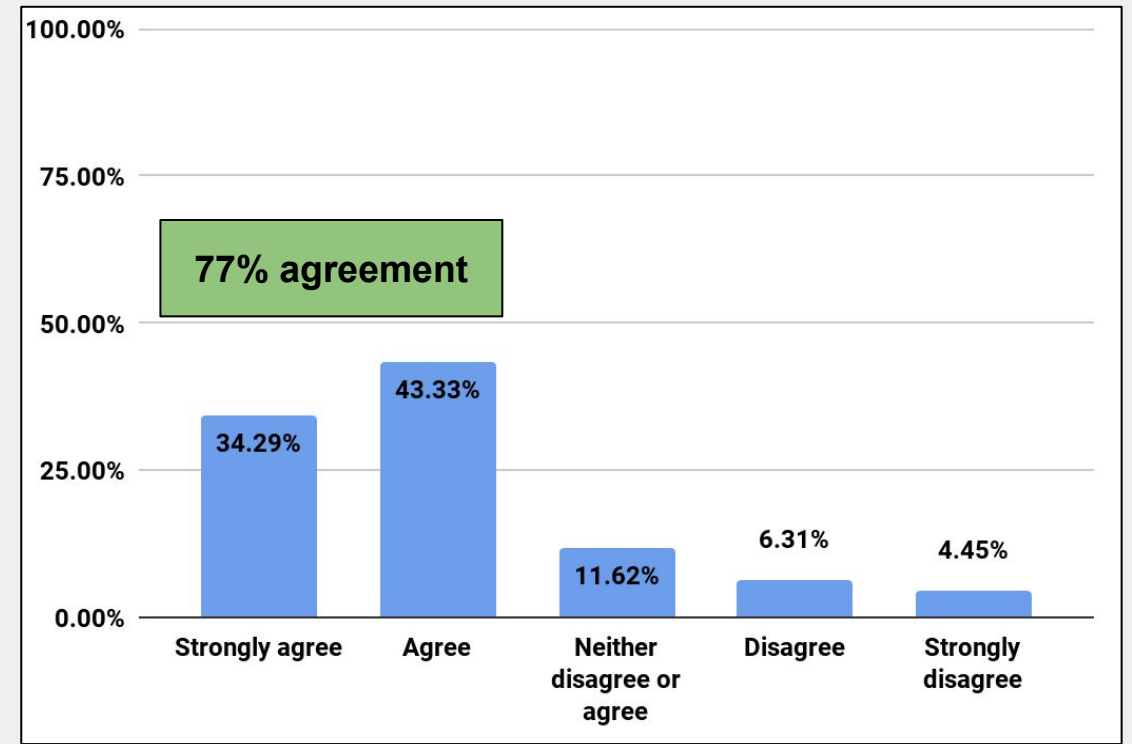
## *Forecaster and Public Surveys*

**Key Question:** Eliminate Advisories & Special Weather Statements in favor of plain language headlines?



**Public Survey Results**

Total Responses: [80,063](#), 346 additional in Spanish



**Forecaster Survey Results**

Total Responses: 747

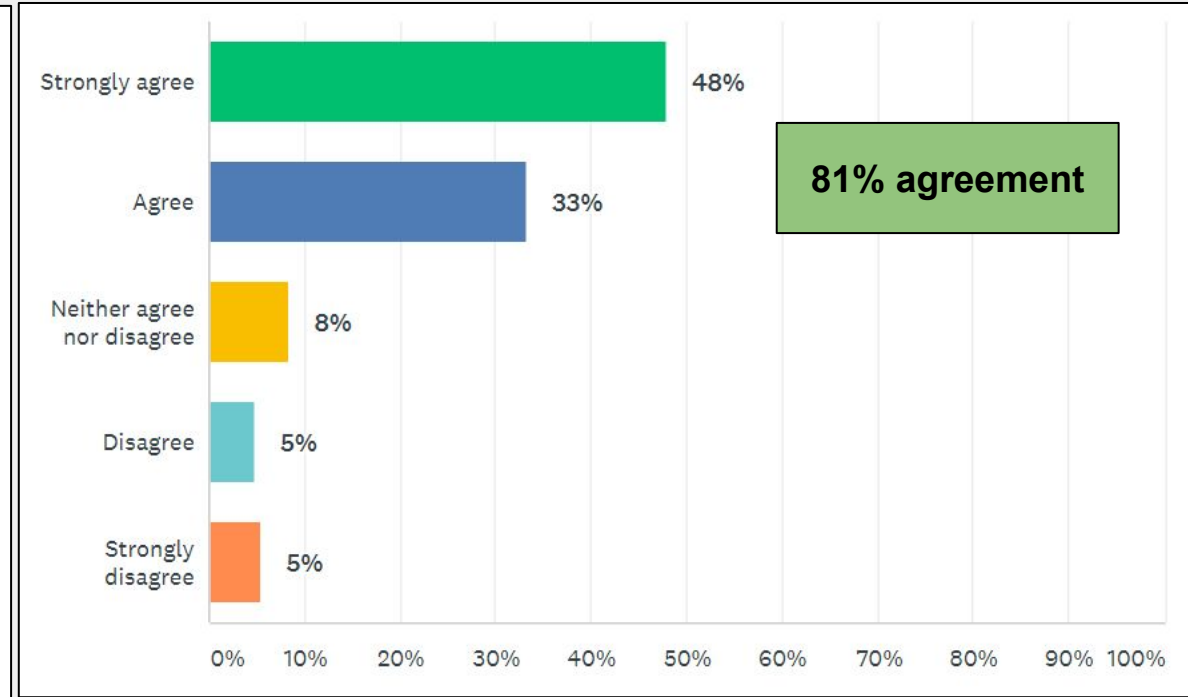
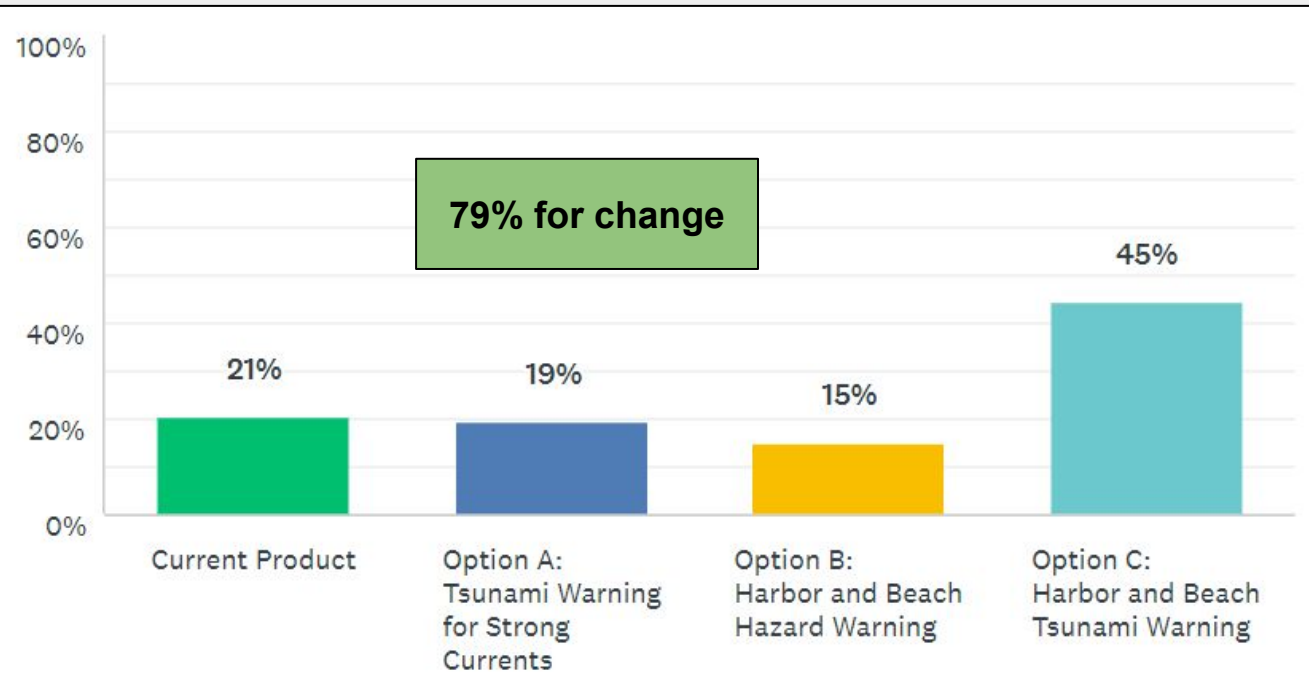
# Justification for the Major Change

## *Evidence of Support for Change on Key Advisories*

### Public survey results for Small Craft & Tsunami Advisory

**Transition Tsunami Advisory to Tsunami Warning:**  
Which Warning most clearly conveys the nature of the hazard?

**Small Craft:** Transition Small Craft Advisory to Warning?

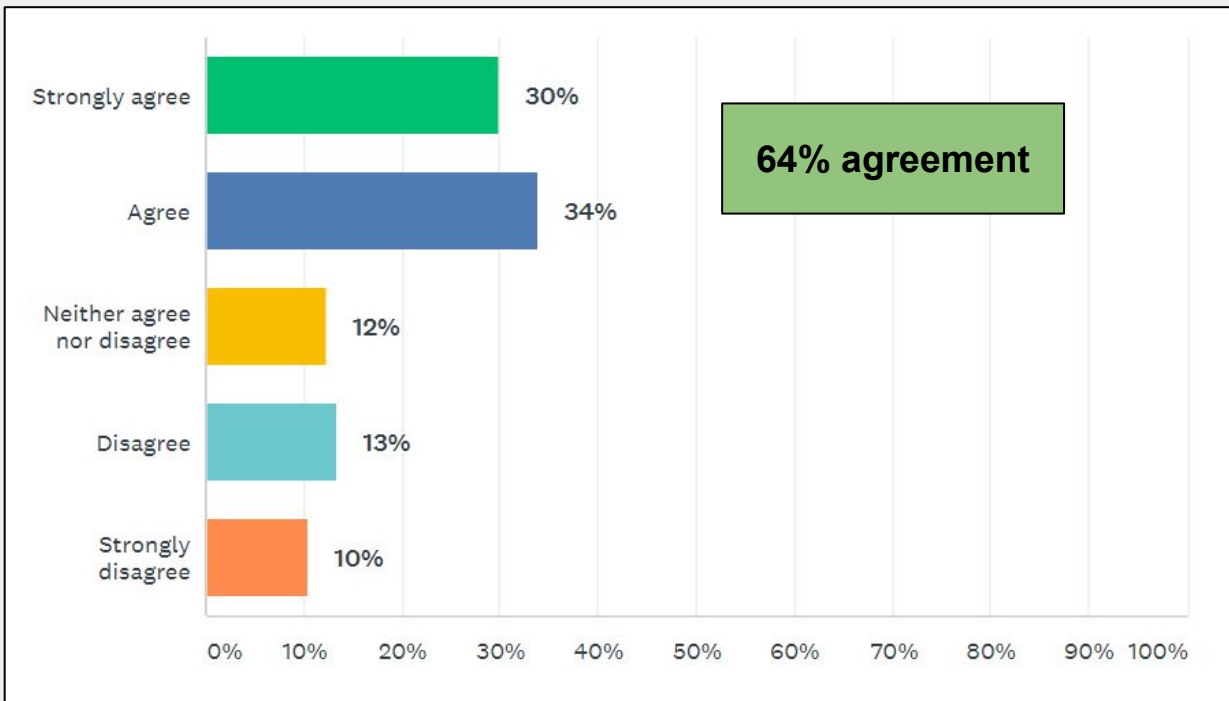


# Justification for the Major Change

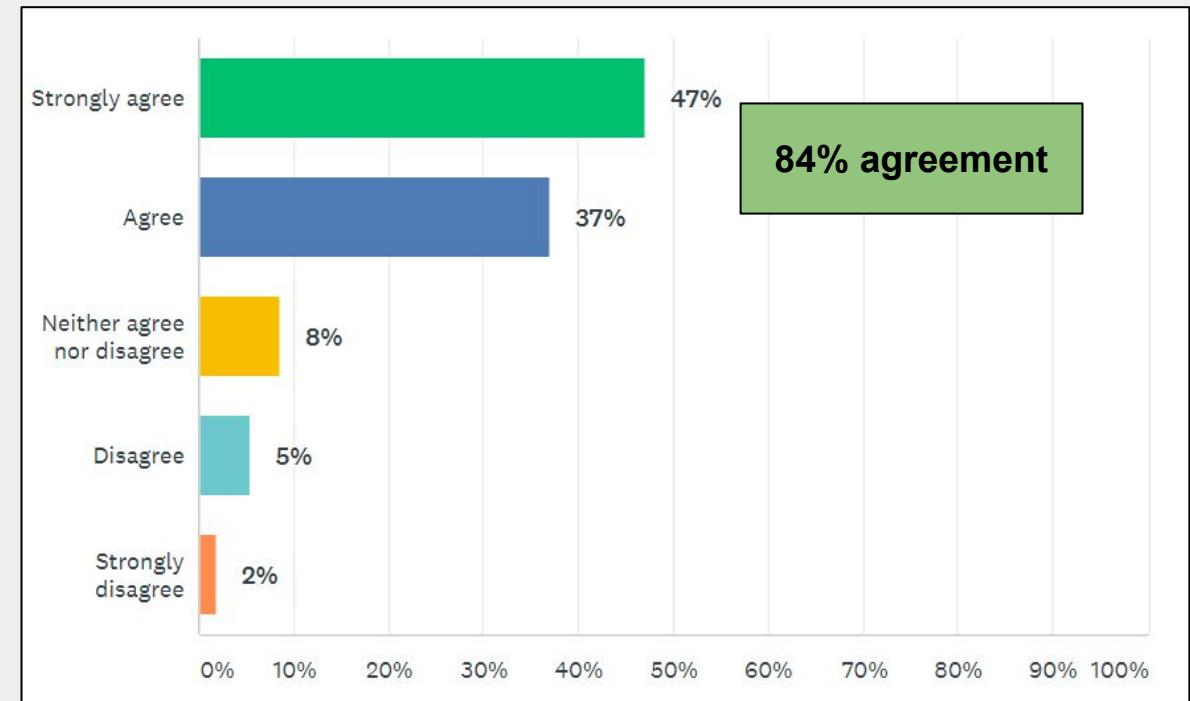
## *Evidence of Support for Change on Key Advisories*

### Public survey results for El Nino/La Nina & High Surf Advisories

**High Surf:** Transition High Surf Advisory to plain language?



**El Nino/La Nina:** Transition El Nino/La Nina headlines to plain language?



# List of Advisories to be Discontinued

<b>Winter Weather Advisory</b>	<b>Lake Wind Advisory</b>	<b>Air Stagnation Advisory*</b>	<b>High Surf Advisory</b>
<b>Wind Chill Advisory</b>	<b>Frost Advisory</b>	<b>El Nino/La Nina Advisory</b>	<b>Small Craft Advisory - <i>transition to “Warning”</i></b>
<b>Dense Fog Advisory</b>	<b>Blowing Dust Advisory</b>	<b>Tsunami Advisory - <i>transition to “Warning”</i></b>	<b>Lakeshore Flood Advisory</b>
<b>Dense Smoke Advisory</b>	<b>Dust Advisory</b>	<b>Freezing Spray Advisory</b>	<b>Coastal Flood Advisory</b>
<b>Wind Advisory</b>	<b>Ashfall Advisory</b>	<b>Low Water Advisory</b>	<b>Flood Advisory (Areal)</b>
<b>Heat Advisory</b>	<b>Freezing Fog Advisory</b>	<b>Brisk Wind Advisory</b>	<b>Flood Advisory (River)</b>

\* Issued in collaboration with EPA

# Next Steps and How You Can Participate

- The decision to discontinue Advisories and Special Weather Statements is now final
- However, to address feedback received during 2020, NWS will survey partners and the public during 2021 to identify best messaging options for our new, plain language headlines
- Survey opportunities will be advertised on the front page of our website this spring! <https://www.weather.gov/hazardsimplification/>
- Send questions or comments to [hazsimp@noaa.gov](mailto:hazsimp@noaa.gov)