A recent statewide survey in Virginia finds that eight in ten, including majorities across party lines, favor state-based action to reduce carbon dioxide emissions in compliance with the EPA’s new restrictions on coal-fired power plant emissions. Virginians are especially enthusiastic about energy efficiency and wind and solar power, which they see as creating jobs, cleaning the air, and increasing energy independence. Unsurprisingly, therefore, components of a state-based emissions reduction plan which emphasize these actions are particularly popular, receiving support from over eight in ten.

Key specific findings of the research include the following:

- **The Clean Power Plan finds majority support.** After hearing that President Obama has directed the Environmental Protection Agency, known as the E-P-A for short, to set strict carbon dioxide emission limits on existing coal-fired power plants with a goal to reduce emissions significantly by the year 2030, 64 percent support the plan, including 41 percent who “strongly” support it. Opposition stands at 31 percent (23% “strongly”). This closely matches national results from the June 2014 NBC News/Wall Street Journal poll, which found 67% “support” to 29% “oppose,” as shown in Figure 1 on the following page.

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1 **Methodology:** The bipartisan team of Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates (FM3) and Public Opinion Strategies (POS) conducted a survey of 400 registered voters in Virginia via landline and cell phone from January 7-11, 2015. The margin of sampling error for the full study is +/- 4.9 percentage points at the 95% confidence level; margins of error for population subgroups will be higher. Due to rounding, some percentages may not sum to 100%.
A Virginia-specific clean energy and pollution reduction plan is even more popular, with support crossing party lines. As shown in Figure 2, eight in ten (83%) support Virginia developing its own state plan to reduce carbon pollution and increase the use of clean energy and energy efficiency, after hearing that new federal rules will require Virginia to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 38 percent by 2030.

In addition, as shown in Figure 3 on the following page, broad majorities of Democrats (84%), Republicans (84%) and independents (80%) support developing a state-level plan, along with majorities in every media market in the state.
Support for a state plan would have a positive impact on perceptions of Governor McAuliffe. If the governor were to develop a state plan to reduce carbon pollution and promote the use of clean energy and increased energy efficiency, nearly half (48%) say such an action would make them view him more favorably, while only five percent would view him less favorably. The impact is a net positive among all political parties, as shown in Figure 4 on the next page.
• Broad majorities support all elements of the plan, with efficiency and clean energy particularly popular. Virginians support all elements of a potential plan for Virginia presented in the survey and are especially enthusiastic about potential components that focus on clean energy and energy efficiency, as shown in Figure 5. For example, 93 percent support expanding utility programs to help consumers improve the energy efficiency of their homes and reduce their electricity bills, (73% “strongly”) and 88 percent support increasing use of clean and renewable energy like wind and solar (64% “strongly”).
Virginians are enthusiastic about the state increasing its use of energy efficiency and clean energy sources and show somewhat weaker support for coal and nuclear. As shown in the following graphs, nearly all favor increased energy efficiency (95% support) as a way to meet Virginia’s future needs, and over eight in ten want to increase the use of a number of renewable sources, including solar (91% support), wind (84%), and hydropower (83%). Majorities strongly support the use of each of the above, as shown in Figure 6.

![Figure 6: Attitudes toward Increasing Use of Various Energy Sources in Virginia](image)

Majorities believe clean energy will create jobs and will not increase costs for consumers. Over six in ten say that increasing the use of clean, renewable energy sources like wind and solar power in Virginia will create jobs (64%), while only 13 percent say it will cost jobs. Equally importantly, most do not believe these benefits come with a financial cost. Only 27 percent say increasing the use of clean, renewable energy sources will increase energy costs. Almost twice that number (49%) say it will decrease energy costs, while 17 percent believe it will not affect energy costs. These attitudes are illustrated in Figure 7 on the following page.
Overall, the survey results show strong and bipartisan support for a state-based plan to reduce coal-fired power plant emissions, particularly when the plan emphasizes investments in energy efficiency and renewable energy sources such as wind and solar power. Putting forward such a plan has the potential to generate substantial enthusiasm among Virginians.