



July 10, 2022

Marylanders Support a Fair Poultry Industry and Stronger Government Oversight

Survey results among 604 registered Maryland voters

To: Interested Parties

From: GQR

A recent survey conducted on behalf of the Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future (CLF) as part of its Food Citizen Project asked Maryland voters' opinions on factory farms, the poultry industry, pesticides, and food procurement. Findings show that Marylanders recognize the importance of the poultry industry for their local economy, but still support fair oversight of the industrial poultry industry to protect public health and the environment. Support for oversight is broad, and spans across political party, age, race, gender, and regions. Nearly half of voters (45 percent) say a gubernatorial candidate supporting proposals for increased oversight makes them more favorable to vote for him or her. Support for an increase in oversight reaches into the Eastern Shore where the industrial poultry industry has a strong presence.

Not only is general support for oversight on the poultry industry strong, but voters also support specific policy proposals to help shape that effort. Support ranges from holding integrators accountable for disposing waste properly to favoring implementing tougher environmental standards for CAFOs with fewer birds.

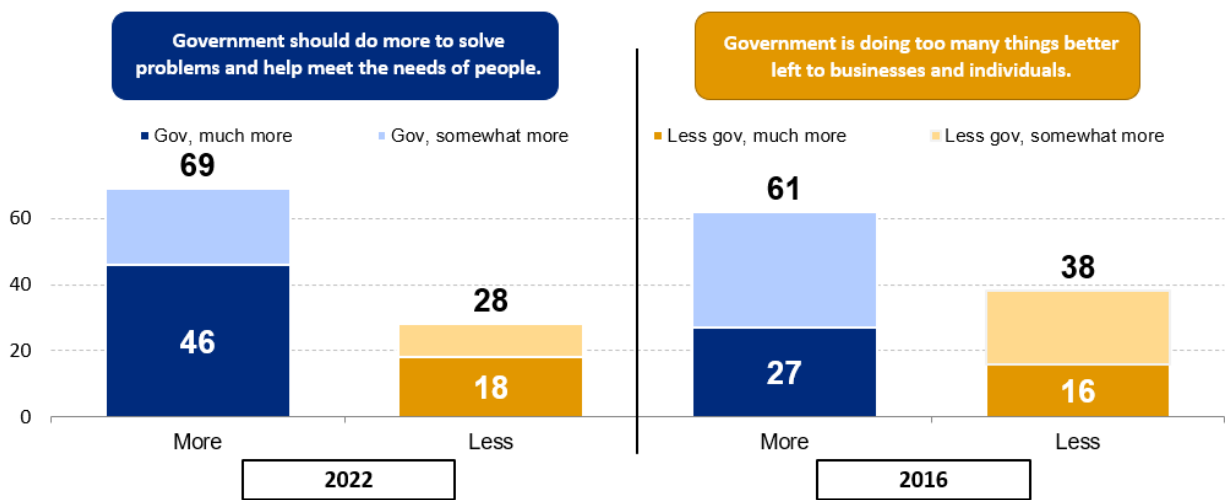
Voters also support government oversight in pesticide-related policies, with large majorities wanting mosquito pesticide in Maryland to be tested for PFAS and wanting input by the Department of Health and the Department of Environment to the Department of Agriculture's decisions on the use of pesticide concern. Voters were also supportive of shifting the state's food procurement away from factory farmed animal products toward lower-carbon, plant-based food in alignment with greenhouse gas reduction targets.

This memo is based on a phone survey of 504 registered voters in the state of Maryland, with an additional oversample of 100 voters on the Eastern Shore, for a total of 604 interviews, weighted to reflect a representative sample of Maryland voters. The results of the survey, conducted from in late June 2022, are subject to a margin of error of +/-3.99 percentage points (+/- 7.95 Eastern Shore OS) at the 95 percent confidence interval and the margin of error is higher among subgroups.

Government Role

Sentiments around the government’s role are fairly clear: voters think that the government should be doing more to help solve problems and meet the needs of people. Nearly 70 percent of voters agree with the statement, while only 28 percent think the government is doing too many things better left to businesses and individuals. Democrats, women, younger voters, Black voters, and college educated voters are the strongest supporters of more oversight.

Figure 1: Looking at the role of government over time



Voters were asked to rate their feelings about different farms and groups. Generally, big chicken processing companies are viewed favorably when named, but industrial chicken farms are viewed unfavorably. On the Eastern Shore where the poultry industry has a large presence, name identification for chicken processing companies is higher, and they are viewed in a more positive light.

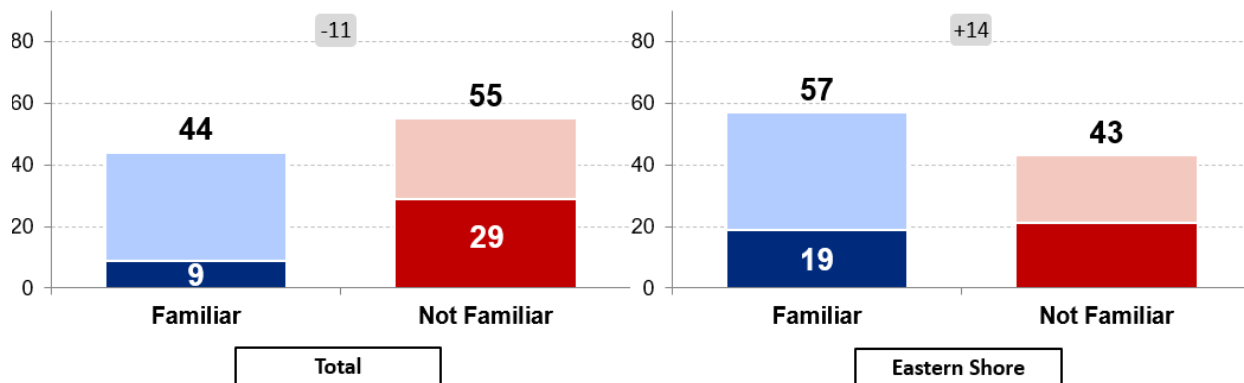
Figure 2: Sentiments of poultry farms

Warm – Cool (Net)	Favorability	
	Maryland Statewide	Eastern Shore
Total		
(Split) Perdue Farms	40 – 25 (+15)	53 – 6 (+47)
Tyson Foods	38 – 25 (+13)	40 – 16 (+24)
(Split) Allen Family Foods	8 – 7 (+1)	18 – 5 (+14)
Maryland Farm Bureau	27 – 10 (+17)	46 – 5 (+41)
Industrial chicken farms that produce very large quantities of poultry	25 – 32 (-7)	38 – 22 (+16)

Poultry and Oversight and CAFOs

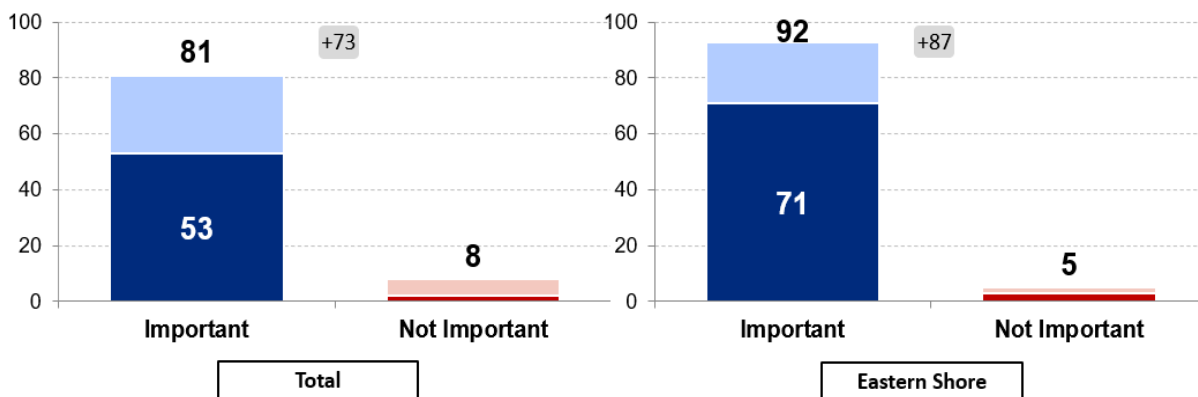
Just over two in five (44 percent) voters are familiar with the industrial chicken farming industry in Maryland. Given the concentration and visibility on the Eastern Shore, voters in that region are much more likely to be familiar with industrial chicken farming. Older voters and men, specifically white, college educated, or younger men, are more familiar with industrial chicken farming while Democrats, women, and voters in the DC region are less familiar with the industry.

■ Figure 3: Regional differences in familiarity with poultry farms



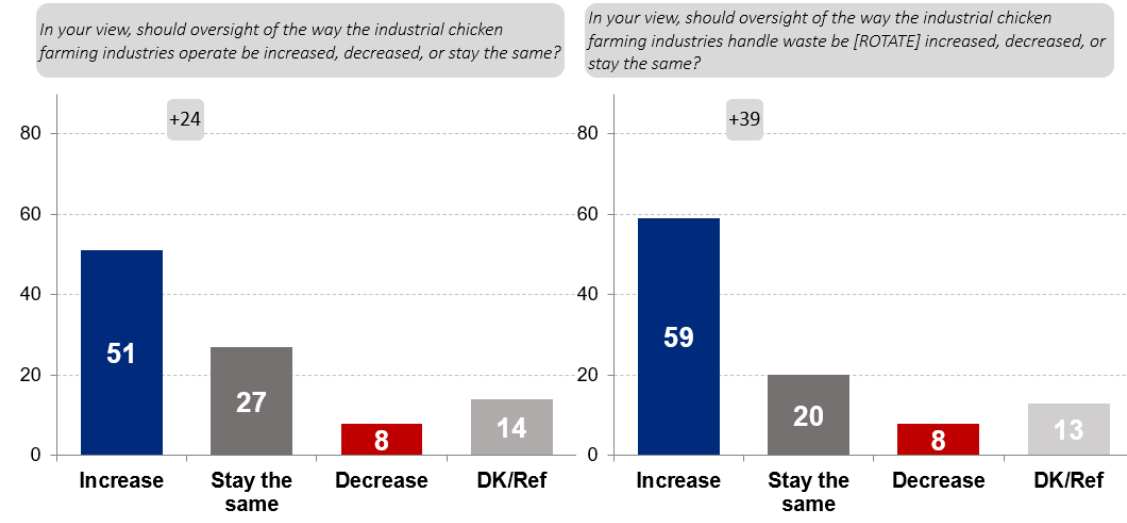
Despite Marylanders generally being less familiar with industrial chicken farming, a large majority view the industry as important to the Maryland economy, with 81 percent of voters identifying it as important. While support is broad, regional differences here are key, and the importance of poultry farming on the Eastern shore cannot be overstated enough. More than 90 percent of voters who live there identify it as important to the economy in the state.

■ Figure 4: Regional differences in economic importance of poultry farms



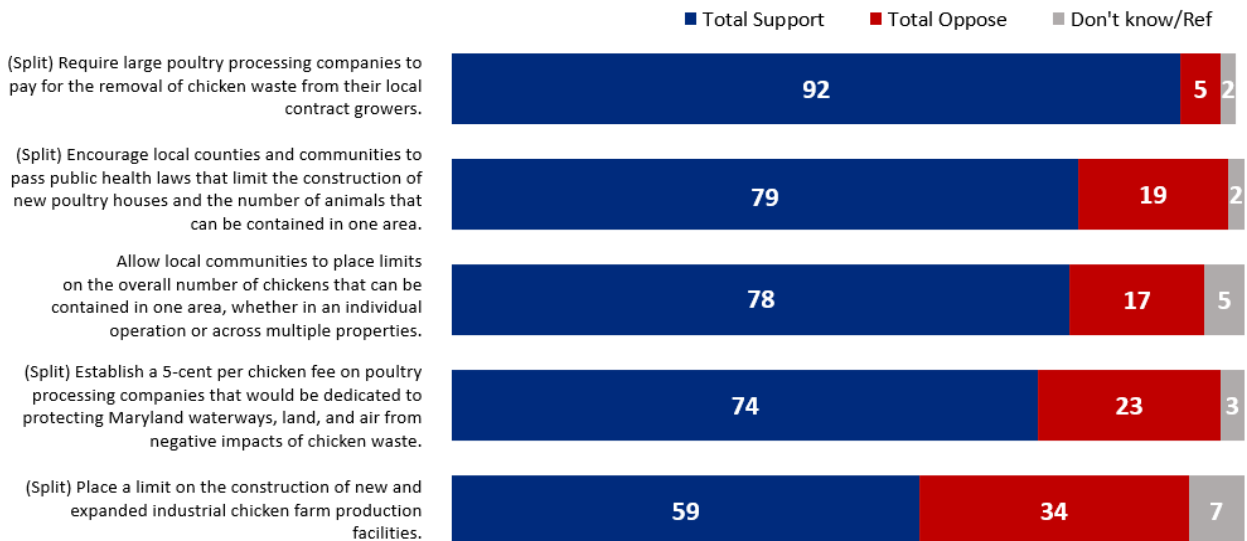
Marylanders’ strong awareness of the economic importance of the poultry industry does not deter them from supporting increasing oversight to protect local communities from potential harm from agriculture.

■ **Figure 5: Oversight of poultry farms**



All the proposals that we tested receive over 50 percent support, with requiring large poultry processing companies to pay for the removal of chicken waste from their local contract growers as the highest testing proposal, at 92 percent support. Support is also strongest for proposals that addressed public health and safety of local communities, including limiting construction, limiting the number of birds in one area, and five cent fees to protecting the local environment from chicken waste. For the most part, support is broad across parties, but Republicans drive support down for the five cent fees and limiting new construction of farms.

■ **Figure 6: Support for specific proposals related to the industrial chicken farming industry**



Separate from this battery of proposals, we tested specific proposals on ways to increase oversight on CAFOs and poultry farms. Nearly 80 percent of voters support integrators sharing liability with growers and implementing tougher environmental impact standards that apply to all CAFOs, including ones that are smaller in size. Nearly 90 percent support monitoring and enforcing the Clean Water Act on CAFOs. Support is even steady across party lines.

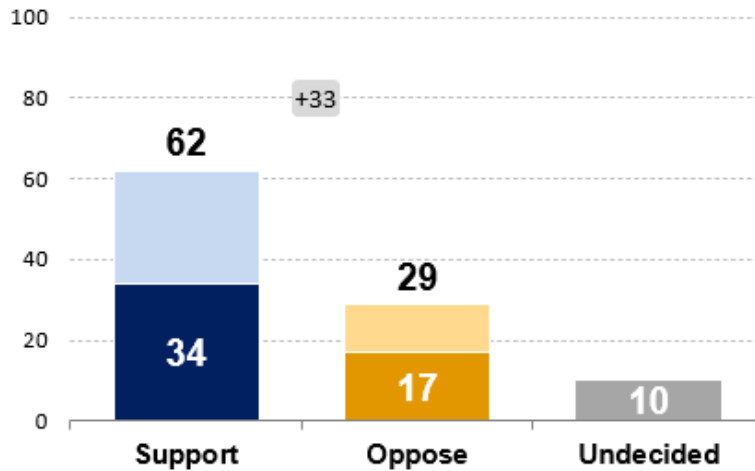
▪ Figure 7: Support for specific proposals related to the industrial chicken farming industry

<i>Support- Oppose</i>	Integrators sharing Liability	Clean Water Act	Environmental standards for smaller CAFOs
Question	<i>Do you support or oppose the idea that integrators should share liability with the growers for disposing waste?</i>	<i>Do you support or oppose the monitoring and enforcement of the Clean Water Act on Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations, or CAFOs?</i>	<i>Do you favor or oppose implementing tougher environmental impact standards that apply to all CAFOs, including ones that are smaller in size?</i>
Total	78-17	89-8	79-17
Eastern Shore	76-18	83-11	73-21

Food Procurement and Pesticides

Voters were asked whether they support or oppose shifting the state's food procurement away from factory farmed animal products toward lower-carbon, plant-based food in alignment with greenhouse gas reduction targets. A strong majority (62 percent) that they supported this shift. Democrats support 78-14, independents support 63-29, but Republicans oppose 28-56.

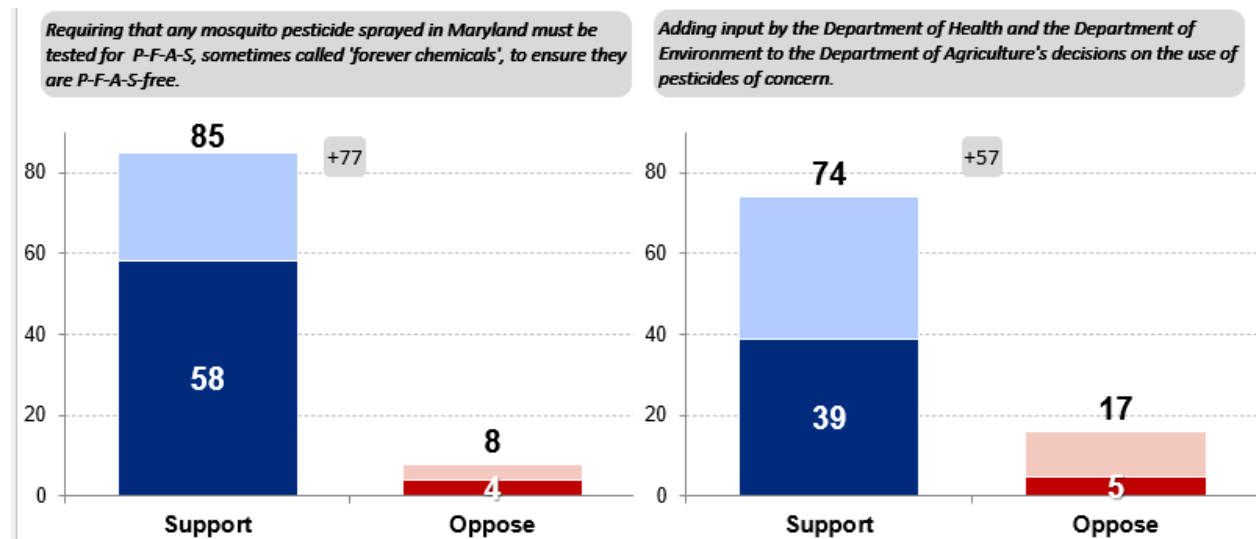
▪ **Figure 8: Food procurement**



The survey asked two questions about pesticides. The first asked if respondents support or oppose requiring mosquito pesticides be tested for P-F-A-S, with 85 percent of voters supporting testing mosquito pesticides, including 77 percent of Republicans.

The second question was less focused on a specific policy proposal but was more interested in the types of organizations that should have input on decisions around pesticides in Maryland. Nearly three quarters of voters believe the Department of Health and the Department of Environment should have a say in addition to the Department of Agriculture.

▪ **Figure 9: Pesticide proposals**



Conclusion

Marylanders want stronger government oversight on industrial poultry farms to protect local communities and general public health, and nearly half of voters (45 percent) say a gubernatorial candidate supporting proposals for increasing oversight makes them more favorable to vote for him or her.

- **Figure 10: Gubernatorial impact**

Thinking about everything you have heard, if a gubernatorial candidate supported proposals to increase oversight on the industrial farming industry, would that make you more or less favorable toward him or her, or would it make no difference?

