



TO: Interested Parties
 FROM: Andrew Baumann and Katie Drapcho, Global Strategy Group
 DATE: February 28, 2024
 RE: **North Carolina voters strongly support restoring protections for wetlands and willing to hold accountable legislators who voted to roll back protections**

North Carolina voters want to see state lawmakers take action to protect wetlands and protect the state from flooding. Eight-in-ten voters support restoring protections for wetlands and a large majority disapprove of the recent action by the state legislature to scale back protections. Voters indicate wetlands protection can impact which candidate they choose to vote for: when the race for state legislature is framed as between a Democrat who supports wetlands protections versus a Republican who doesn't, the Democrats wins by 24 points – a +27-point shift in margin from the straight generic ballot (in which Democrats trail by three points). Voters see the benefit that protecting wetlands has on a host of issues facing the state, saying protections would have a positive impact on everything from the state's ability to withstand flooding to drinking water to the economy.

KEY FINDINGS:

North Carolina voters place a premium on wetlands protections and see flooding as a serious problem facing their state. Both wetlands protection (66% favorable/4% unfavorable) and wetlands restoration (61% favorable/7% unfavorable) are popular concepts with North Carolina voters. Nearly all voters agree that they want to see state lawmakers take action to protect the state's wetlands. A nearly equal share want state lawmakers to take action to protect the state's communities from flooding, which voters believe is having a big impact on North Carolina. On the flip side, North Carolinians believe corporate real estate developers have too much power in Raleigh. Voters in North Carolina's Upper Coastal Plain region (see definition in appendix) share these sentiments.

	NET AGREEMENT						Upper Coastal Plain
	Overall agree	Overall disagree	Net	Dem.	Ind.	GOP	
I want to see state lawmakers take action to protect North Carolina's wetlands	87%	12%	+75	+88	+77	+59	+72
I want to see state lawmakers take action to protect North Carolina's communities from flooding	85%	14%	+71	+76	+69	+66	+78
Corporate real estate developers have too much influence in Raleigh	84%	14%	+70	+71	+72	+65	+69
Increased rainfall and flooding are already having a serious impact on North Carolina.	72%	27%	+45	+75	+34	+25	+49

As a result of these attitudes, an overwhelming majority support restoring protections for wetlands protections. The legislature's action rolling back protections is extremely unpopular. By 80%-8%, voters overwhelmingly support restoring protections for wetlands in North Carolina, including large shares of voters in every region of the state (including the Upper Coastal Plain), and majorities of registered Democrats, Independents, and Republicans. Nearly two-thirds of voters say they disapprove of the state legislature's action to significantly scale back protections in the state (21% approve/64% disapprove), including over six in ten voters in every partisan group.

SUPPORT FOR WETLANDS PROTECTIONS								
	Overall Support/ Approve	Overall Oppose/ Disapprove	Net	Dem.	Ind.	GOP	Upper Coastal Plain	
Do you support or oppose restoring protections for wetlands in North Carolina?	80%	8%	+72	+74	+75	+65	+70	
Do you approve or disapprove of the action by the legislature to significantly scale back protections for wetlands in North Carolina?	21%	64%	-43	-41	-52	-36	-34	

Legislators who voted to roll back protections created a major vulnerability for themselves. Voters are poised to penalize legislators who oppose wetlands protections and reward those who support restoring them. Voters have favorable views to lawmakers who support strong action to protect and restore North Carolina's wetlands (71% favorable/7% unfavorable) and are deeply critical of lawmakers who voted to eliminate protections for wetlands (7% favorable/65% unfavorable). While Republicans narrowly lead on the generic vote for state legislature (43% Democrat/46% Republican), when the race is framed as between a Democrat who supports restoring protections for wetlands against a Republican who opposes restoring protections for wetlands, the Democrat leads by 24 points, a +27-point shift on the margin, with the most movement among Independents and Republicans.

LEGISLATIVE VOTE WITH WETLANDS PROTECTION					
	Overall	Dem.	Ind.	GOP	Upper Coastal Plain.
Democrat who supports restoring protections for wetlands	55%	82%	57%	26%	49%
Republican who opposes restoring protections for wetlands	31%	9%	27%	59%	34%
<i>Net support</i>	+24	+73	+30	-33	+15
<i>Net generic Democrat</i>	-3	+64	-1	-75	-9
<i>Total Lift</i>	+27	+9	+31	+42	+24

Protecting wetlands is so popular, in part, because voters believe these protections will have a positive impact on many aspects of life in North Carolina, particularly fish and wildlife, hunting, fishing, and outdoor traditions, drinking water, and flood resilience. Over seven-in-ten voters believe that wetlands protections will positively impact fish and wildlife, North Carolina's outdoor traditions, drinking water quality, hunting, fishing, and recreation,

and the state's ability to withstand flooding from hurricanes and heavy rainfall. Strong majorities also believe wetlands protections will benefit the state's farmers and economy.

IMPACT OF WETLANDS PROTECTIONS							
	Overall Positive	Overall Negative	Net	Dem.	Ind.	GOP	Upper Coastal Plain
Fish and Wildlife	84%	4%	+80	+81	+83	+74	+72
North Carolina's outdoor traditions	72%	5%	+67	+72	+66	+61	+65
Drinking water quality in North Carolina	71%	4%	+67	+72	+65	+62	+64
Hunting, fishing, and recreation opportunities in North Carolina	74%	9%	+65	+75	+61	+60	+64
North Carolina's ability to withstand flooding from hurricanes and heavy rainfall	72%	7%	+65	+66	+65	+62	+64
Farmers in North Carolina	67%	13%	+54	+72	+47	+44	+48
North Carolina's economy	58%	15%	+43	+57	+40	+31	+44

ABOUT THE POLL

Global Strategy Group conducted a survey of 800 likely 2024 voters in North Carolina, with an additional oversample of 200 voters in the Upper Coastal Plain (375 interviews total) between January 17-21, 2024. The survey had a margin of error of +/- 3.5%. The margin of error on sub-samples is greater.

APPENDIX

Counties included in the Upper Coastal Plain: Bertie, Bladen, Brunswick, Chatham, Columbus, Cumberland, Duplin, Edgecombe, Franklin, Gates, Greene, Harnett, Hertford, Hoke, Johnston, Lee, Lenoir, Martin, Moore, Nash, Pender, Pitt, Richmond, Robeson, Sampson, Scotland, Wayne, Wilson

