

September 29, 2022

To: Interested Parties

Fr: Impact Research

**Re: Rhode Island Voters are Concerned About Energy Prices and Support Increasing Natural Gas Production as a Solution**

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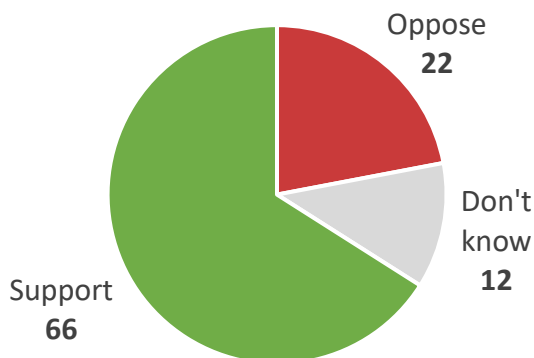
Heading in to the 2022 election, **likely voters in our recent Rhode Island poll are overwhelmingly concerned about rising energy costs and believe increasing natural gas production has the potential to lower costs.** As a result, a majority of voters support building new pipelines in the state that would facilitate increased production. In an increasingly turbulent election cycle, support for increasing natural gas production meets voters' concerns and offers a political upside for candidates.

- **High energy costs are a major concern for Rhode Island voters, and they are looking for elected officials to help lower them.** More than 4-in-5 voters in Rhode Island (84%) are concerned about increased energy costs impacting their personal finances, including a majority (56%) who are very concerned. These concerns span income brackets, with 86% of voters with incomes under \$75,000 and 81% of those with incomes over \$75,000 who are concerned about increased energy costs. A majority of voters overall (65%), persuadable voters (72%), and Independents (70%), believe lowering energy costs should be at least a high priority for elected officials.
- **There is consensus that increasing natural gas production will help lower costs and doing so fits with the direction voters want to see the state go in to transition to cleaner energy.** Overall, 68% of voters believe increasing natural gas production will cause energy costs to go down while virtually no one (7%) thinks it will cause an increase. They do not see this as running counter to the state transitioning to cleaner energy sources because most voters (51%) see natural gas as clean energy and they want the state's energy policy to use any options currently available to keep energy affordable and reliable, including majorities of Democrats (68%), Independents (73%), and Republicans (51%).
- **The result is two-thirds of voters (66%) support increasing natural gas production in the United States while very few, just 22%, oppose it.** Support for increasing natural gas production is consistent among most Rhode Island voters, with at least a majority in support across major demographic and geographic subgroups. Critically, people of color (71%) are even more supportive of increasing natural gas production than voters overall.

These findings are based on the results of a multi-modal poll of likely 2022 voters in Rhode Island by Impact Research. A total of N=600 responses were collected between September 9<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>, 2022. The margin of error for a sample of this size is +/- 4.0 percentage points at the 95% level of confidence.

- Support for increasing natural gas production is politically beneficial for candidates.** By a 27-point margin, voters in Rhode Island say they would be more likely to vote for political candidates who support increasing natural gas production (46% more likely, 19% less likely). With Democrats well below 50% and holding an 11-point lead on the generic ballot in Rhode Island (43% Democrat, 32% Republican, 25% persuadable), supporting increased natural gas production offers a tremendous political upside as both persuadable voters and Independents say they are more likely to vote for candidates that do by more than 40-point margins (persuadable voters +42 / Independents +40).
- There is broad support for building the infrastructure needed to produce more natural gas.** In general, 62% of voters support building new natural gas pipelines to eliminate the obstacle that a lack of infrastructure creates for increasing production. Voters are even more supportive of building new natural gas pipelines if it means improving the country's energy independence (81%), and Democrats are particularly supportive if it means using less coal (78%).
- Voters are equally supportive of building new natural gas pipelines specifically in Rhode Island.** Overall, 61% would support building pipelines in Rhode Island while under half of that (28%) are opposed to it, and support is higher among Independents (68%) and persuadable voters (70%). After learning how Rhode Islanders pay some of the highest electricity costs in the nation in part due to a lack of natural gas pipeline capacity, support for building them in the state increases to 70% and includes majorities in support across party lines (Democrats 51%, Independents 75%, Republicans 92%). Support for building pipelines in Rhode Island increases to near unanimous levels if it means lowering energy costs (83%) or increasing reliability (79%).

*Do you support or oppose increasing the production of natural gas in the United States?*



*Would you support or oppose building new natural gas pipelines in Rhode Island?*

