

To: Offshore Wind Coalition
From: Steve Raabe, OpinionWorks
Date: January 10, 2012
**Subject: New Poll Numbers Give More Definition
to Support for Offshore Wind Power**

OpinionWorks has conducted a far-reaching poll of Maryland voters for the Offshore Wind Coalition exploring the level and contours of support statewide for developing offshore wind power, and in four varied legislative districts across the state. The poll was conducted December 14-21, 2011 among 1,405 registered voters.

This poll was commissioned to expand on a previous poll conducted for your coalition in September 2011 that showed a strong majority of Maryland voters favoring developing offshore wind power. In the current poll, we looked at support within individual legislative districts as well as statewide, and explored issues that impact and help explain the level of voter support.

The poll finds that an overwhelming majority of Maryland voters want the state to move away from fossil fuels and towards renewable sources like wind power for its energy needs. Voters expect to see a positive jobs and health impact from developing wind power, while believing the cost of fossil fuels will go up in the coming years.

Significantly, support for the offshore wind proposal is strongest in the Lower Shore area. Statewide and across the legislative districts we surveyed, voter support for the offshore wind proposal reaches a solid majority that approaches two-thirds of voters, despite a \$2 per month cost to households.

The legislative districts sampled were:

- Legislative District 8 (Baltimore County)
- Legislative District 26 (Prince George's County)
- Legislative District 38 (Lower Eastern Shore)
- Legislative District 40 (Baltimore City)

Statewide voter numbers discussed in this memo reflect voter opinion both within these districts, as well as across the state outside those districts, and have been weighted to mirror the statewide voting population. Detailed findings follow.

Strong Support among Maryland Voters to Move Towards Renewable Energy Sources

There is a strong underlying consensus among Maryland's voters that the state needs to "move towards renewable sources like wind power." Three-quarters (76%) of voters believe the state needs to move in the direction of renewable energy sources, compared to only 15% who believe Maryland should "continue to rely mostly on fossil fuels for its energy needs."

This very strong level of support for moving towards renewable sources of energy is consistent across the varied legislative districts we sampled, in fact reaching 80% in Baltimore City’s District 40, and exceeding that level in District 38 on the Lower Shore.

How Best to Meet Maryland’s Energy Needs

	State	LD8	LD26	LD38	LD40
Move to renewable sources	76%	72%	79%	82%	80%
Continue to rely on fossil fuels	15%	17%	6%	10%	8%
Do both (<i>Volunteered</i>)	1%	3%	2%	2%	1%
Not sure	8%	8%	13%	7%	11%

“As you look at it, should Maryland continue to rely mostly on fossil fuels for its energy needs, or should Maryland move towards renewable sources like wind power?”

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 go up over the next few years. A near-majority (48%) expect the cost of fossil fuels to go up “a lot.” No fewer than 44% of voters in any of the legislative districts we sampled expect the cost of fossil fuels to go up a lot.

Voters’ Expected Trend in Fossil Fuel Prices

	State	LD8	LD26	LD38	LD40
Go up a lot	48%	44%	45%	52%	45%
Go up a little	23%	22%	19%	22%	17%
Go up (Total)	71%	66%	64%	73%	63%
Stay the same	14%	19%	15%	11%	11%
Go down	6%	8%	11%	8%	13%
Not sure/Depends	9%	7%	10%	7%	13%

“As you look ahead a few years, do you think the price of fossil fuels like coal, oil, and natural gas will generally (randomize): [go up, go down, (or) stay about the same]?” (If go up): “Do you think they will go up a lot or a little?”

Jobs and Health Help Drive Voter Support for Wind Power

Having seen solid voter support numbers for offshore wind in September, in part the mission of the current poll was to explore why voters support offshore wind. We explored six key arguments and asked voters whether each one made them more likely to support wind power, less likely, or made no difference. Voters were then asked to choose the one that was most important to them overall. Those statements and voters’ responses are detailed in the tables on the following page. The numbers listed are for the full, statewide sample.

Through this analysis, we see that the two most important ideas for voters are the potential jobs impact of offshore wind, and the beneficial health impacts. One-third of voters (33%) said job

New Poll Numbers Give More Definition to Support for Offshore Wind Power

January 10, 2012

Page 3

creation was the most important idea on the list out of the six tested, while 27% chose the idea of health.

In the tables below, the six ideas are ranked by their importance to voters. A handful of voters were not sure how they felt and are not listed in the tables. Similarly, 8% of voters said all of these ideas are important to them, none of them are, or were not sure.

	More likely	No difference	Less likely	Most important
2,400 jobs	57%	23%	16%	33%

“One moderate offshore wind farm would create 2,400 jobs, and many Maryland businesses could participate in offshore wind development.”

	More likely	No difference	Less likely	Most important
Health	68%	19%	12%	27%

“Wind power is better for our health, lessening the risk of diseases like asthma and lung disease that can be caused by burning fossil fuels.”

	More likely	No difference	Less likely	Most important
Global warming	54%	19%	21%	11%

“A moderate-sized offshore wind farm would prevent nearly one million tons of global warming pollution every year.”

	More likely	No difference	Less likely	Most important
Fixed electricity rate	60%	22%	16%	9%

“Because the fuel for wind power is free, we can lock in a fixed, affordable electricity rate for many years. This will free ratepayers from the volatile energy market, where prices roughly doubled in the last decade.”

	More likely	No difference	Less likely	Most important
National security	63%	19%	14%	7%

“Wind power lessens our dependence on imported sources of oil, which is safer for us and better for our national security.”

	More likely	No difference	Less likely	Most important
Regional manufacturing hub	63%	19%	15%	4%

“If Maryland develops wind power before other states, it could become a regional hub for building wind turbines, a source of badly-needed manufacturing jobs.”

The poll measures two-to-one support for offshore wind at the cost of \$2 per month (64% to 32%), when balancing the statements just mentioned against the fact that the proposal is estimated to cost “about \$2 on your monthly electric bill.”

Support is no lower than 63% in any of the districts we tested, and reaches nearly three-quarters of voters (72%) in the legislative district closest to where the offshore wind facilities would be located, District 38.

Informed Support for Offshore Wind Power

	State	LD8	LD26	LD38	LD40
Strongly favor	33%	30%	36%	43%	40%
Somewhat favor	31%	34%	29%	28%	25%
Favor (Total)	64%	63%	64%	72%	65%
Somewhat oppose	12%	12%	14%	11%	10%
Strongly oppose	20%	20%	14%	14%	17%
Oppose (Total)	32%	32%	28%	25%	27%
Not sure	4%	6%	8%	3%	7%

“Having heard these statements, would you favor or oppose a proposal to develop offshore wind power in Maryland, at the cost of about \$2 on your monthly electric bill?” (If favor/oppose): “Is that strongly or just somewhat {favor/oppose}?”

How This Survey Was Conducted

OpinionWorks interviewed 1,405 randomly-selected registered voters by telephone December 14–21, 2011, as follows: 1,202 interviews spread across the four selected legislative districts at the rate of approximately 300 voters in each district, plus an oversample of 202 voters throughout the rest of the state. Through random sampling and weighting, each legislative district and the statewide sample have been carefully balanced to reflect the political, geographic, and demographic makeup of the registered voter population in each of those areas.

The statewide poll of 1,405 interviews has a potential sampling error of no more than $\pm 2.6\%$ at the 95% confidence level, meaning the survey results would differ by no more than that margin at least 95% of the time if *every* registered voter in Maryland had been interviewed.

Each legislative district poll on its own has a potential sampling error of no more than $\pm 5.7\%$ at the 95% confidence level

Interviewees were drawn randomly from the database of registered voters provided by the Maryland State Board of Elections and matched with telephone numbers by a commercial vendor.

Brief Background on OpinionWorks

OpinionWorks conducts frequent opinion studies in Maryland and the surrounding states. We are the polling organization for *The Baltimore Sun*, having accurately forecast the 14-point gubernatorial margin in 2010 and the Baltimore mayoral margin in 2011, and have polled for numerous other media throughout the region. We work for state and local agencies and for a variety of non-profit and for-profit entities within the region and nationally.

