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**Poll: Md. Voters Support a Ban on Fracking By 2-to-1 Margin,
Including in At-Risk Garrett County**

Results show high voter intensity for a ban, widespread concern about water pollution and harm to health

ANNAPOLIS, Md. — With the clock winding down on Maryland's two-year moratorium on fracking, a [statewide poll of Maryland voters](#) released today shows broad public support for permanently banning the risky drilling practice. In Garrett County, a prime target area for the oil and gas industry, voters oppose fracking by an even stronger margin.

The poll, conducted by the nonpartisan firm OpinionWorks, found that Maryland voters support a ban on fracking by a 2-to-1 margin, with a 56% majority supporting the ban and only 28% opposed. This poll follows on the heels of a [recent Washington Post poll](#) finding that a similarly strong majority of Marylanders opposes fracking.

The OpinionWorks poll provides additional insights for state legislators who will weigh legislation to ban fracking in the 2017 Maryland General Assembly. Key additional findings include:

- **In Garrett County, the margin of support for a fracking ban is *more than 2-to-1***, with 57% in support of a ban and only 27% opposed. (This result is based on statistically significant "oversampling" of voters in Garrett County, the likely ground zero for fracking in Maryland.)
- **By a 3-to-1 margin, voters say they are *more likely to vote for a legislator who supports a fracking ban***, with 40% more likely and only 13% less likely.
- **Voter intensity is significantly higher on the pro-ban side:** 25% of voters are *much more* likely to support a pro-ban legislator, compared to only 7% who are *much less* likely.

"This new poll makes it clear that Maryland voters strongly support a ban on fracking," said **Senator Bobby Zirkin**, D-Baltimore County, a longtime supporter of banning the practice, "strengthening the case that it is time for the Maryland General Assembly to act."

Delegate Kumar Barve, D-Montgomery County and chair of the House Environment and Transportation Committee added, "In 2015, my committee passed a two-year moratorium on

fracking so that we could understand the science and all of the policy implications of hydraulic fracturing. This year we will take decisive action based on science and in the interest of all of the people of Maryland."

The poll also found that Marylanders have a wide variety of concerns about the significant risks of fracking. Contamination of water was the top concern cited — with one-third of voters worried about the risks — while harm to human and animal health was the second-biggest concern. Only 6% of voters statewide did not express concern about the risks of fracking.

"Western Marylanders recognize, as the poll shows, that most of our friends and neighbors don't want fracking," said **Paul Roberts, president of Citizen Shale and a small business owner in Garrett County**. "That is a message difficult to convey in Annapolis when our own representatives fail to speak up for us. So, now is the time for Maryland to move ahead, with legislative leaders committed to securing a healthy and sustainable future for our community and families."

More than 100 organizations have endorsed the [Don't Frack Maryland](#) campaign and are working to pass a ban on fracking in the upcoming General Assembly session. Unless state legislators take action, Governor Larry Hogan's administration could allow industrial drilling operations to begin in Maryland soon after October 2017, when the state's moratorium will expire.

"The movement to ban fracking in Maryland is only growing, and these poll numbers reflect that," said **James McGarry, Maryland policy director at the Chesapeake Climate Action Network**. "By banning fracking, Maryland legislators will not only be following the science, they'll be following the wishes of voters statewide."

In 2016, the town of Friendsville in Garrett County and Prince George's County both passed local ordinances banning fracking, joining the town of Mountain Lake Park and Montgomery County. Members of the Anne Arundel County Council also recently wrote a letter urging their state legislative delegation to pass a fracking ban. Last week, nearly 200 citizens rallied in Frostburg and won a commitment from their City Council to advance a municipal ban on fracking.

"Governor Hogan has sought to keep a low profile on this issue, but the draft regulations released by his administration clearly indicate his intentions to frack our state," said **Mitch Jones, senior policy advocate at Food & Water Watch**. "We know most Marylanders oppose fracking, so we're urging state legislators to stand with the people, and stand up for a ban on fracking now."

"It has been clear for several years that there is no safe way to regulate fracking," said **Josh Tulkin, director of the Maryland Sierra Club**. "Health and environmental hazards are

pervasive in every state that permits fracking. The only foolproof way to protect Marylanders from fracking is to keep it out of Maryland.”

ABOUT THE POLL: The OpinionWorks poll was commissioned by groups within the Don't Frack Maryland coalition. For the statewide poll results, OpinionWorks surveyed 802 randomly selected registered voters across Maryland from August 18-30, 2016. The statewide poll has a potential sampling error of no more than $\pm 3.5\%$ at a 95% confidence level. In addition to the statewide sample, 1,250 additional interviews were distributed across five selected legislative districts and Garrett County. The additional oversample interviews were conducted from September 1-28, 2016.

VIEW THE POLLING MEMO AT:

<http://www.dontfrackmd.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Maryland-Fracking-Ban-Poll-Memo-102516.pdf>

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The Don't Frack Maryland coalition unites more than 100 business, public interest, community, faith, food and climate groups committed to passing a permanent, statewide ban on fracking in Maryland. For more information on the statewide campaign, go to <http://www.dontfrackmd.org>.