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New Poll Numbers Bolster Evidence for Statewide Support of Offshore Wind Power

Results come as advocates gather for first day of Maryland General Assembly, Call on legislators to pass offshore wind bill in 2012

ANNAPOLIS – As dozens of wind advocates gathered on Lawyer’s Mall to welcome legislators back for the 2012 General Assembly session, new poll results released today show that an overwhelming majority of Maryland voters want the state to move away from fossil fuels and towards renewable sources like offshore wind power for its energy needs. Voters expect to see a positive jobs and health impact from developing offshore wind power, while believing the cost of fossil fuels will skyrocket in the coming years.

The poll, conducted by research firm Opinion Works and commissioned by the Marylanders for Offshore Wind Coalition, questioned 1,405 Marylanders about their specific beliefs on the cost and benefits of developing offshore wind power. Results reaffirmed other poll results from October 2011, demonstrating strong support throughout the state for offshore wind power in key regions throughout the state.

The poll specifically focused on examining trends in support in some key regions throughout the state. Statewide and across the key regions surveyed – Baltimore County, Prince George’s County, the Lower Eastern Shore, and Baltimore City – voter support for offshore wind power reaches a solid majority that approaches two-thirds of voters, despite a potential \$2 per month cost to households. Significantly, support for offshore wind power is strongest on the Lower Eastern Shore.

In part, this support may be explained by the more than two-thirds (71%) of voters statewide who expect the cost of fossil fuels to rise over the next few years. A near-majority (48%) expect the cost of fossil fuels to rise “a lot.” Additionally, a majority of voters believe the state needs to “move towards renewable sources like wind power.” Three-quarters (76%) of

voters support this view.

Results showed that poll respondents were most compelled by the health and jobs-creation benefits of offshore wind power development, with 60% of voters claiming one of these two benefits as their primary reason for supporting the measure. “Clearly voters support offshore wind. This is the second poll in the past few months that confirms that. The question is, will our elected officials listen to their constituents, or to special interests?” said Jen Brock-Cancellieri of the Maryland League of Conservation Voters.

These poll results come as momentum continues to build for offshore wind legislation during the 2012 Maryland General Assembly session. To kick-off the legislative season, more than 100 advocates from the Marylanders for Offshore Wind coalition gathered on Lawyer’s Mall to welcome legislators and encourage them to pass an offshore wind energy bill in 2012. Delegate Tom Hucker and Senator Paul Pinsky spoke at the rally in support of Governor O’Malley’s 2012 offshore wind power bill.

Since the end of the 2011 legislative session, Marylanders for Offshore Wind has been organizing a major grassroots campaign throughout the state to grow support for offshore wind power. This campaign has included:

- Collecting 10,000 signatures from Maryland voters in support of offshore wind power legislation
- Commissioning two statewide polls – one in September 2011 by Gonzales Research, and the Opinion Works poll released today, confirming widespread public support for offshore wind power development
- Holding six educational town hall meetings throughout the state, attended by more than 600 Marylanders in key regions

The poll was paid for by the five Maryland environmental groups: the Chesapeake Climate Action Network, Environment Maryland, the Maryland League of Conservation Voters, National Wildlife Federation, and the Sierra Club Maryland Chapter.

For more information about this campaign or about Marylanders for Offshore Wind, visit www.marylandoffshorewind.org.

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