

# Mid-Atlantic Coastal Policy: The Public View

*A survey of residents in the six-state Mid-Atlantic region  
(New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia)*

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## SUMMARY

The Mid-Atlantic Coastal Policy survey was conducted by the Monmouth University Urban Coast Institute (UCI) and Polling Institute (MUPI) to better understand public opinion of coastal issues in general as well as elements of the recently adopted Mid-Atlantic Ocean Action Plan among residents who live in the six-state Mid-Atlantic region – New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia. The survey covers the relative priority of coastal and ocean environment concerns across the Mid-Atlantic region; assessments of state and federal government performance on protecting the coast and ocean; opinions on different ocean monitoring and coastal energy resource policies and restrictions; and evaluations of the threat of climate change. The survey was made possible through the generous support of a grant from the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation.

The Mid-Atlantic Coastal Policy survey was conducted by telephone using a random probability sample in each of the region's six states from August 3 to 16, 2017. The final sample included 1,512 adult residents and has a statistical margin of error of  $\pm 2.5$  percentage points. The margin of error for results in each of the individual states is  $\pm 6.2$  percentage points.

### – Importance of the Ocean Environment –

A majority of Mid-Atlantic residents say the condition of the ocean and beaches is important to their states' economies. They also feel that protecting the coastal and ocean environment should be a high priority for their states.

- *More than 8-in-10 Mid-Atlantic residents say the condition of the ocean and beaches is very (47%) or somewhat (36%) important to the economies of their states.*
- *A majority (58%) of Mid-Atlantic residents say protecting the coastal and ocean environment should be a high priority for their states. Residents of Delaware (68%), Maryland (65%), and New Jersey (64%) are most likely to rate this as a high priority while residents of Virginia (53%) and Pennsylvania (50%) are least likely. New Yorkers (60%) fall in the middle.*
- *Protecting the coastal and ocean environment competes with other policy priorities in these states. More residents place a high priority on improving the local economy and creating jobs (76%) and improving public education (75%). Lowering taxes (58%) comes in at the same high priority level as protecting the coast. Fewer residents feel that controlling growth and development should be a high priority (43%).*
- *Most Mid-Atlantic residents recognize that what happens on the coast of one state has an impact on the coasts of the other states in the region, including 52% who say this has a great deal of impact and 31% who say it has some impact.*

- *Six-in-ten Mid-Atlantic residents report visiting the beach or ocean along their region's coast at least once in the past year.*

### **– Protecting the Mid-Atlantic Coast –**

Mid-Atlantic residents tend to give the government poor marks on its handling of coastal issues. They are more confident in their state governments' ability to deal with coastal management issues than they are in the federal government.

- *Nearly half (45%) of residents in the six-state region say efforts to protect coastal waters and beaches along the Mid-Atlantic coast are too little. Four-in-ten (39%) say efforts are about right and only 4% say efforts are too much.*
- *Only one-third (32%) of Mid-Atlantic residents say the government is doing an excellent or good job protecting coastal wetlands and wildlife habitats. About one-quarter (27%) say the government is doing an excellent or good job managing fish and other marine life and a similar number (26%) say the government is doing an excellent or good job collecting data that tracks the health of the ocean's ecosystem. One-fifth (22%) say the government is doing an excellent or good job managing growth and development in coastal communities.*
- *Just over half of Mid-Atlantic residents have either a great deal (11%) or some confidence (40%) in their state governments' ability to deal with coastal management issues over the next few years, but a significant minority have just a little (27%) or no confidence (17%). Residents of Delaware (68%) are the most likely to be at least somewhat confident in their state government on this issue, followed by residents of Maryland (64%), Virginians (59%), New Yorkers (52%), New Jerseyans (49%), and Pennsylvanians (39%).*
- *Just over 1-in-3 Mid-Atlantic residents say they have either a great deal (11%) or some (24%) confidence in how the federal government will handle coastal management issues over the next few years, while 6-in-10 have just a little confidence (24%) or none at all (37%).*

### **– Monitoring the Oceans –**

Residents of the six Mid-Atlantic states say it is important for the government to track the health of the oceans. They oppose reducing federal funding for these efforts and would support their states stepping in to take over this responsibility if federal funding is cut.

- *Nearly all Mid-Atlantic residents say it is either very (61%) or somewhat (29%) important for the government to collect information and maintain databases that track the health of the oceans.*
- *A majority of Mid-Atlantic residents (54%) oppose a reduction in federal funding to monitor water quality and pollution along the region's coast, while 37% support such a reduction.*
- *If federal funding is cut, a clear majority of Mid-Atlantic residents (60%) would support their states taking over ocean health monitoring responsibilities even if it means their states' taxpayers will have to foot the bill. Three-in-ten residents (30%) would oppose shifting the cost to state taxpayers.*

## – Ocean Resource Policies –

Mid-Atlantic residents support maintaining restrictions on oil and gas drilling in the Atlantic Ocean but most have a favorable view of placing electricity-generating windmills off the coast.

- *Six-in-ten Mid-Atlantic residents support designating certain areas of the ocean for special protection from fishing (60%) and a nearly identical number supports designating areas to restrict oil and gas drilling (62%).*
- *Just 26% support oil and gas drilling off the Atlantic coast, while 40% oppose it and 34% express no opinion. A majority of Mid-Atlantic residents (54%) say it would be a bad idea for the federal government to loosen recent restrictions on new drilling in parts of the Atlantic Ocean. Just 20% say it is a good idea, while 27% express no opinion.*
- *Nearly 6-in-10 Mid-Atlantic residents (58%) support placing electricity-generating windmills off the Atlantic coast, 10% say they oppose it, and 32% express no opinion.*

## – Climate Change –

The vast majority of Mid-Atlantic residents believe that climate change is occurring. They agree that both the federal and state governments should be doing more to deal with the impact of sea level rise.

- *Three-quarters (76%) of Mid-Atlantic residents believe the world's climate is undergoing change.*
- *A majority of Mid-Atlantic residents (55%) believe that predictions about sea level rise in the next 25 years causing greater risk to coastal areas are generally accurate. Another 19% believe these reports actually underestimate the risks, and one-fifth of residents (21%) say the threats are exaggerated.*
- *Nearly 6-in-10 Mid-Atlantic residents (59%) believe the federal government should be doing more to deal with the impact of sea level rise, another 3-in-10 (29%) say the federal government should do about the same as it is doing now, and just 7% say the government should do less.*
- *Half of Mid-Atlantic residents (51%) believe their states should do more to deal with sea level rise, 36% say they should do about the same as they are now, and 7% say they should do less.*

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# Mid-Atlantic Coastal Policy: The Public View

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## **I. Introduction**

The Mid-Atlantic Coastal Policy survey was conducted by the Monmouth University Urban Coast Institute (UCI) and Polling Institute (MUPI) to better understand public opinion of coastal issues in general as well as elements of the recently adopted Mid-Atlantic Ocean Action Plan among residents who live in the six-state Mid-Atlantic region – New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia. This survey, along with a separate survey of residents who live within five miles of the Mid-Atlantic coast and a survey of key regional stakeholders, is part of a larger Urban Coast Institute project to support data sharing and facilitate dialogue about ocean planning in the Mid-Atlantic region.

The Mid-Atlantic Coastal Policy survey was conducted by telephone using a random probability sample in each of the region's six states from August 3 to 16, 2017. The final sample included 1,512 adult residents and has a statistical margin of error of  $\pm 2.5$  percentage points. The margin of error for results in each of the individual states is  $\pm 6.2$  percentage points.

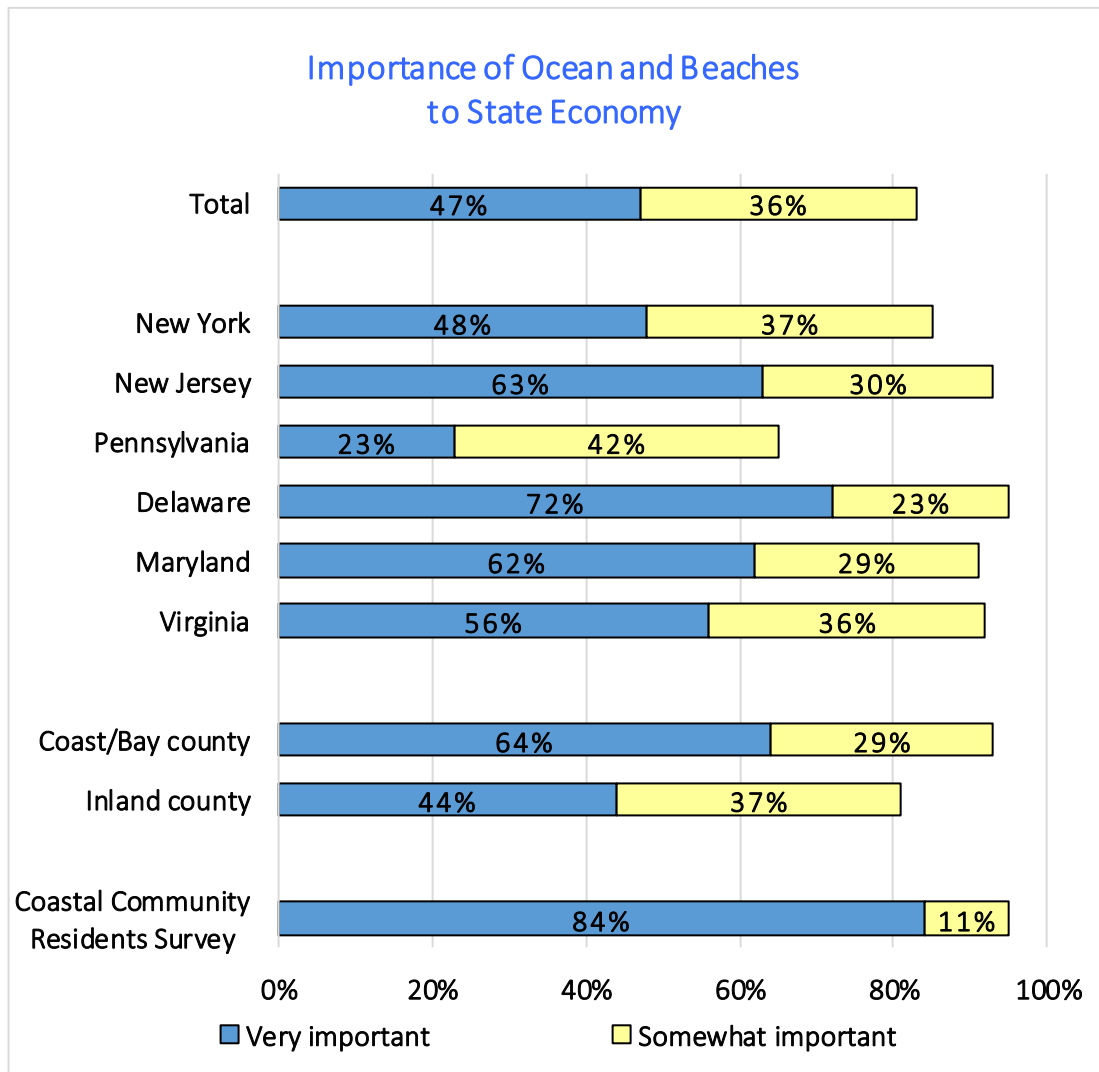
The survey covers the relative priority of coastal and ocean environment concerns across the Mid-Atlantic region; assessments of state and federal government performance on protecting the coast and ocean; opinions on different ocean monitoring and coastal energy resource policies and restrictions; and evaluations of the threat of climate change. Many of these questions were also asked on the coastal residents survey conducted earlier in the year, which allows for a comparison of public opinion on coastal issues between Mid-Atlantic residents within five miles of the coast and those who live further inland.

The survey was made possible through the generous support of a grant from the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation. The survey was designed and analyzed by the Monmouth University Polling Institute, Patrick Murray, Director, and Carolyn Lau, Research Associate. The overall project effort was directed by Tony MacDonald, Director of the Urban Coast Institute at Monmouth University. This report and the interpretation of the survey findings are the sole responsibility of the Urban Coast Institute and the Polling Institute at Monmouth University.

## **II. Importance of the Ocean Environment**

More than 8-in-10 Mid-Atlantic residents say that the condition of the ocean and beaches is important to the economies of their respective states, including 47% who see this as very important and 36% who see this as somewhat important. Very few say the coastal environment is

not too (9%) or not at all (5%) important to their state economies. Among residents of the six states, Delaware residents are the most likely to see the coast and ocean as *very important* to their economy (72%), followed by residents of New Jersey (63%), Maryland (62%), and Virginia (56%). Just under half of New Yorkers (48%) say the same. Only 1-in-5 Pennsylvanians (23%) – which is the only state in the region without an Atlantic Ocean coastline – feel that the ocean environment is very important to their state economy.



Residents who live in a county along the coast or a bay that feeds into the Atlantic Ocean – representing about 17% of residents in the six-state region – are more likely to say the condition of the ocean and beaches is very important to their states’ economies (64%) than are residents of inland counties (44%). A separate survey specifically of Mid-Atlantic residents who live within five miles of the ocean found an even greater number (84%) of the region’s coastal population saying the condition of the ocean and beaches is very important to their *local* economies.

Overall, protecting the coastal and ocean environment is deemed a high state-level priority by nearly 6-in-10 Mid-Atlantic residents (58%), but it does have to compete with other important policy concerns. Coastal protection falls in the middle of the pack among five issues asked about in the survey. More residents place a high priority on improving the local economy and creating jobs (76%) and improving public education (75%). Protecting the coast is on par with lowering taxes (58%) as a high priority among residents of these six states, but it is a more widespread concern than controlling growth and development (43%).

Residents of Delaware (68%), Maryland (65%), and New Jersey (64%) are most likely to rate coastal and ocean environment protection as a high priority for their states while residents of Virginia (53%) and Pennsylvania (50%) are least likely. New Yorkers (60%) fall in the middle. Mid-Atlantic residents who live in coastal or bay counties are not much more likely to rate this issue as a high priority (63%) than those who live in inland counties (57%). In a separate survey specifically of residents who live within five miles of the Mid-Atlantic Coast, 81% said protecting the coastal and ocean environment is a high priority for their *local* area, outpacing the importance placed on the other four issues covered in the survey.

<b>High Priority Issues for Your State</b>					
<i>Here are some issues that your state may have to deal with. After I read each one, please tell me whether it should be a high, medium, or low priority.</i>					
<i>Percentage saying "high priority":</i>	<b>Improving the economy and creating jobs</b>	<b>Improving public education</b>	<b>Protecting the coastal and ocean environment</b>	<b>Lowering taxes</b>	<b>Controlling growth and development</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>76%</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>43%</b>
<b>State</b>					
New York	73	72	60	61	39
New Jersey	79	79	64	69	50
Pennsylvania	80	76	50	55	44
Delaware	76	84	68	41	52
Maryland	75	77	65	52	47
Virginia	74	78	53	48	43
<b>Coastal/Bay County</b>					
Yes	67	66	63	61	41
No	78	77	57	57	44
<b>Coastal Community Residents Survey</b>					
	65%	71%	81%	60%	50%

The vast majority of Mid-Atlantic residents recognize that what happens on the coast of one state has an impact on the coasts of the other states in the region, including 52% who say this has a great deal of impact and 31% who say it has some impact. These results are fairly consistent across the six states surveyed.



### III. Protecting the Mid-Atlantic Coast

Nearly half (45%) of residents in the six-state region say efforts to protect coastal waters and beaches along the Mid-Atlantic coast are too little. Four-in-ten (39%) say efforts are about right and only 4% say efforts are too much. Those saying these protection efforts are too little range from 39% of Pennsylvanians to 52% of Delaware residents.

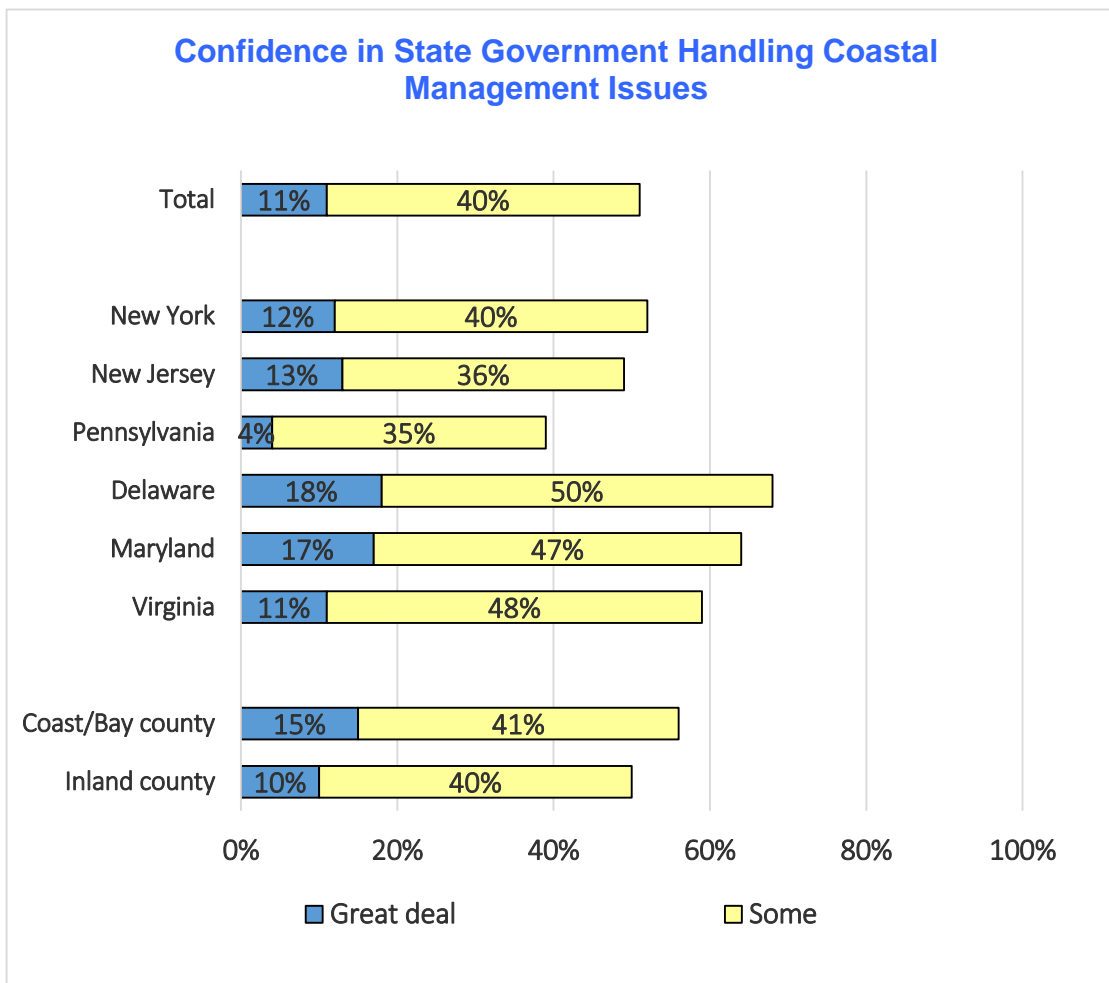
Mid-Atlantic residents give the government lackluster marks on its handling of four coastal issues. One-third (32%) say the government is doing an excellent or good job protecting coastal wetlands and wildlife habitats, compared to 53% who say it is doing only a fair or poor job. About one-quarter (27%) say the government is doing an excellent or good job managing fish and other marine life, while half (51%) say the government’s performance is only fair or poor in this area. A similar number (26%) say the government is doing an excellent or good job collecting data that tracks the health of the ocean’s ecosystem, but 44% say it is doing only a fair or poor job. Just over one-fifth (22%) of Mid-Atlantic residents say the government is doing an excellent or good job managing growth and development in coastal communities, while 54% say it is doing only a fair or poor job.

<b>Government Performance on Coastal Issues</b>				
<i>How good a job is government doing at each of the following? Please respond with excellent, good, only fair, poor, or tell me if you don't have an opinion on this.</i>				
<i>Percentage saying "excellent" or "good":</i>	<b>Protecting coastal wetlands and wildlife habitats</b>	<b>Managing fish and other marine life</b>	<b>Collecting data that tracks the health of the ocean's ecosystem</b>	<b>Managing growth and development in coastal communities</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>22%</b>
<u>State</u>				
New York	31	28	27	23
New Jersey	31	26	28	22
Pennsylvania	30	27	26	22
Delaware	41	28	31	23
Maryland	33	26	30	20
Virginia	39	27	23	22
<u>Coastal/Bay County</u>				
Yes	28	23	29	27
No	33	28	27	22
<i>Coastal Community Residents Survey</i>	<b>39%</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>28%</b>

There are very few state level differences on any of these ratings, with the exception of protecting coastal wetlands and wildlife habitats, where residents of Delaware (41%) and Virginia (39%) are somewhat more likely to give the government positive marks when compared with those who live in Maryland (33%), New York (31%), New Jersey (31%), and Pennsylvania (30%). A

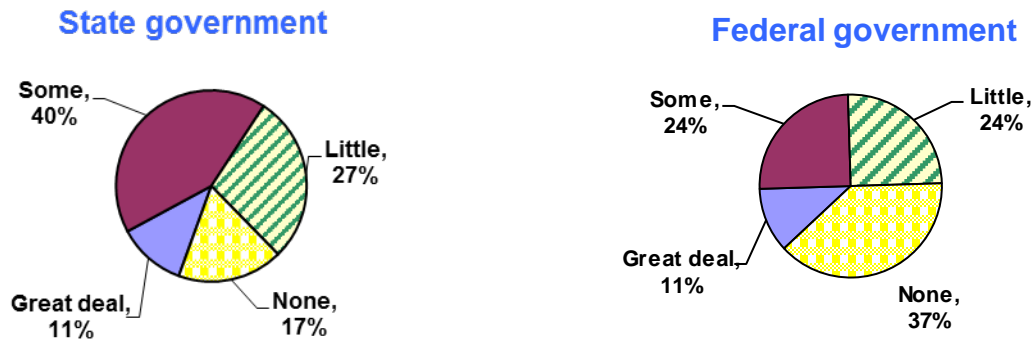
separate survey of residents who live within five miles of the Mid-Atlantic coast found only slightly higher levels of satisfaction with government performance in any of these four areas.

When it comes to dealing with coastal management, Mid-Atlantic residents are more likely to have confidence in their state governments than in the federal government. Just over half have either a great deal (11%) or some confidence (40%) in their state governments to deal with coastal management issues over the next few years. On the other hand, a significant minority have just a little (27%) or no confidence (17%) in their state governments' ability to handle these concerns. Residents of Delaware (68%) are the most likely to be at least somewhat confident in their state government on this issue. Confidence is also widespread in Maryland (64%), followed by Virginians at 59%. Around half of New Yorkers (52%) and New Jerseyans (49%) have a great deal or some confidence in their state governments' ability to deal with coastal management issues. Residents of Pennsylvania, which does not border the Atlantic Ocean, are the least confident in their state government's ability to deal with coastal management issues (39%).



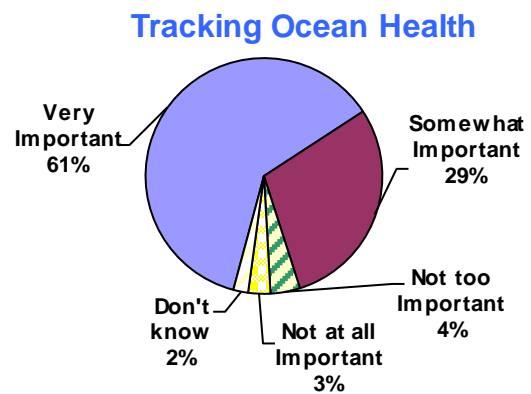
Just over 1-in-3 Mid-Atlantic residents say they have either a great deal (11%) or some (24%) confidence in how the federal government will handle coastal management issues over the next few years, while 6-in-10 have just a little confidence (24%) or none at all (37%). Residents having at least some confidence in how Washington will handle coastal management concerns ranges from 28% in Maryland to 38% in New York.

### Confidence in Handling Coastal Management Issues



#### IV. Monitoring the Oceans

Nearly all Mid-Atlantic residents say it is either very (61%) or somewhat (29%) important for the government to collect information and maintain databases that track the health of the oceans. Very few say it is not too (4%) or not at all important (3%). Delaware (70%) and Maryland (67%) residents are most likely to say it is *very important* for government policymakers to collect and store this information. About 6-in-10 residents of Virginia (62%), New Jersey (62%) and New York (61%) say the same, with Pennsylvanians (56%) being just somewhat less likely to say it is very important for the government to track ocean health. A survey of Mid-Atlantic coastal residents found that a similar 67% believe collecting this information in a database is very important.



A majority of Mid-Atlantic residents (54%) oppose a reduction in federal funding to monitor water quality and pollution along the region's coast, while 37% support such a reduction. Opposition to a cut in federal support for water quality monitoring includes 63% in Delaware and

61% in Maryland who are opposed as well as half or more in New York (54%), Pennsylvania (53%), Virginia (53%), and New Jersey (50%).

<b>Government Funding of Mid-Atlantic Ocean Tracking</b>				
	<b>Reduce federal funding to monitor Mid-Atlantic water quality and pollution</b>		<b>State taxpayers continue to monitor ocean health if federal funding is cut</b>	
	<b><u>Support</u></b>	<b><u>Oppose</u></b>	<b><u>Support</u></b>	<b><u>Oppose</u></b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>30%</b>
<b><u>State</u></b>				
New York	37	54	62	26
New Jersey	41	50	61	30
Pennsylvania	38	53	55	34
Delaware	31	63	75	20
Maryland	29	61	62	29
Virginia	39	53	62	34
<b><u>Coastal/Bay County</u></b>				
Yes	38	56	71	25
No	37	53	58	31

If federal funding is cut, a clear majority of Mid-Atlantic residents (60%) would support their states taking over ocean health monitoring responsibilities even if it means their states' taxpayers will have to foot the bill. Three-in-ten residents (30%) would oppose shifting the cost to state taxpayers. Residents of Delaware are by far the most supportive (75%). About 6-in-10 residents of New York (62%), Maryland (62%), Virginia (62%), and New Jersey (61%) also support having their state pick up the cost of ocean water quality monitoring if federal funding is cut. Even a majority in Pennsylvania (55%) – which does not directly have a Mid-Atlantic coastline – would be supportive. Regional residents who live in a coastal county are much more likely to support having their state take on this role if federal funding is reduced (71%) compared to residents who live in inland counties (58%).

## **V. Ocean Resource Policies**

Six-in-ten Mid-Atlantic residents support designating certain areas of the ocean for special protection from fishing (60%) and a nearly identical number supports designating areas to restrict oil and gas drilling (62%). Just 10% oppose restrictions on fishing and 12% oppose restrictions on drilling, with slightly over one-quarter having no opinion on these two policies. About 7-in-10 Delaware residents support designating certain areas of the ocean for special protection from fishing and drilling, with about 2-in-3 Maryland and Pennsylvania residents feeling the same. They are joined by approximately 6-in-10 New Yorkers, and majorities in New Jersey and Virginia.

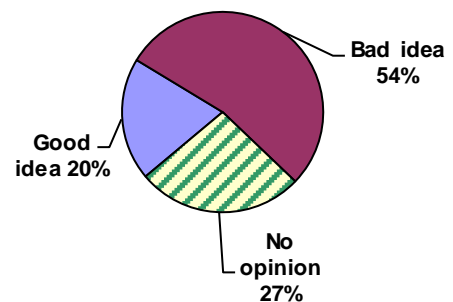
A separate survey of Mid-Atlantic coastal residents living within five miles of the beach found that a similar proportion (63%) supports designating certain areas of the ocean for special protection from fishing. Another 29% oppose such restrictions, which is somewhat higher than the 1-in-10 residents throughout the six-state region who are opposed. Coastal residents are even more likely to support designating certain areas of the ocean for protection from oil and gas drilling (78%) than are their neighbors throughout the rest of the Mid-Atlantic region.

<b>Coastal Protection Policies Support</b>				
<i>Residents' support for each policy</i>				
	<b>Designate areas to restrict fishing</b>	<b>Designate areas to restrict drilling</b>	<b>Support coastal oil drilling</b>	<b>Support coastal wind farms</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>62%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>58%</b>
<u>State</u>				
New York	60	63	22	58
New Jersey	56	59	25	57
Pennsylvania	64	68	33	62
Delaware	70	71	22	67
Maryland	67	63	22	52
Virginia	56	55	30	54
<u>Coastal/Bay County</u>				
Yes	60	62	23	56
No	60	62	27	58
<i>Coastal Community Residents Survey</i>	63%	78%	22%	--

Support for oil and gas drilling off the Atlantic coast is weak among Mid-Atlantic residents. Just 26% support off-shore oil and gas drilling compared to 40% who oppose it. A sizeable proportion (34%), though, have no opinion on the issue. Support is highest in Pennsylvania, but it still only reaches 33% in that state. New York, Delaware, and Maryland are least supportive, with only 22% in favor of off-shore drilling. Virginia (30%) and New Jersey (25%) fall in between.

Mid-Atlantic residents also express concern about the federal government initiating a review on whether to loosen recent restrictions on new drilling in parts of the Atlantic Ocean. Most (54%) say that relaxing these rules would be a bad idea and just 20% say it is a good idea, while 27% express no opinion. Residents of Delaware are most likely to say this is a bad idea (64%), followed by residents of New York (58%), Maryland (55%), New Jersey (51%), Pennsylvania (51%), and Virginia (48%).

**Loosen government restrictions on Atlantic Ocean drilling**

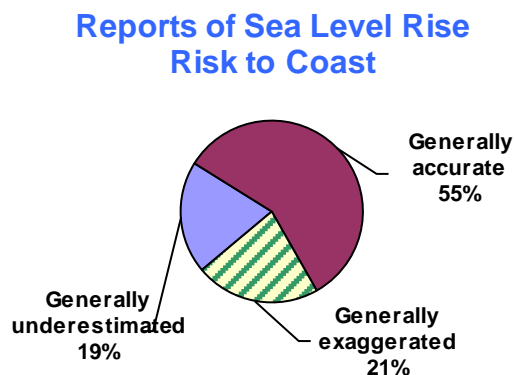


Mid-Atlantic residents are generally supportive of placing electricity-generating windmills off the Atlantic coast, though, with 58% saying they support this proposal and just 10% saying they oppose it. The remaining 32% express no opinion. Support ranges from 52% in Maryland and 54% in Virginia to 62% in Pennsylvania and 67% in Delaware, with New Jersey (57%) and New York (58%) falling in the middle. The current survey did not specify whether the windmills would be visible or not from the shore, but a separate survey of Mid-Atlantic coastal residents made this distinction. That survey found that while 72% of coastal residents would support non-visible windmills, 52% would support windmills that could be seen from the shore.

## VI. Climate Change

Three-quarters (76%) of Mid-Atlantic residents believe that the world's climate is undergoing a change that is causing more extreme weather patterns and the rise of sea levels. Very few (16%) believe climate change is not happening. The percentage of Mid-Atlantic residents who believe in climate change falls in line with the results of a nationwide *Monmouth University Poll* from December 2015 that found 70% of Americans believe climate change is occurring.

Furthermore, a majority of Mid-Atlantic residents (55%) believe that predictions about sea level rise in the next 25 years causing greater risk to coastal areas are generally accurate. Another 19% believe these reports actually underestimate the risks. One-fifth of residents (21%) say the threats are exaggerated. These results are fairly comparable across all six states in the Mid-Atlantic region, with between 52% and 61% saying these forecasts are accurate.



Nearly 6-in-10 Mid-Atlantic residents (59%) believe the federal government should be doing more to deal with the impact of sea level rise. Another 3-in-10 (29%) say the federal government should do about the same as it is doing now and just 7% say the government should do less. Opinion does not vary much by state, ranging from 55% in Pennsylvania and Virginia who say the federal government should be doing more to 63% in Delaware.

In terms of state governments' efforts to deal with the impact of sea level rise, half of Mid-Atlantic residents (51%) believe their states should do more, 36% say they should do about the same as they are now, and 7% say they should do less. Pennsylvanians are significantly less likely to say their state government should do more (40%) when compared with residents of the other five states in the region, although they are more likely to say their state should continue to do about the same as it is now (45%). Among other Mid-Atlantic residents, solid majorities in

New York (58%), Delaware (56%), and New Jersey (55%) say their state should be doing more to deal with the impact of sea level rise. They are joined by about half of those living in Maryland (51%) and Virginia (49%).

<b>Government Efforts on Sea Level Rise</b>		
<i>Should be doing more to deal with impact of sea level rise</i>		
	<b>Federal government</b>	<b>State government</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>51%</b>
<u>State</u>		
New York	62	58
New Jersey	57	55
Pennsylvania	55	40
Delaware	63	56
Maryland	62	51
Virginia	55	49
<u>Coastal/Bay County</u>		
Yes	58	54
No	59	51

## **VII. Coastal Activities**

About 17% of residents in the six-state Mid-Atlantic region live in a county that is adjacent to the Atlantic Ocean or a bay. This includes 41% of Delaware residents due to the small size of the state. Between 1-in-4 and 1-in-6 residents of New York (26% – many of whom live in New York City), Maryland (21%), New Jersey (19%), and Virginia (16%) live in a coastal or bay county. No Pennsylvania residents do. About 1-in-10 Mid-Atlantic residents have a family member who works in a marine-related industry, including 5% who say someone in their household does this.

Six-in-ten Mid-Atlantic residents report visiting the beach or ocean along their region’s coast at least once in the past year, including 29% who spent one to five days at the beach, 22% who spent between six and 20 days, and 10% who spent more than 20 days at the beach in the past year. Those who spent at least one day on the Mid-Atlantic coast include 76% of Delaware residents and 72% of New Jerseyans, 66% of Virginians, 63% of Marylanders, and 60% of New Yorkers. Just under half (47%) of Pennsylvanians spent time on the Mid-Atlantic coast in the past year.

Among three sets of activities available along the Mid-Atlantic coast, residents of the six-state region are most likely to swim, sunbathe, or walk along the shore (54%). About one quarter (26%) say they boated, canoed, kayaked, or jet-skied along the Mid-Atlantic coast, and one-fifth (21%) went fishing, crabbing, or clamming. All of these activities become more popular the closer residents live to the beach. Almost three-quarters (73%) of residents who live in coastal or

bay counties report swimming, sunbathing, or walking along the shore in the past year, which rises to 89% among those who live within five miles of the beach. Forty-four percent of coastal county residents and 58% of residents within five miles of the beach boated, canoed, kayaked, or jet-skied. Four-in-ten (39%) coastal county residents and half (51%) of residents who live within five miles of the beach went fishing, crabbing, or clamming in the past year.



# Mid-Atlantic Coastal Policy: The Public View

## ***SURVEY METHODOLOGY***

The survey was conducted by the Monmouth University Urban Coast Institute and Polling Institute to better understand public opinion of elements of the recently adopted Mid-Atlantic Ocean Action Plan and coastal issues in general among residents who live in the six-state Mid-Atlantic region – New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia. Roughly two-thirds of the questions for this study were also asked in a separate survey specifically of Mid-Atlantic *coastal* residents taken earlier this year. This allows for a comparison of public opinion between Mid-Atlantic residents regionwide and residents who live within five miles of the coastline.

The survey was conducted by telephone August 3-16, 2017 by professional interviewers at Braun Research, Inc. A random probability sample was used to generate phone numbers for each of the six Mid-Atlantic states and interviews were conducted with residents at least 18 years of age or older. Approximately 250 residents were interviewed in each of the six Mid-Atlantic states to allow for comparison among the states. The total sample includes 1,512 residents, with 898 interviews conducted on a landline phone and 614 conducted on a cell phone.

While those interviewed in a survey ideally will have the same characteristics as the population they represent, samples frequently may under-represent groups that are more difficult to interview, such as the elderly or those with less than a high school education. To correct this imbalance, a statistical technique known as “weighting” is used. The weighting procedure for this survey compared state population figures for age, education, race, and sex based on census data with those of the sample and weighted the sample to more accurately reflect the population. For example, if census figures for one state show 39 percent of residents 18 years and older have a high school education, and the sample for that state consists of 32 percent with a high school education, each respondent in this category would be counted as 1.22 persons to adjust for this difference. Weighting was done separately for each of the states, creating six final state weights. A final weighting step adjusted each state weight to represent its proportional share of the Mid-Atlantic region’s population. For example, New York responses represent 35% of the total weighted results, while Delaware responses represent 2%.

The percentages obtained in a sample survey are estimates of what the distribution of responses would be if the entire population had been surveyed. “Sampling error” is a statistical term which describes the probable difference between interviewing everyone in a given population and a sample drawn from that population. The sampling error associated with a sample of 1,512 respondents is  $\pm 2.5$  percentage points at a 95 percent confidence interval.

Sampling error increases as the sample size is reduced. For example, if statements are made based on a sub-group of 250 (as with any of the state samples), the sampling error is  $\pm 6.2$  percentage points. This factor must be kept in mind when comparing the responses of different states. Readers should note that sampling error does not take into account other possible sources of error inherent in any study of public opinion.

## SURVEY INSTRUMENT

# Mid-Atlantic Coastal Policy: The Public View

*A survey of residents in the six state Mid-Atlantic region*

*[New York; New Jersey; Pennsylvania;  
Delaware; Maryland; Virginia]*

**August 2017**  
**(n=1,512)**



**Urban Coast Institute  
and Polling Institute**

### A. GENERAL PRIORITIES

A1. How many years have you lived in *[READ IN STATE NAME]*, or have you lived here all your life?

- 1% Less than 1 year
- 4% 1 to 5 years
- 5% 6 to 10 years
- 8% 11 to 20 years
- 22% More than 20 years
- 57% All my life
- 1% (VOL) Don't Know/Refused

A2. Here are some issues that your state may have to deal with. After I read each one, please tell me whether it should be a high, medium, or low priority for *[READ IN STATE NAME]*. *[ITEMS WERE ROTATED]*

	<u>High</u>	<u>Medium</u>	<u>Low</u>	(VOL) <u>DK/Ref</u>
A. Improving public education	75%	18%	5%	2%
B. Controlling growth and development	43%	38%	13%	6%
C. Lowering taxes	58%	30%	10%	2%
D. Protecting the coastal and ocean environment	58%	28%	11%	2%
E. Improving the local economy and creating jobs	76%	17%	5%	2%

A3. How important is the condition of the ocean and beaches to the economy of [READ IN STATE NAME] – very, somewhat, not too, or not at all important?

- 47% Very important
- 36% Somewhat important
- 9% Not too important
- 5% Not at all important
- 3% (VOL) Don't Know/Refused

**B. CURRENT COASTAL MANAGEMENT**

Now I'd like to ask you some questions about the Mid-Atlantic Coast, which includes the beach and ocean areas of New York state, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia.

B1. Do you think current efforts to protect coastal waters and beaches along the Mid-Atlantic coast are too much, too little, or about right?

- 4% Too much
- 45% Too little
- 39% About right
- 13% (VOL) Don't Know/Refused

B2. How much does what happens on the coast of one state affect the coasts of the other Mid-Atlantic states – a great deal, some, just a little, or nothing at all?

- 52% Great deal
- 31% Some
- 8% Just a little
- 3% Nothing at all
- 1% (VOL) Depends
- 6% (VOL) Don't Know/Refused

B3. How good a job is government doing at each of the following. Please respond with excellent, good, only fair, poor, or tell me if you don't have an opinion on this. [ITEMS WERE ROTATED]

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Only fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>No opinion</u>
A. Managing fish and other marine life	4%	23%	32%	19%	21%
B. Protecting coastal wetlands and wildlife habitats	6%	26%	35%	18%	15%
C. Managing growth and development in coastal communities	5%	17%	34%	20%	23%
D. Collecting data that tracks the health of the ocean's ecosystem	5%	21%	28%	16%	29%

B4. How important is it for government policymakers to collect information and maintain databases that track the health of the oceans – very, somewhat, not too, or not at all important?

61% Very important  
29% Somewhat important  
4% Not too important  
3% Not at all important  
2% (VOL) Don't Know/Refused

B5. How much confidence do you have in how the federal government in Washington will deal with coastal management issues over the next few years – a great deal, some, just a little, or none at all?

11% Great deal  
24% Some  
24% Just a little  
37% None at all  
4% (VOL) Depends/Don't Know/Refused

B6. How much confidence do you have in how the *[READ IN STATE NAME]* state government will deal with coastal management issues over the next few years – a great deal, some, just a little, or none at all?

11% Great deal  
40% Some  
27% Just a little  
17% None at all  
5% (VOL) Depends/Don't Know/Refused

### C. COASTAL POLICY PROPOSALS

*[QUESTIONS C1 & C2 WERE ROTATED]*

C1. Do you support or oppose placing electricity-generating windmills off the Atlantic Coast, or do you have no opinion?

58% Support  
10% Oppose  
32% No opinion

C2. Do you support or oppose drilling for oil or gas in the ocean off the Atlantic coast, or do you have no opinion?

26% Support  
40% Oppose  
34% No opinion

*[QUESTIONS C3 & C4 WERE ROTATED]*

C3. Do you support or oppose designating certain areas of the ocean for special protection where fishing would be restricted, or do you have no opinion?

60% Support  
10% Oppose  
30% No opinion

C4. Do you support or oppose designating certain areas of the ocean for special protection where oil and gas drilling would be restricted, or do you have no opinion?

62% Support  
12% Oppose  
26% No opinion

C5. The federal government is reviewing whether to loosen restrictions on new drilling that were recently put in place in parts of the Atlantic Ocean. Do you think it is a good idea or bad idea to loosen these restrictions, or do you have no opinion?

20% Good idea  
54% Bad idea  
27% No opinion

C6. Do you support or oppose reducing federal funding to monitor water quality and pollution along the Mid-Atlantic coast?

37% Support  
54% Oppose  
9% (VOL) Depends/Don't Know

C7. If this funding is reduced, would you support or oppose having your state continue to monitor coastal water quality even if it means *[READ IN STATE NAME]* taxpayers will be responsible for the costs?

60% Support  
30% Oppose  
10% (VOL) Depends/Don't Know

**D. CLIMATE CHANGE**

Now, I'd like to ask you some questions about the world's climate.

D1. Do you think that the world's climate is undergoing a change that is causing more extreme weather patterns and the rise of sea levels, or is this not happening?

76% Yes, is happening  
16% No, is not happening  
8% (VOL) Don't Know/Refused

D2. Some reports predict that sea levels will rise substantially in the next 25 years and that many coastal areas will be in much greater risk from storm damage and flooding. Based on what you have heard, do you think that this risk is generally accurate, generally exaggerated, or generally underestimated?

- 55% Generally accurate
- 21% Generally exaggerated
- 19% Generally underestimated
- 6% (VOL) Don't Know/Refused

D3. Should the federal government in Washington do more to deal with impact of sea level rise, do less, or do about the same as it is now?

- 59% Do more
- 7% Do less
- 29% Do about the same
- 1% (VOL) Neither/not happening
- 4% (VOL) Don't Know/Refused

D4. Should the *[READ IN STATE NAME]* state government do more to deal with impact of sea level rise, do less, or do about the same as it is now?

- 51% Do more
- 7% Do less
- 36% Do about the same
- 1% (VOL) Neither/not happening
- 5% (VOL) Don't Know/Refused

## E. DEMOGRAPHICS

E1. Over the past year, that is since September 2016, how many days did you spend on the beach or ocean along the Mid-Atlantic coast, which includes the coastal areas of New York state, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia – would you say zero, one to five, six to 20, 21 to 50, or more than 50 days?

- 39% Zero
- 29% One to five
- 22% Six to 20
- 6% 21 to 50
- 4% More than 50
- 1% (VOL) Don't Know/Refused

E2. Have you done any of the following activities along the Mid-Atlantic coast in the past year? [The Mid-Atlantic Coast includes the beaches and ocean of New York state, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia.]  
*[ITEMS WERE ROTATED]:* Have you done this in the past year or not?

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
A. Gone fishing, crabbing or clamming	21%	79%
B. Taken a boat, canoe, kayak or jet-ski out for pleasure	26%	74%
C. Gone swimming or sunbathing, or walked along the shore	54%	46%

E3. Does any member of your immediate family work in a job that involves fishing, boating, shipping, marine trades, the recreational use of the ocean, or any other business related to the ocean? [IF "YES" ASK: Is that you, someone else in your household, or another family member outside of your household?]

- 3% Yes, self
- 2% Yes, other person in household
- 4% Yes, family member outside of household
- 90% No
- 1% (VOL) Don't know/Refused

E4. What was the last grade in school you completed?

- 39% High school or less
- 28% Some college
- 33% College graduate

E5. What was your age on your last birthday?

- 31% 18 to 34
- 34% 35 to 54
- 35% 55 and over

E6. In politics today, do you consider yourself a Republican, Democrat, independent, or something else?

- 22% Republican
- 37% Democrat
- 41% Independent

E7. Are you of Latino or Hispanic origin?

E8. Are you white, black or of Asian origin?

- 64% White
- 15% Black
- 12% Hispanic
- 9% Asian/Other



E9. So that we can group all answers, is your total annual family income before taxes: Under \$50,000; from \$50,000 to just under \$100,000; from \$100,000 to just under \$150,000; or \$150,000 or more?

38% Under \$50,000  
29% \$50,000 - \$99,999  
34% \$100,000 or more

E10. Respondent gender?

48% Male  
52% Female

E11. Which county do you live in?

17% Coastal or Bay county  
83% Inland county

*Thank you very much for your help.*