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## **New Poll Shows Eastern Shore Voters Support Phosphorus Management Legislation, Say Agriculture Should Do More**

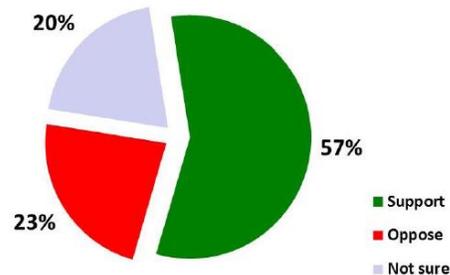
*Poll Shows Strong Support for Phosphorus Management Tool State-Wide, Including Among Eastern Shore Voters and Agricultural Families*

(Annapolis, MD) – Voters across Maryland strongly support legislation moving through the General Assembly to implement the science-based Phosphorus Management Tool and reduce pollution from agriculture, according to a new survey.

The [OpinionWorks poll](#) found that 57 percent of voters statewide, 54 percent of voters on the Eastern Shore and 53 percent of agricultural families favor legislation to implement the new Phosphorus Management Tool with a 6-year phase-in.

Last week, the Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee voted favorably on an amended version of legislation sponsored by Senator Pinsky and Delegate Lafferty (SB 257 / HB 381) that would require the Department of Agriculture to draft Phosphorus Management Tool regulations by 2016 with a final implementation date of 2022.

**Support for Phosphorus Legislation**



"Because Governor Hogan originally canceled the phosphorus regulations, Maryland legislators have introduced a bill that would implement the phosphorus management tool for farmers. The legislation would make the regulations law, and includes a 6 year phase-in period and exemptions for organic farms. Do you support or oppose this legislation?"

The survey was conducted before a recent [report](#) was released from the U.S. Geological Survey showing that Eastern Shore waterways have levels of nitrogen and phosphorus pollution that are among the "highest in the nation" due to agricultural operations.

How and when to implement the Phosphorus Management Tool has been negotiated and delayed since Maryland first committed to adopting it in 2011. Regulations to implement the

tool were pulled by the new Hogan Administration, which later proposed rules that critics say include a significant loophole because they lack a clear end date for implementation.

“It should come as no surprise that Eastern Shore voters support legislation to implement the new phosphorus rule,” said Jeff Horstman, Deputy Director, Midshore Riverkeeper Conservancy. “We’ve watched as our local waters – including our largest river, the Choptank, have grown more and more polluted due to agricultural pollution. Families, farmers, watermen -- all of us on the Eastern Shore want clean water.”

The poll also found that more than two-thirds (68 percent) of Maryland voters think the agriculture industry should do more than it does today to reduce pollution to Maryland waters and the Chesapeake Bay. A full 60 percent of Eastern Shore voters and a near majority of self-identified agricultural families agree.

“In 2010, Maryland made a commitment to restore its rivers, streams and the Chesapeake Bay. The Phosphorus Management Tool helps to fulfill that commitment. We’re happy to see continued momentum for legislation that requires the use of the Phosphorus Management Tool with a firm end date,” said Alison Prost, Maryland Executive Director, Chesapeake Bay Foundation. “We thank those members of the General Assembly that are supporting the Phosphorus Management Tool legislation and thereby standing by Maryland’s commitments to clean its waterways.”

The Phosphorus Management Tool would reduce pollution by halting the excessive uses of manure on farm fields already contaminated with too much phosphorus. Phosphorus pollution causes algae blooms that threaten public health; kill underwater grasses; harm aquatic life like blue crabs, oysters and fish; and create an enormous “dead zone” in the Bay.

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*The Maryland Clean Agriculture Coalition is working to improve Maryland waterways and protect public health by reducing pollution, and increasing transparency and accountability, from agriculture and other associated sources of water degradation.*

*Its partners include: Anacostia Riverkeeper, Audubon Naturalist Society, Assateague Coastal Trust, Blue Water Baltimore, Chesapeake Climate Action Network, Clean Water Action, Environment Maryland, Environmental Integrity Project, Gunpowder Riverkeeper, League of Women Voters of Maryland, Lower Susquehanna Riverkeeper, Maryland League of Conservation Voters, Maryland Pesticide Education Network, Midshore Riverkeeper Conservancy, Potomac Riverkeeper, Sierra Club, Maryland Chapter, South River Federation, Waterkeepers Chesapeake, West/Rhode Riverkeeper*

*Founded in 1967, the Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) is the largest independent conservation organization dedicated solely to saving the Bay. Serving as a watchdog, we fight for effective, science-based solutions to the pollution degrading the Chesapeake Bay and its rivers and streams. Our motto, "Save the Bay," is a regional rallying cry for pollution reduction throughout the Chesapeake's six-state, 64,000-square-mile watershed, which is home to more than 17 million people and 3,000 species of plants and animals.*