

TO: All Interested Parties
From: Jim McLaughlin
RE: New Jersey Energy Issues Study – Executive Survey Summary
Date: January 23rd, 2020

McLaughlin & Associates conducted a statewide survey of New Jersey voters. ***Our research shows that while New Jersey voters care strongly about the environment and pollution, they also disapprove of many of the key elements of the recently announced Energy Master Plan. Specifically, the voters reject the government mandates imposed by the Energy Master Plan and they oppose efforts to eliminate consumer choice in how to provide energy to their home, specifically the loss of natural gas.***

An initial take-away from the survey is the voters have little to no awareness of Governor Murphy’s Energy Master Plan (EMP). On its surface, the EMP has *very limited* resonance with less than half the voters. In fact, when given a balanced explanation of the EMP, the voters are spit 1:1; as four of ten voters approve and four of ten voters disapprove of the EMP. ***But most striking, when given detailed descriptions of components of the EMP, the voters overwhelmingly disapprove of the plan.***

Voters reject the Energy Master Plan for multiple reasons, including an unpopular government mandate, the elimination of choice and the increased costs associated with the plan, making it unaffordable. There is overwhelming approval of natural gas, as well as a strong preference for free market solutions over government regulations. These combine to make the Energy Master Plan and officials who support it, extremely unpopular with voters.

- **There voters are not familiar with the Energy Master Plan. Seven of ten voters, 71%, are not aware of the EMP; while just 15% approve and 13% disapprove of the EMP.**

Do you approve or disapprove or disapprove of New Jersey’s Energy Master Plan?

15% Approve / 13% Disapprove / 72% Don’t Know or Refused

- **Eliminating choice, imposing government mandates and increasing the cost of living in New Jersey are important issues. The Energy Master Plan contains all three, and it has the power to significantly impact elections. Overall, 7 in 10 voters are less likely to vote for a candidate who voted to increase energy and utility costs. Moreover, it enjoys a high level of intensity.**

WOULD YOU BE MORE LIKELY OR LESS LIKELY TO VOTE FOR A CANDIDATE FOR STATE LEGISLATURE WHO VOTED TO INCREASE ENERGY AND UTILITY COSTS ON CONSUMERS BY 30%?

15% More Likely / 71% Less Likely / 48% MUCH LESS LIKELY

- **When given a balanced description of the EMP, support and opposition increase in equal measure. Clearly the voters see value in creating an EMP, but unfortunately this EMP contains elements that the voters strongly oppose.**

THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY HAS RELEASED WHAT IS CALLED THE “ENERGY MASTER PLAN”. THIS ENERGY MASTER PLAN SIGNIFICANTLY REGULATES ENERGY USAGE OVER THE NEXT 50 YEARS AND IS DESIGNED TO REDUCE CARBON EMISSIONS, REDUCE POLLUTION, AND IMPROVE AIR QUALITY AND WATER QUALITY IN NEW JERSEY. THIS ENERGY MASTER PLAN REQUIRES BUSINESSES AND RESIDENTS TO CUT EMISSIONS, CONVERT THEIR PROPERTIES FROM NATURAL GAS TO ELECTRIC POWER AND REQUIRES TRANSPORTATION SERVICES TO 100% CONVERT FROM GAS AND FUEL TO ELECTRICITY. KNOWING THIS, DO YOU APPROVE OR DISAPPROVE OF NEW JERSEY’S PROPOSED ENERGY MASTER PLAN.

48% Approve / 46% Disapprove

- **Opposition to the EMP is rooted in the government mandates imposed by the proposed EMP. The majority of voters, 54%, say they would prefer to “allow the free market economy” to achieve the same goals that the EMP hopes to achieve through mandates.**

BETWEEN THE FOLLOWING TWO CHOICES, WHICH IS THE BEST LONG-RANGE ENERGY MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY?

- 1. THE STATE SHOULD REGULATE THE ENERGY, GAS AND ELECTRICITY INDUSTRIES AND FORCE THEM TO CUT EMISSIONS, BAN THE CONSTRUCTION OF NEW HOMES AND BUILDINGS THAT RELY ON NATURAL GAS, AND FULLY TRANSITION TO RENEWABLE SOURCES OF ELECTRICITY IN THE NEXT 50 YEARS, OR,*
- 2. NEW JERSEY SHOULD ALLOW THE FREE MARKET ECONOMY TO GRADUALLY PHASE OUT NON-RENEWABLE ENERGIES AS TECHNOLOGY IMPROVES AND COSTS FOR RENEWABLE ENERGIES BECOME MORE AFFORDABLE.*

38% The State Should Regulate / 54% Free Market Economy / 7% Don’t Know or Refused

- **Further evidence that New Jersey voters prefer less regulation and more free market capitalism is the fact that three-quarters of the voters, 74%, agree that the state should “allow residents to choose how they want to power their homes...”.**

THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY SHOULD ALLOW RESIDENTS TO CHOOSE HOW THEY WANT TO POWER THEIR HOMES, NOT FORCE A GOVERNMENT MANDATE ON ITS RESIDENTS.

74% Agree / 21% Disagree

- **Natural gas is viewed very favorably by the voters and they do not want to be forced to stop using it. Eighty-two percent (82%) are favorable towards natural gas and 85% support using it to generate energy and electricity.**

Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of natural gas?

82% Favorable / 11% Unfavorable / 6% no opinion / 1% Never Heard Of 67%

Do you support or oppose the use of clean natural gas to generate energy and electricity in New Jersey?

85% Support / 12% Oppose

DO YOU APPROVE OR DISAPPROVE OF THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY REQUIRING RESIDENTS AND BUSINESSES TO STOP USING NATURAL GAS FOR HOMES, BUSINESSES AND TRANSPORTATION?

25% Approve / 67% Disapprove

Summary Review:

- **While New Jersey voters consider energy usage to be a critical issue as it relates to the environment, they clearly oppose the government mandates associated with the EMP, especially as it relates to natural gas.**
- **Voters prefer free-market solutions to solve their energy needs. They prefer to see new technologies developed that will address these problems, rather than the government mandating unrealistic and unaffordable solutions.**
- **The fact is, New Jersey voters like natural gas. They know it is environmentally friendly, they know it is safe, and they know it is affordable. In a state that already has a very high cost of living, this Energy Master Plan is simply not acceptable to the voters.**
- **Furthermore, seven of ten voters, 71%, are less likely to vote for a candidate for State Legislature who voted to increase energy and utility costs on consumers by 30%.**
- **As we have consistently seen in our New Jersey research, policy proposals that increase costs and weaken affordability, such as the Energy Master Plan, are very unpopular with the voters.**

Methodology:

This survey of n=500 likely general election voters in the State of New Jersey was conducted from November 18th, through November 20th. All interviews were conducted via telephone by professional interviewers. Among the 500 interviews, 49% and 51% were cell phone and landline interviews, respectively. Interview selection was random within predetermined election units. The survey of 500 likely general election voters has an accuracy of $\pm 4.5\%$ at a 95% confidence interval.