

September 29, 2022

To: Interested Parties

Fr: Impact Research

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

Heading in to the 2022 election, **likely voters in our recent Virginia poll are overwhelmingly concerned about rising energy costs and believe increasing natural gas production has the potential to lower costs.** As a result, a strong majority of voters support building new pipelines in the state that would facilitate increased production. In an increasingly competitive 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 Virginia voters, and they are looking for elected officials to help lower them.** More than 3-in-4 voters in Virginia (76%) are concerned about increased energy costs impacting their personal finances, including a near majority (49%) who are very concerned. These concerns span income brackets, with 82% of voters with incomes under \$75,000 and 72% of those with incomes over \$75,000 who are concerned about increased energy costs. A majority of voters overall (57%), persuadable voters (58%), and Independents (52%), 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, 69% of voters believe increasing natural gas production will cause energy costs to go down while virtually no one (9%) 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 (56%) 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 (65%), Independents (69%), and Republicans (58%). Overall, 70% of voters specifically support using natural gas as a bridge to help Virginia meet its renewable energy goals.
- **The result is two-in-three voters (65%) support increasing natural gas production in the United States while very few, just 23%, oppose it.** Support for increasing natural gas production is consistent among Virginia voters, with at least a majority in support across all major demographic and geographic

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

subgroups. Critically, people of color (60% support / 30% oppose) are also supportive of increasing natural gas production by a 30-point margin. By a 40-point margin (24% support, 64% oppose), voters also oppose proposals to ban the installation of natural gas lines in new home construction.

- Support for increasing natural gas production is political beneficial for candidates.** By a 27-point margin, voters in Virginia say they would be more likely to vote for political candidates who support increasing natural gas production (47% more likely, 20% less likely). With Democrats holding just a 4-point lead on the generic ballot in Virginia (45% Democrat, 41% Republican, 14% 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 a large margin (persuadable voters +37 / Independents +29).
- 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 (80%), and Democrats are particularly supportive if it means using less coal (81%).
- Voters are equally supportive of building new natural gas pipelines specifically in Virginia.** Overall, 62% would support building pipelines in Virginia while under a third (31%) are opposed to it and support is even higher among Independent and soft partisan voters (67%) and persuadable voters (71%). Support for building pipelines in Virginia increases to near unanimous levels if it means lowering energy costs (82%) or increasing reliability (80%).

Do you support or oppose:

■ Support ■ Don't know ■ Oppose

