



*Fairbank,
Maslin,
Maullin &
Associates*

*Opinion Research &
Public Policy Analysis*

TO: Interested Parties

FROM: David Metz
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RE: Results of Statewide Voter Survey on Uses of Revenue From a Proposed Tax on Natural Gas Drilling

DATE: March 9, 2009

The bipartisan polling team of Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin & Associates (D) and Public Opinion Strategies (R) recently partnered to complete a statewide survey of Pennsylvania voters on issues related to natural gas drilling revenues for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.¹

The survey results confirm that **Pennsylvania voters continue to support using state revenues from natural gas drilling to support land, water, and wildlife conservation in the state.** Specifically, a majority of voters supports charging a tax on energy companies based on the amount of natural gas they drill in Pennsylvania – and over four in five voters would favor dedicating a portion of those revenues to protecting land, water and wildlife in the State. Well over three-quarters of voters would support setting aside up to 25 percent of the money generated by a severance tax to fund conservation programs. Moreover, a majority of voters also supports continuing to dedicate money from natural gas leases in state forests to fund conservation programs.

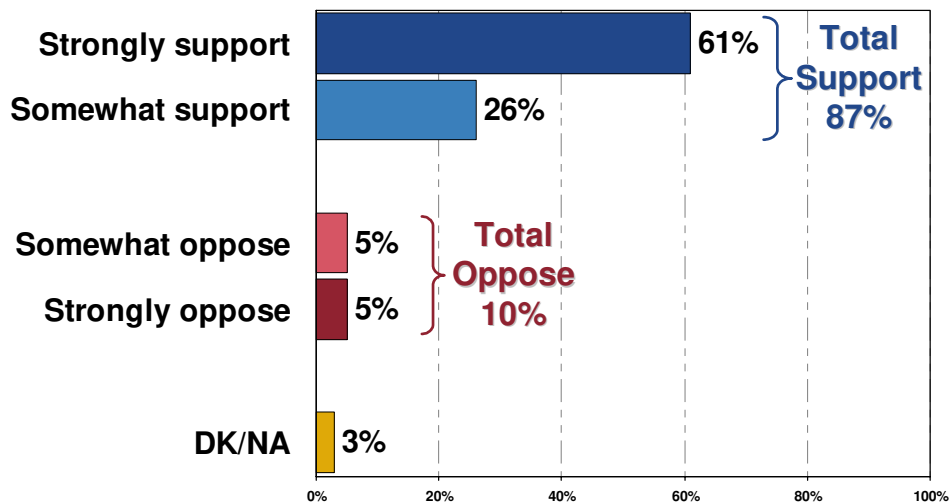
Among the key specific findings of the survey are the following:

- **A majority of voters supports a severance tax on natural gas drilling in Pennsylvania.** Fifty-three percent (53%) of voters indicated they would support establishing a natural gas severance tax in Pennsylvania, with a little over one-third (37%) opposed. Even in a difficult economic climate, most voters view it as appropriate to tax energy companies for natural gas drilling at a rate comparable to other states.

¹ **Methodology:** From February 28 - March 3, 2009, FMM&A and POS completed 600 telephone interviews with registered voters in Pennsylvania, including 100 respondents in each of six regions: Greater Philadelphia, Greater Pittsburgh, Central Pennsylvania, the Susquehanna Valley, Northeastern Pennsylvania and Northwestern Pennsylvania. Results have been statistically weighted to reflect the true distribution of voters across the state. The margin of sampling error for the full statewide sample is +/- 5.7% and for each individual region it is +/- 9.8%.

- **An overwhelming majority of Pennsylvania voters supports dedicating a portion of severance tax revenues to conservation programs.** Survey respondents were asked whether, if a severance tax was established, “some of the money raised should be dedicated to land, water and wildlife protection, due to the impact that drilling will have on Pennsylvania’s natural areas, water and wildlife.” The results show that voters wholeheartedly embrace this concept, with 87 percent supporting it and fully three in five (61%) expressing “strong support” (**Figure 2**).

FIGURE 2:
Support for Dedicating Some Natural Gas Severance Tax Revenues to Conservation



With only one in ten (10%) Pennsylvania voters expressing opposition to this idea, support was broad-based and cut across most major demographic and geographic subgroups of the Pennsylvania electorate. Sizable majorities of every major demographic group backed the idea of dedicating a portion of a natural gas severance tax to conservation programs, including:

- *Women (90%) and men (83%)*
- *Voters under age 50 (86%) and voters ages 50+ (88%)*
- *Democrats (88%), Republicans (83%) and independents (96%)*
- *Voters with a four-year college degree (88%) and those without (86%)*
- *White voters (88%) and voters of color (81%)*

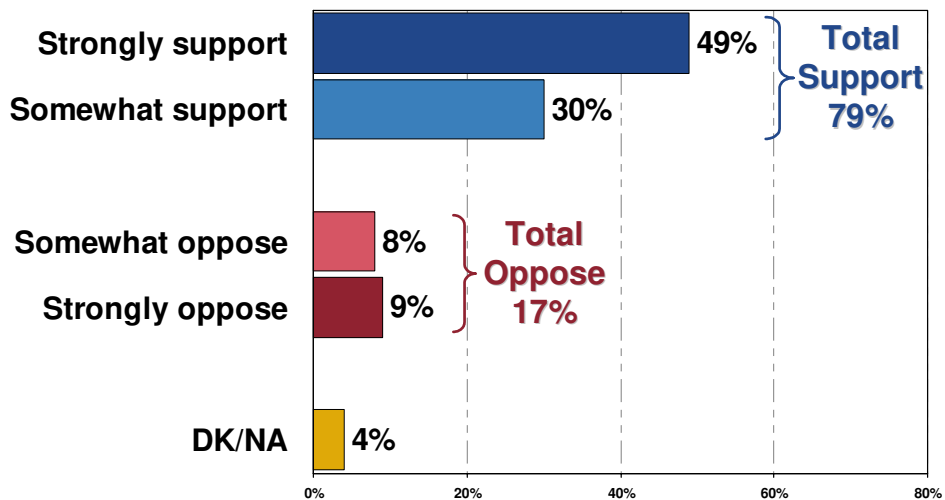
In addition, support for the idea of dedicating severance tax revenues to conservation cut across every region of the state, has highlighted in **Figure 3** on the following page. At least four in five voters in each region backed the idea, and support ranged between 82 and 93 percent of those polled.

**FIGURE 3:
Support for Dedicating Some Natural Gas Severance Tax
Revenues to Conservation, by Region**

Region	Support	Oppose	Undecided
<i>TOTAL</i>	87%	10%	3%
Greater Pittsburgh	82%	14%	4%
Greater Philadelphia	85%	11%	4%
Northwestern Pennsylvania	87%	13%	0%
Susquehanna Valley	90%	7%	3%
Central Pennsylvania	91%	9%	0%
Northeastern Pennsylvania	93%	7%	0%

- **More specifically, voters back the idea of setting aside 25% of revenue from a severance tax to conservation.** When respondents were asked more specifically whether one-quarter of natural gas severance tax revenues should be dedicated to protect land, water and wildlife, eight in ten (79%) expressed support (**Figure 4**). Moreover, roughly one-half of respondents (49%) said that they would “strongly” support such an allocation..

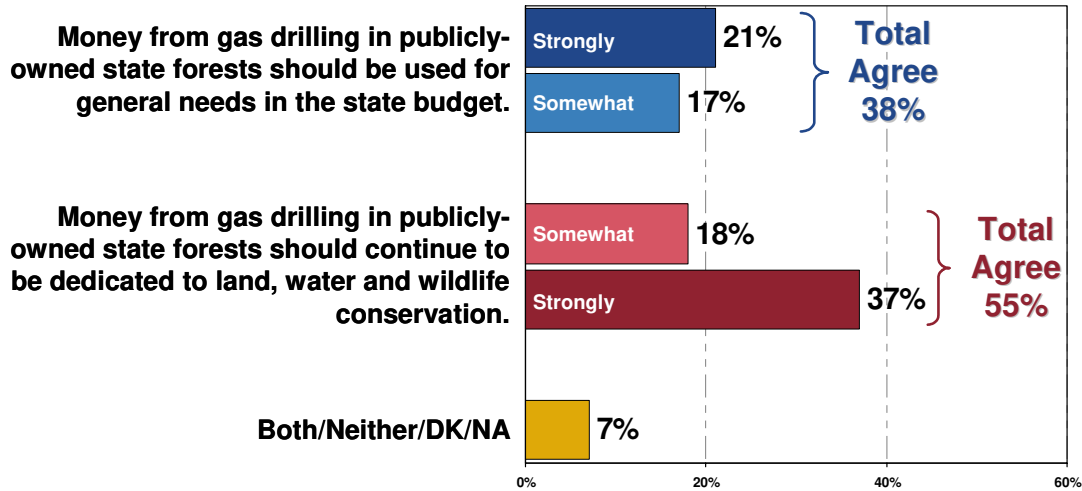
**FIGURE 4:
Support for Dedicating 25% of a Natural Gas Severance Tax for Conservation**



- **On a related issue, most Pennsylvania voters would prefer that revenues from natural gas leases in state forests be dedicated to conservation.** Respondents were presented with two proposals for how money generated from natural gas drilling on publicly-owned state forests should be spent – either on general needs in the state budget or on land, water and wildlife conservation. As shown in **Figure 5**, a majority of respondents (55%) felt that these revenues should continue being dedicated to conservation, including over one-third (37%)

who felt strongly about the matter.

FIGURE 5:
Spending Preferences for Funds Collected from Natural Gas Drilling Leases
Which of the following statements about this issue do you agree with more?



Taken together, **the survey results reveal a Pennsylvania electorate committed to ensuring that a significant portion of state revenues from natural gas drilling be used to protect land, water and wildlife.** Voters not only believe that revenue from drilling leases on public land should continue to go that purpose, they also support dedicating as much as one-quarter of the revenue from a severance tax on natural gas drilling to conservation programs.