To: Chesapeake Climate Action Network
From: Steve Raabe, President
OpinionWorks LLC
Date: October 25, 2016
Subject: Maryland Voter Support for a Ban on Fracking

OpinionWorks conducted a statewide poll of 802 Maryland registered voters, along with additional oversample interviews in selected locations, between August 18 and September 28, 2016. **This poll identifies broad public support for a statewide ban on hydraulic fracturing for natural gas in Maryland.**

The statewide survey sample is representative of the Maryland electorate, reflecting their views within a potential margin of error of ±3.5% at the 95% confidence level. Both wireless and landline telephones were included in the sampling frame, and interviews were conducted by live operators trained in opinion research best practices.

The poll further explored voter attitudes by adding statistically significant oversamples in Garrett County, one of the first two counties where the practice of fracking would occur, and in selected legislative districts across Maryland. The results of the statewide poll and the geographic oversamples are discussed in the memorandum that follows.

**Two-to-One Support for a Ban on Fracking in Maryland**

Maryland voters strongly support a ban on the practice of extracting natural gas through a process known as hydraulic fracturing, or “fracking.” By a margin of two-to-one, Maryland voters statewide support a fracking ban, with a 56% majority supporting the ban and only 28% opposed.

![Pie chart showing support for a fracking ban](image)

After more than six years of study, the New York State Health Department declared in 2014 that “fracking” for natural gas posed too many human and environmental health risks to be done safely, so the governor banned the practice of fracking in that state. In Maryland, no fracking yet occurs, but studies have found that fracking here would pose similar risks. Knowing this, do you support or oppose a ban on fracking in Maryland?
The poll further tested the appeal of a fracking ban through oversamples in five legislative districts spread across the State, and in Garrett County. The margin of support for a fracking ban is more than two-to-one in Garrett County, with 57% in favor of a ban and 27% opposed. As enumerated in the table below, support for a ban consistently exceeds a majority of voters in various areas of the State, with opposition only one-third of voters or fewer in each geographic area.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Garrett County</th>
<th>Legislative District 30 (Anne Arundel Co.)</th>
<th>Legislative District 6 (Baltimore Co.)</th>
<th>Legislative District 12 (Baltimore, Howard Cos.)</th>
<th>Legislative District 3 (Frederick Co.)</th>
<th>Legislative District 29 (St. Mary’s, Calvert Cos.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Support</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oppose</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sure/Depends</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Legislators’ Position on the Fracking Ban Affects Their Level of Support by Voters

Legislators’ position on a fracking ban will have a significant impact on the support they can expect from voters in their districts. Across the State, 40% of people said they are more likely to vote for a legislator who supports a fracking ban, compared to only 13% who would be less likely to vote for that legislator — a margin of three-to-one.

This question also identifies a voter intensity surrounding the fracking issue, with one-quarter (25%) of voters in Maryland saying they are much more likely to vote for a legislator who supports a ban on fracking, compared to only 7% who said they are much less likely to do so.
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This strong voter impact in favor of a fracking ban is found in Garrett County and in all legislative districts that were oversampled for this poll. At least one-third of voters in every geographic area said they were more likely to vote for a legislative candidate who supports a ban on fracking, while as few as 10% said they would be less likely.

| Likelihood to Vote for a Legislator Who Supports a Ban on Fracking, by Geographic Area |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Garrett County | Legislative District 30 (Anne Arundel Co.) | Legislative District 6 (Baltimore Co.) | Legislative District 12 (Baltimore, Howard Co.) | Legislative District 3 (Frederick Co.) | Legislative District 29 (St. Mary’s, Calvert Co.) |
| Much more likely | 22% | 28% | 19% | 27% | 21% | 15% |
| Somewhat more | 15% | 16% | 18% | 20% | 22% | 19% |
| **Total More Likely** | **37%** | **44%** | **37%** | **47%** | **43%** | **34%** |
| No difference | 32% | 31% | 39% | 33% | 37% | 42% |
| Somewhat less likely | 7% | 6% | 6% | 4% | 4% | 5% |
| Much less likely | 14% | 11% | 10% | 5% | 6% | 10% |
| **Total Less Likely** | **21%** | **17%** | **15%** | **10%** | **11%** | **15%** |
| Not sure | 10% | 9% | 8% | 11% | 9% | 9% |

Voter Worries about Fracking

**Voters have significant concerns about fracking.** When asked, “What would you say is the most important risk related to fracking?” voters offered a wide variety of concerns. This was an open-ended question, with no response options suggested. What appears below are categories based on the raw responses voters offered. These numbers will add up to more than 100% because voters may have offered more than one concern.

Leading the list, mentioned by 33% of all voters statewide, is concern about contamination of ground water, surface water, or drinking water. The second leading concern is the potential for harm to human or animal health, mentioned by 22%.

**Leading Worries about Fracking**

Registered Voters Statewide

- Water contamination: 33%
- Harm to human/animal health: 22%
- Harm to the environment generally: 10%
- Air pollution from truck traffic/drilling operations: 10%
- Earthquakes: 4%
- Methane release and climate change: 3%
- Harm to tourism/property values/sense of community: 1%
- The unknown: 1%
- Other: 2%
- No risks with fracking: 6%
- Not sure/Depends: 26%

What would you say is the most important risk related to fracking in Maryland?  
(Open-ended question. Responses categorized.)
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Voters also expressed significant concerns about environmental harm generally (mentioned by 10%), for air pollution stemming from fracking operations (10%), earthquakes (4%), and the release of gases that contribute to climate change (3%).

This wide range of concerns helps to explain the strong voter support for banning fracking in Maryland. Only 6% of voters statewide asserted that there are no risks with fracking, and another 26% said they were not sure of the risks.

How This Poll Was Conducted

OpinionWorks interviewed 802 randomly-selected registered voters across Maryland by telephone August 18–30, 2016. The interviews were conducted by trained and supervised live interviewers who are skilled in opinion research best practices.

The statewide poll has a potential sampling error of no more than ±3.5% at a 95% confidence level, meaning that at least 95% of the time the survey results would differ by no more than that margin if every registered voter in Maryland had been interviewed.

In addition to the statewide sample, an addition 1,250 interviews were distributed across five selected legislative districts and Garrett County. These additional oversample interviews were conducted September 1–28, 2016.

Interviewees were drawn randomly from the database of registered voters, supplied by the State Board of Elections and matched with landline and cellular telephone numbers by a commercial vendor. The sample was balanced geographically and by political party during interviewing, and respondents were screened to ensure that only registered voters were interviewed. Weights were applied to bring the voter sample into compliance with the demographic breakdown of the registered voter population.

Brief Background on OpinionWorks

OpinionWorks conducts frequent opinion studies at the state and local level across the country. Since 2007 we have been the polling organization for The Baltimore Sun newspaper in Maryland, and have polled for numerous other media throughout the Mid-Atlantic region. We are currently engaged by state agencies in Virginia, D.C., Maryland, and Delaware to assess public needs and preferences, and are working with local jurisdictions in those and other states. In addition to these public surveys, we assess donor and customer relationships for a variety of non-profit and for-profit entities nationally and internationally, with a growing body of work in Latin America.