

To: Choose Clean Water Coalition
From: Steve Raabe, President
OpinionWorks LLC
Date: February 26, 2019
Subject: Maryland Polling on the Forest Conservation Act

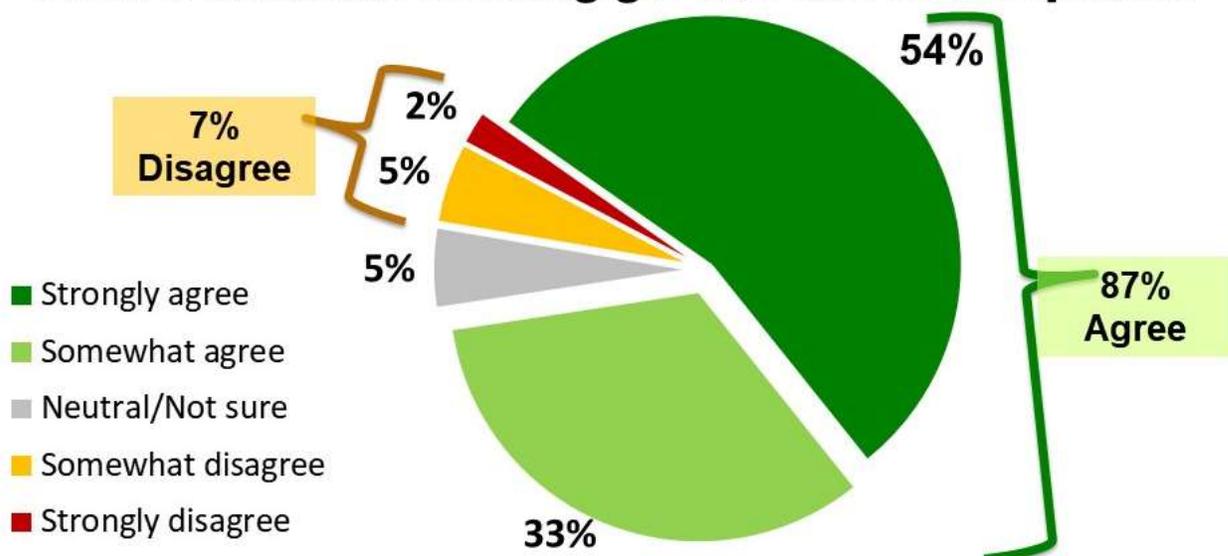
There is overwhelming support among Maryland’s voters for saving forests and protecting trees, according to our most recent statewide poll. This priority is so strongly felt by voters that they favor forest protection by an enormous margin, even at a cost to growth and development. Elected officials who make forest protection a priority are much more favorably viewed by voters of all parties.

This statewide poll of 654 Maryland registered voters was conducted February 13-20, 2019. It has a maximum potential margin of sampling error of ±3.8% at the 95% confidence level.

Maryland Voters Strongly Affirm That Forests Need to be Protected

There is an overwhelming consensus among Maryland voters that forests should be protected. Nearly nine out of ten registered voters (87%) agree with the statement, “The state legislature should set a goal to save Maryland’s remaining forests and strengthen the laws that protect trees, even if it means slowing growth and development.” A 54% majority of voters *strongly* agree with this statement. Only 7% disagree.

Set a goal to save Maryland’s remaining forests even if it means slowing growth and development



Our region loses nearly 100 acres of forest a day, and projections are that Maryland could lose 60,000 or more acres of forest by 2025. Knowing that, would you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with this statement?

The state legislature should set a goal to save Maryland’s remaining forests and strengthen the laws that protect trees, even if it means slowing growth and development.

As a lead-in to the question, voters were informed that “Our region loses nearly 100 acres of forest a day, and projections are that Maryland could lose 60,000 or more acres of forest by 2025.” The intensity of voter sentiment on behalf of saving forests and protecting trees is strong, as voters agree with the statement by a margin of 12 to 1, even at the economic cost of slowing growth and development.

Voters of all ages and regardless of racial or ethnic identity are equally likely to agree with this statement. Agreement approaches a consensus in suburban Montgomery and Baltimore Counties, reaching towards the mid-90s, and it never drops below 80% anywhere in Maryland, including Western Maryland.

	Baltimore City	Baltimore County	Greater Baltimore ¹	Montgomery	Prince George’s	Greater Washington ²	Shore/Southern MD	Western MD
Agree	83%	94%	87%	93%	87%	90%	85%	80%
Disagree	13%	4%	10%	4%	11%	7%	4%	6%
Margin	+70%	+90%	+77%	+89%	+76%	+83%	+81%	+74%
Neutral or Not sure	4%	2%	3%	4%	2%	3%	11%	14%

“The state legislature should set a goal to save Maryland’s remaining forests and strengthen the laws that protect trees, even if it means slowing growth and development.”

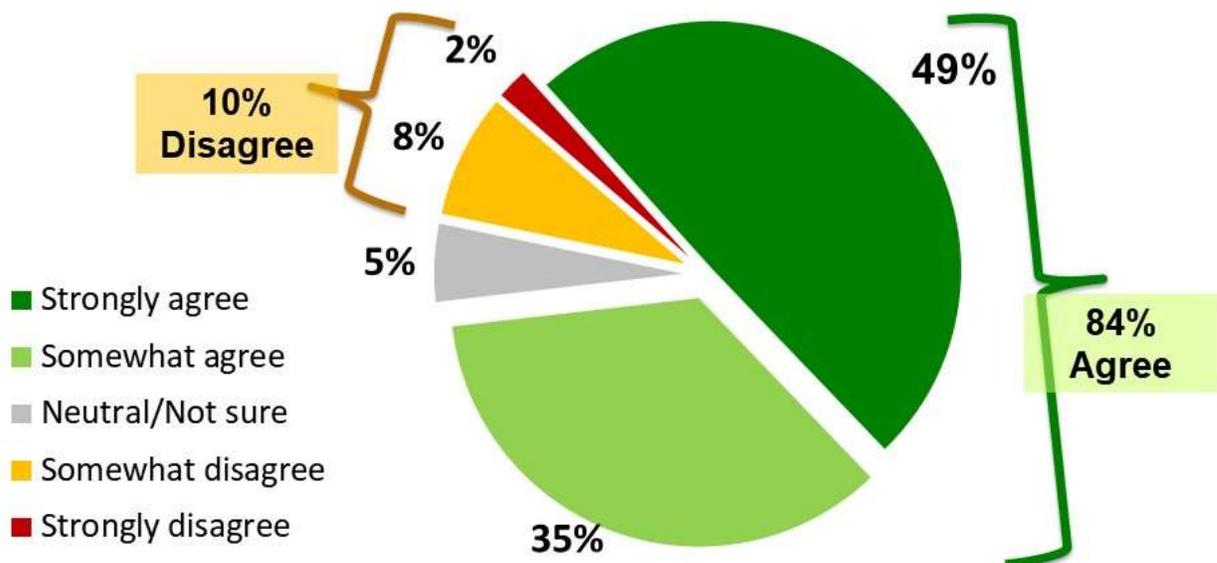
¹Greater Baltimore includes Anne Arundel, Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Carroll, Harford, Howard.

²Greater Washington includes Charles, Frederick, Howard, Montgomery, Prince George’s.

The Support for Forest Protection is Overwhelming, Even at Some Economic Cost

In response to a second question, voters responded in similar overwhelming numbers that saving forests is vital to them, even if it presents difficulty or additional cost for a development project. Eighty-four percent agree, and only 10% disagree with the statement, “When developing land, it is important to save Maryland’s oldest, most connected, and/or most beneficial forests, even if a development project would have to move or cost more.” A near-majority of 49% *strongly* agree with this statement.

Important to save Maryland’s forests even if a development project had to move or cost more



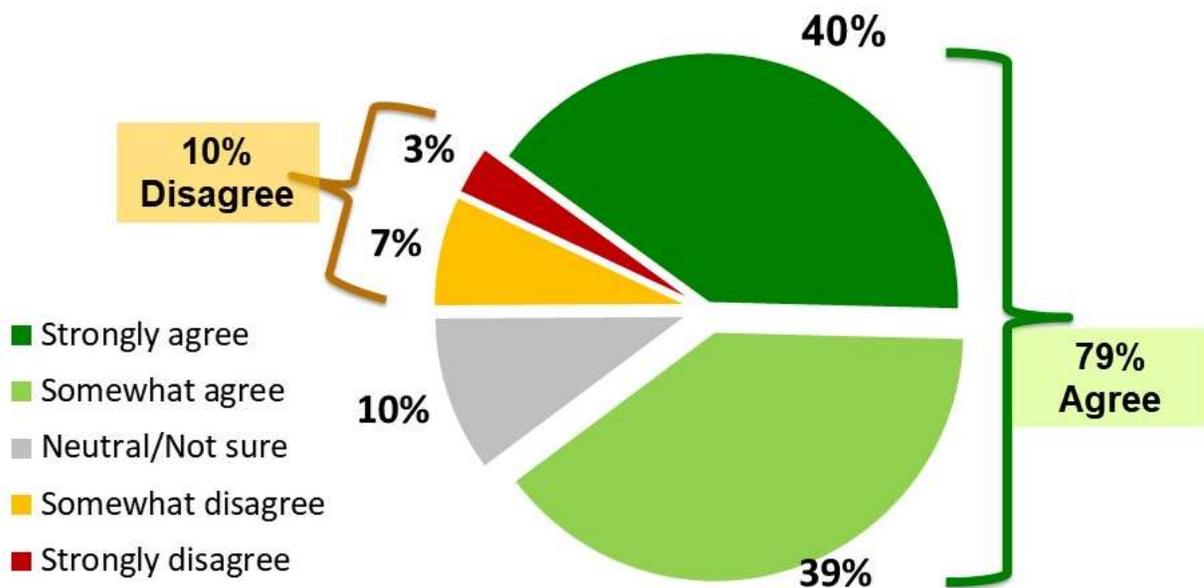
Would you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with this statement?

When developing land, it is important to save Maryland’s oldest, most connected, and/or most beneficial forests, even if a development project would have to move or cost more.

Elected Officials Who Place a Priority on Protecting Forests are More Favorably Viewed

Elected officials in Maryland could greatly improve their standing with voters if “they placed a priority on protecting forests and worked to stop the loss of forests in Maryland.” The numbers are profound. Nearly eight voters out of ten (79%) said they would have a more favorable opinion of an elected official who worked to save forests, with 40% of all voters feeling that way *strongly*. Only 10% disagreed, saying they would *not* have a more favorable view of that elected official, while an additional 10% said they were neutral on this question, or not sure.

A more favorable view of an elected official if they placed a priority on protecting forests



Would you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with this statement?

I would have a more favorable opinion of an elected official if I knew they placed a priority on protecting forests and worked to stop the loss of forests in Maryland.

By wide margins, voters across all party lines said their views of that elected official would be more positive. Seventy-two percent of Republicans, 80% of unaffiliated voters, and 83% of Democrats all agreed their opinion would be more positive towards “an elected official if I knew they placed a priority on protecting forests and worked to stop the loss of forests in Maryland.”

	All Voters	Democrats	Republicans	Independents
Agree/More favorable	79%	83%	72%	80%
Disagree/Not more favorable	10%	8%	15%	10%
Margin	+69%	+75%	+57%	+70%
Neutral or Not sure	10%	9%	13%	10%

“I would have a more favorable opinion of an elected official if I knew they placed a priority on protecting forests and worked to stop the loss of forests in Maryland.”

How This Poll was Conducted

A total of 654 interviews were conducted statewide February 13-20, 2019 among randomly selected Maryland registered voters. Live interviewers reached voters on both wireless and landline telephones, and a third group were given the option of responding online to ensure the poll best represented all segments of the electorate. Sampling targets were adhered to throughout the interviewing process to ensure that the sample represented the statewide electorate geographically, by political party, and for key demographic indicators such as gender, age, and race or ethnicity. Following interviewing, statistical weights were applied to ensure the sample most closely mirrored the characteristics of the statewide electorate. This poll produces a margin of sampling error no greater than $\pm 3.8\%$ at the 95% confidence level, meaning that at least 19 times out of 20 the actual results would differ by no more than that margin if every registered voter in the state had been interviewed.

Brief Background on OpinionWorks

OpinionWorks conducts frequent opinion studies at the state and local level across the country. Since 2007 we have been the polling organization for *The Baltimore Sun* newspaper in Maryland, and have polled for numerous other media and advocates throughout the Mid-Atlantic region. We are engaged by state and local government agencies from Delaware to Oregon to assess public needs and preferences. Our recently released Citizen Stewardship Indicator, conducted for the Chesapeake Bay Program, is a model nationally for measuring behavior adoption and potential behavior change on behalf of water restoration. We measure health attitudes and practices for public health departments, assess alumni engagement and prospective student expectations for colleges and universities, evaluate donor and volunteer relationships for non-profit organizations, and have a growing body of work in Latin America.