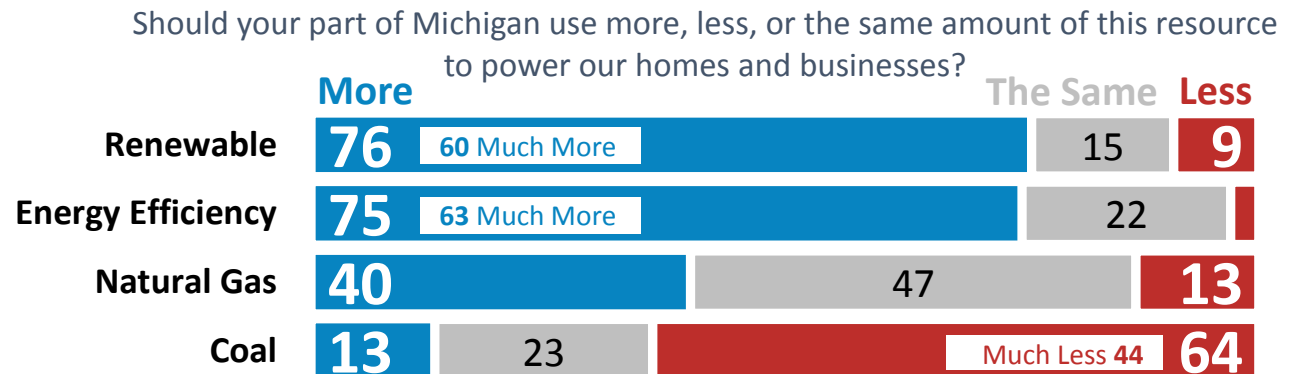


TO: Interested Parties
 FROM: Global Strategy Group
 DATE: May 19, 2016
 RE: **Lansing Voters Support Rapid Transition to Clean Energy**

Voters in the Lansing area overwhelmingly support a move away from coal and toward renewable energy and energy efficiency. In isolation, they like the Lansing Board of Water and Light’s proposal to transition to a mix of natural gas and at least 40 percent renewables by 2030. However, when offered an alternative proposal to transition completely and more rapidly to clean energy and energy efficiency and set a hard date to close both LBWL coal power plants, voters not only support that proposal with much more intensity but also prefer that to LBWL’s proposal by a wide margin. This reflects a broad underlying preference for clean energy that stretches across party lines. Opinions here are robust, holding steady after voters hear a positive message in favor of each plan.

Key findings from Global Strategy Group’s recent poll of 400 registered voters in Lansing, East Lansing, and Lansing Township are as follows:

Lansing voters want much more renewable energy and energy efficiency and much less coal-generated power in their part of Michigan. About three-quarters of voters want more renewable energy (76% want more; 60% much more) and energy efficiency (75% want more; 63% much more), while nearly two-thirds want less coal (64% want less; 44% much less). Natural gas lies in the middle, with two in five voters wanting to see more of it used for electricity generation (40% want more), but 60% wanting less or the same amount.



Corresponding to these broader sentiments about renewable energy and natural gas, both the Lansing Board of Water and Light’s proposal, and an alternative proposal from Sierra Club that would transition the region completely and more rapidly to renewable energy and efficiency, are well-supported – but the latter receives much more intense support. About seven in ten support each proposal (72% support Sierra Club proposal; 68% support LBWL proposal), but nearly half strongly support the Sierra Club proposal to transition to renewable energy by 2050 (47% strongly support) while less than one-third strongly support the LBWL proposal (32% strongly support).

[SC PROPOSAL] The [FIRST/SECOND] proposal would retire one coal power plant by 2020 and set a firm date for retiring the second coal power plant as soon as reasonably possible before 2030. This proposal would move the region to energy efficiency and renewable energy as quickly as possible by replacing the coal plants with a mix of wind, solar and natural gas in the short-term, and moving entirely to energy efficiency and renewable energy like wind and solar by the year 2050.

[LBWL PROPOSAL] The [FIRST/SECOND] proposal would retire one coal power plant by 2020, replacing it with a natural gas plant. This proposal would not commit to a firm date for retiring the second coal power plant, but would aim to phase it out around 2030, while phasing in two more natural gas plants. The plan would also increase investments in energy efficiency and build enough new wind and solar capacity to provide 40 percent of the region’s power by the year 2030.

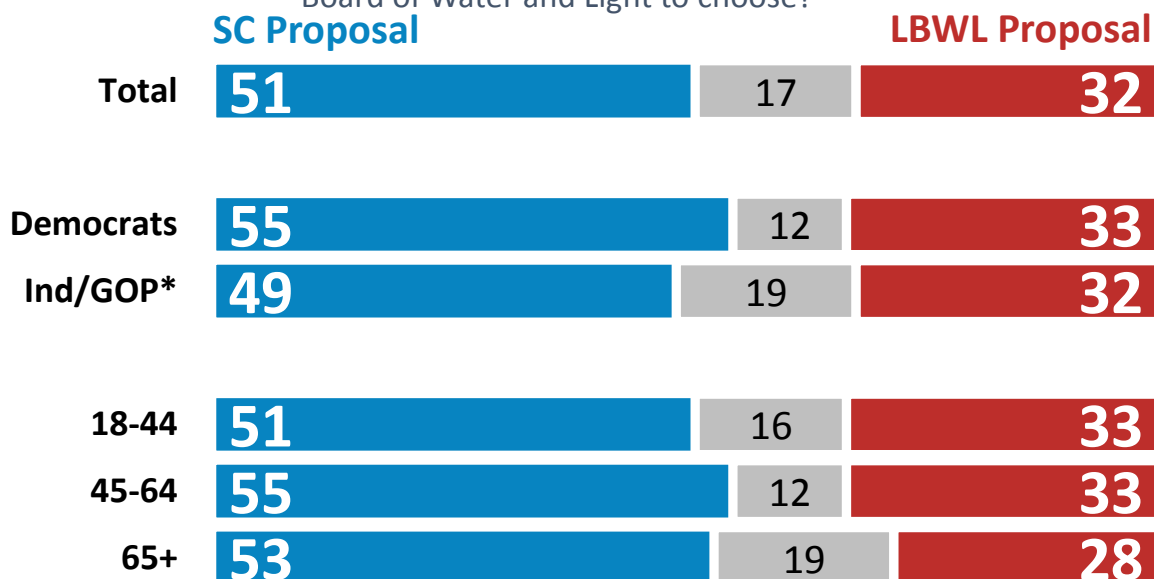
Having heard this information, would you say you support or oppose this proposal?



Respondents heard the proposals in random order.

Furthermore, when offered a direct choice between the two plans, voters pick the proposal to transition completely to renewable energy by a 19-point margin. The transition to renewable energy earns support from over half of voters, while the LBWL proposal sits at one-third (51% SC proposal/ 32% LBWL proposal). This preference extends across nearly all demographic groups, including independents and Republicans.

And if you had to pick just one of these proposals, which one would you want the Lansing Board of Water and Light to choose?



*Republican voters are too small a group to be looked at in isolation.

A simulated debate on the issue does not dislodge support for the proposal to transition fully to renewable energy and efficiency. After voters are exposed to arguments in favor of each proposal (with the pro-LBWL proposal using language from LBWL itself), support shifts slightly further in favor of the transition to renewable energy (53% SC Proposal/30% LBWL Proposal).

Supporters of the plan to eventually move entirely to renewable energy say: Iowa already gets 30 percent and Canada already gets more than 50 percent of its power from renewable energy, so we can do a lot better than 40 percent by 2030. Stanford University scientists now say that getting 100 percent of our electricity from renewable energy by 2050 is not only achievable, but will also end up saving the average family 260 dollars a year because prices for wind and solar are falling rapidly, while gas and coal prices are volatile and increasing. And we all know that moving to wind and solar will mean cleaner air and dramatically less heart disease, respiratory ailments, and cancer.

Supporters of the plan to eventually move to natural gas and 40 percent renewable energy say: We should be moving away from coal and transitioning to cleaner energy in a responsible, realistic, and cost-effective way. This plan is the right choice to ensure that the people of the Lansing area have affordable, sustainable, and reliable power now and into the future. By investing in wind and solar and replacing coal with clean-burning natural gas, it will mean much cleaner and healthier air. Moving entirely to renewable energy is just unrealistic. Those sources are more expensive and less reliable than natural gas, and such a plan could mean higher rates and increase the chance of blackouts.

So now that you've heard these statements, let me ask you again... If you had to pick just one of the proposals, which one would you want the Lansing Board of Water and Light to choose?



Respondents heard the statements in random order.

ABOUT THESE DATA

Global Strategy Group recently conducted a 401-interview survey of registered voters in Lansing, East Lansing, and Lansing Township between May 11th and 12th, 2016. The margin of error at the 95% confidence level is +/- 4.9 percentage points. Care has been taken to ensure that the partisan, geographic, and demographic divisions of the citywide electorate are properly represented by the survey's respondents.