



TO Interested Parties

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FM3 Research

RE: Small-Town and Rural Massachusetts Voter Views of Transportation and Climate Issues

DATE November 13, 2018

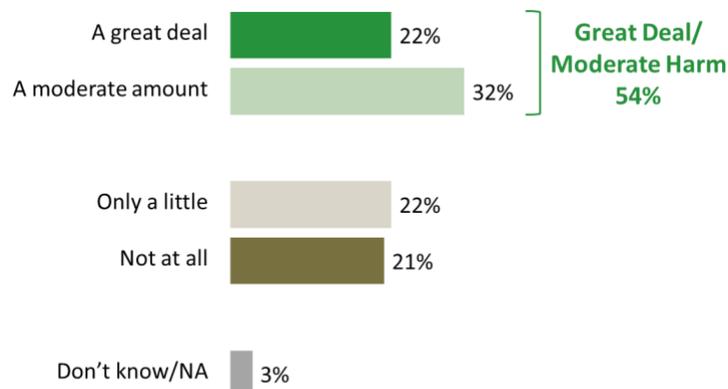
Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates (FM3) recently completed a survey of rural and small-town Massachusetts voters to assess their opinions of climate and transportation issues in the state.¹ The study found that these voters are concerned about the impact of climate change, are eager to have more transportation options, and strongly support a clean transportation fund. They see value in a number of potential uses for the fund, including repairing and maintaining roads and bridges, and providing more options for people in rural communities to get around. These voters are willing to invest personally in clean transportation -- and broadly support a variety of proposals addressing the impacts of climate change.

Among the key specific findings of the survey:

- **A majority believes climate change will harm them personally.** Fully 84 percent of these voters agree that climate change is happening -- and half (51%) are "extremely sure" of this. Nearly two-thirds (63%) attribute it to human activity rather than to natural changes in the environment. At the same time, more than half (54%) of Massachusetts' rural and small-town voters feel that climate change will harm them "a great deal" or "a moderate amount" personally. Among American adults, that figure is 12 points lower.

Figure 1: Personal Climate Change Impact

How much do you think climate change will harm you personally?

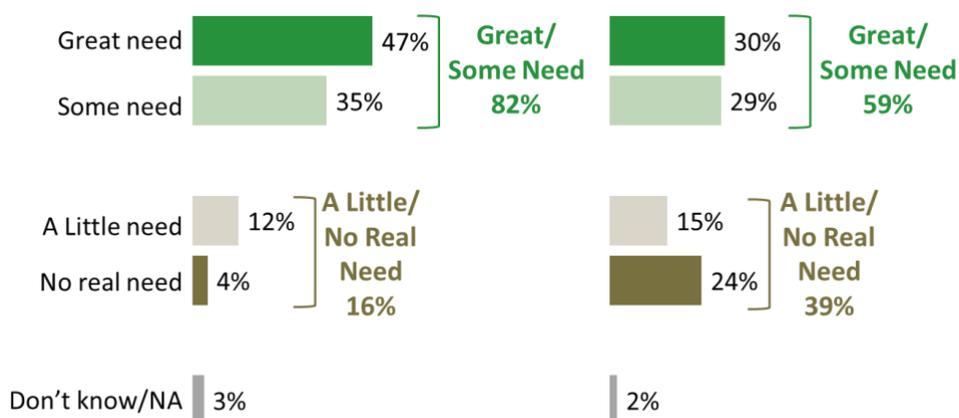


- **These voters clearly see a need for additional transportation investments.** More than four in five (82%) see at least "some need" for more money to properly maintain and repair streets and roads in their part of the state, and 47 percent say there is a "great need." When it comes to money for increasing the use of alternatives to driving (such as buses, rail, biking and sidewalks), three in five (59%) see at least "some need" for new funding (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Support for Transportation Investments

(Left Chart) In general, how much need would you say that there is for more money to properly maintain and repair streets and roads in your part of Massachusetts?

(Right Chart) In general, how much need would you say that there is for more money to increase the use of alternatives to driving, such as buses, rail, biking and sidewalks for walking, in your part of Massachusetts?



- **Most of these voters feel they have no choice but to drive as much as they do -- but believe that their community would benefit from improved public transportation.** Two-thirds (66%) agree with the statement "my community would benefit from an expanded and improved public transportation system." At the same time, 76% say they currently "have no choice but to drive as much as I do." Majorities say they would not use public transportation as often as they could, however, indicating that they feel these alternatives are better-suited to others' lifestyles.

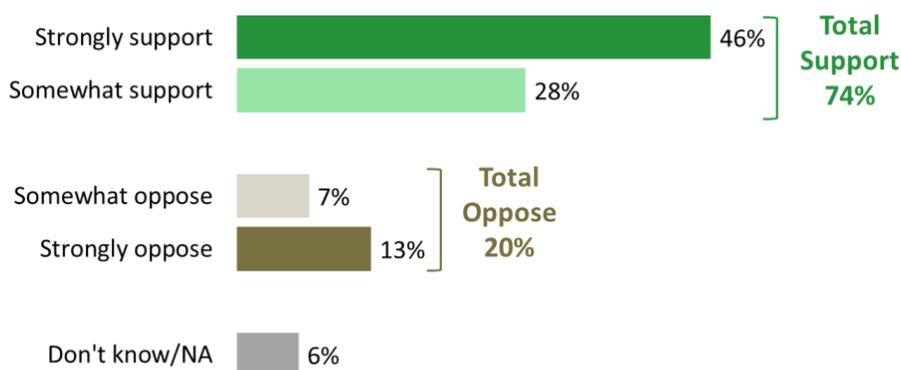
Figure 3: Attitudes About Transportation

Statement	% Agree	% Disagree
I have no choice but to drive as much as I do	76%	21%
My community would benefit from an expanded and improved public transportation system	66%	30%
If my community had more vans, buses or other public transportation, I would use them as often as I could	40%	59%

- **Three-quarters support establishing a clean transportation fund.** Fully 74 percent of voters in small-town and rural Massachusetts support creating a fund that would invest in transportation choices that reduce pollution, as shown in Figure 4. Nearly half (46%) are "strong" supporters of the idea, outnumbering the total of those opposed (20%) by more than a two-to-one margin.

Figure 4: Support for a Clean Transportation Fund

Some people have proposed that the state of Massachusetts create a clean transportation fund that would invest in transportation choices that reduce pollution, including expanding public transportation and creating infrastructure for electric vehicles and safe ways for people to walk and bike, including in rural areas of the state. Does this sound like something you would support or oppose?



This support cuts across major demographic and geographic groups, including:

- 71% of men and 77% of women,
 - 82% of voters under 50 and 68% of voters ages 50 and older,
 - 86% of Democrats, 75% of independents, and half of Republicans (50%), and
 - 74% of small-town voters and 73% in rural areas.
- **The potential benefits of such a fund that they most value include repairing and maintaining roads and bridges and providing options for people in vulnerable groups to get around rural areas.** Figure 5 on the next page shows the shares who rate each potential project supported by the clean transportation fund as "extremely" or "very important." Notably, more than two-thirds (68%) value investments that would reduce the pollution that causes climate change, and 65 percent say the same of "reducing the impact of pollution from cars and trucks on rivers, lakes and streams." Majorities also favor using the clean transportation fund to create more alternatives to driving.

Figure 5: Importance of Clean Transportation Fund Investments

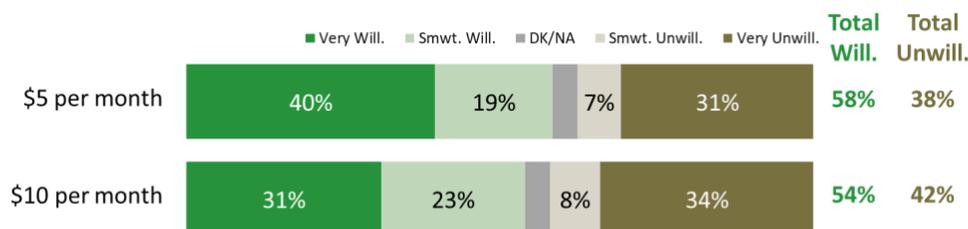
I am going to read you a list of potential benefits from investments like these that would give residents of rural communities in Massachusetts more opportunity to drive less. Please tell me how important each of these potential benefits is to you.

Benefit	% Extremely/Very Important
Repairing and maintaining roads and bridges	84%
Providing options for seniors and teenagers in rural communities to get around on their own	72%
Making it easier for low-income people in rural areas to get to locations with good jobs	71%
Reducing the pollution that causes climate change	68%
Reducing the impact of pollution from cars and trucks on rivers, lakes and streams	65%
Improving public health by reducing air pollution	65%
Reducing the time people spend stuck in traffic	61%
Expanding the availability of public transportation	55%
Improving public health by making it safer, easier and more convenient to get around by bike or walking	54%
Saving residents money by reducing the gas they have to buy	52%

- **These voters are willing to invest up to \$10 per month to expand the availability of clean transportation choices.** Regardless of the mechanism, nearly three in five (58%) Massachusetts' small-town and rural voters say they would be willing to pay \$5 per month to expand clean transportation choices -- and 40 percent said they would be "very willing" to invest that much. More than half (54%) are willing to pay twice that.

Figure 6: Willingness to Pay to Invest in Clean Transportation

No matter how the money was raised, would you be willing to pay _____ if it helped raise money dedicated to clean transportation choices, such as expanding public transit and creating infrastructure for electric vehicles and safe ways for people to walk and bike in your area?



- **The specific investments they most broadly support for this fund include infrastructure repairs, conserving land to remove carbon from the air, and improving internet access.** Some of the highest-priority projects are ones that have to do directly with climate change mitigation and adaptation, such as conserving forest land that removes carbon from the air. Small-town and rural voters also largely favor incentives for zero-emissions school buses and incentives for electric vehicles and charging stations.

Figure 7: Transportation Improvements for Rural Massachusetts

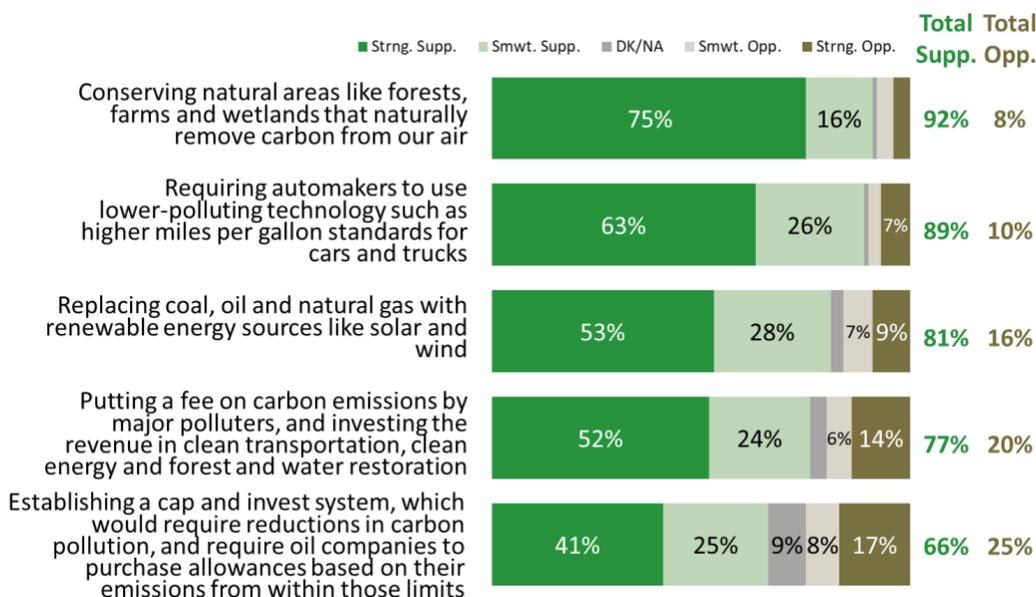
Next, I'd like to ask you about some specific investments that have been proposed to improve transportation in your part of Massachusetts. After I read each one, please tell me whether it sounds like something you would support or oppose.

Investment	% Support
Repairing and upgrading roads and bridges so that they can better withstand the impacts of extreme weather	96%
Conserving additional forest land in order to naturally remove carbon from the air	88%
Providing better options to work from home with improved broadband internet access	83%
Purchasing zero-emissions school buses	75%
Providing incentives to make electric vehicles more affordable	74%
Providing more charging stations for people who purchase an electric vehicle	74%
Providing more options for home delivery of necessities, such as groceries and pharmaceuticals	70%
Providing shopping closer to home	67%
Providing free public transit passes for all Massachusetts state residents	61%

- **Small-town and rural voters also broadly support a variety of proposal for addressing climate change more broadly.** Figure 8 on the next page shows support for several proposals that would address climate change in Massachusetts. Each has support from at least two-thirds, with the most substantial backing for a description of natural climate solutions (92% support, 75% "strong support"). Requiring higher MPG standards is supported by nearly nine in ten (89%), while more than four in five (81%) support replacing coal, oil and natural gas with renewable energy. A carbon fee and a cap-and-invest system also have broad majority support.

Figure 8: Support for Proposals Addressing Climate Change

Here is a list of several specific proposals for addressing climate change. Please indicate whether it sounds like something you would support or oppose.



In sum, small town and rural voters in Massachusetts see climate change as a serious concern, and support a variety of actions that could address it. This includes investments in clean transportation, including upgrading infrastructure and providing more options for seniors, teens, and low-income people to get around without a private vehicle. This support is reinforced by their willingness to invest in these priorities personally, with majorities supportive of \$10 per month.

ⁱ **Methodology:** From Sept. 22-Oct. 1, 2018, FM3 completed 427 online and telephone interviews (on both landlines and cell phones) with randomly selected voters in Barnstable, Berkshire, Essex, Franklin, Hampshire, Middlesex and Worcester counties, and from communities with populations under 5,000 in Bristol and Plymouth counties. Each respondent self-identified as a rural or small-town resident. The margin of sampling error for the study is $\pm 4.9\%$ at the 95% confidence level; margins of error for population subgroups within the sample will be higher. Due to rounding, not all totals will sum to 100%.