A new survey of likely 2021 Virginia voters conducted by Global Strategy Group shows that there is broad, statewide, and bipartisan support for taking action to protect the state from future flooding. Voters not only overwhelmingly want the next governor to act to protect Virginia’s communities from flooding and support a Master Plan to achieve that end, but they also strongly support spending state money to provide funding for the Community Preparedness Flood Fund to meet the Commonwealth’s long-term flood preparedness needs.

The following memo contains key findings from the survey conducted for EDF Action between April 20 and April 26, 2021 among 600 likely 2021 voters in Virginia, plus an oversample of 300 voters in the coastal region for a total of 421 coastal interviews.

**KEY FINDINGS**

Both inland and coastal voters and voters across partisan lines see addressing flood risk as an important priority for lawmakers in Richmond. While voters see big issues like improving the economy, improving education, and dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic as the biggest priorities for lawmakers in Richmond to focus on, more than two-thirds also rate addressing the risk of flooding in Virginia’s coastal communities as an important issue, with majorities of every party and over two-thirds of both coastal and inland Virginians in agreement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IMPORTANCE OF FLOODING ISSUES</th>
<th>Likely Voters</th>
<th>Dem</th>
<th>Ind</th>
<th>GOP</th>
<th>Coastal</th>
<th>Inland</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Addressing the risk of flooding in Virginia’s coastal communities</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By more than two-to-one, voters believe that flooding is already having a serious impact on Virginia, and a plurality believe that it will directly impact their family in the next 10 years. By a 62% to 30% margin, Virginians agree that flooding, heavy rainfall, and rising sea levels are already having a serious impact on Virginia. Further, a 40% plurality of Virginians believe their own family will be directly impacted by flooding in the next decade, including nearly half of coastal Virginians.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How soon do you think rising sea levels or flooding will directly impact you and your family?</th>
<th>Likely Voters</th>
<th>Dem</th>
<th>Ind</th>
<th>GOP</th>
<th>Coastal</th>
<th>Inland</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% 10 years or less</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% More than 10 years</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Will Have Impact</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 Coastal Virginians are defined as being registered to vote in the following counties and independent cities: Accomack County, City of Chesapeake, Gloucester County, City of Hampton, Isle of Wight County, James City County, Lancaster County, Mathews County, Middlesex County, City of Newport News, City of Norfolk, Northampton County, Northumberland County, City of Poquoson, City of Portsmouth, City of Smithfield, City of Suffolk, Surry County, City of Virginia Beach, City of Williamsburg, and York County.
Virginians believe it is important to have a regularly updated flooding plan and want to see their next governor take action to protect communities from the risk of flooding. Huge majorities of Democrats and independents, along with a very solid majority of Republicans agree that the Commonwealth should have a plan to deal with flood risk, along with strong majorities of both coastal and inland voters. And over three-quarters of voters statewide are looking to the next governor to address the problem.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STATEMENTS ABOUT FLOODING</th>
<th>% Agree</th>
<th>% Disagree</th>
<th>% DK</th>
<th>NET Agree</th>
<th>LVs</th>
<th>Dem</th>
<th>Ind</th>
<th>GOP</th>
<th>Coastal</th>
<th>Inland</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It is important for the Commonwealth to have a plan to deal with the risk of flooding that is updated regularly to keep up with the latest science.</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>+65</td>
<td>+91</td>
<td>+52</td>
<td>+42</td>
<td>+75</td>
<td>+63</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I want to see the next governor take action to protect Virginia’s communities from the risk of flooding.</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>+57</td>
<td>+85</td>
<td>+69</td>
<td>+22</td>
<td>+65</td>
<td>+56</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Both coastal and inland voters believe that it is important to address the risk of flooding to protect Virginia’s economy, coastal communities, wetlands, and habitats. When it comes to the threat from flooding, there is little disagreement between coastal and inland voters, with strong majorities of both believing flooding is a serious threat to important state priorities, and about 70% of each saying that protecting the state’s economy, coastal communities is an important reason to take action now to address the risk of flooding.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FLOODING THREATS</th>
<th>% Serious threat</th>
<th>% Important reason to address flooding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coastal</td>
<td>Inland</td>
<td>Coastal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virginia’s economy</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virginia’s coastal cities and communities</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virginia’s wetlands, marshes, and coastal ecosystems</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virginia’s wildlife and fish habitats</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virginia’s beaches and tourism industry</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Voters have little awareness of any progress being made to combat flooding and have almost no knowledge of the state’s Master Plan. Just barely over a third of Virginia voters believe that the state has made either a lot or some progress on projects aimed at reducing the risk of flooding with almost no difference on this attitude based on partisanship or geography. Meanwhile, four-in-five say they have heard only a little or nothing at all about the state’s Master Plan to protect the state from flooding. This lack of awareness about the state’s plans to combat flooding provides an opportunity for the next governor to capture significant credit on an issue that voters care about by taking action and educating voters on the state’s progress.
How much progress has been made on projects in Virginia aimed at reducing the risk of flooding?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Likely Voters</th>
<th>Dem</th>
<th>Ind</th>
<th>GOP</th>
<th>Coastal</th>
<th>Inland</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% A lot/some</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% A little/hardly any</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**MASTER PLAN AWARENESS**

As you may have heard, the Commonwealth of Virginia is developing a Master Plan to protect and restore Virginia’s coastal areas and make them more resilient to rising sea levels and flooding. Before taking this survey, how much had you heard about this plan?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Likely Voters</th>
<th>Dem</th>
<th>Ind</th>
<th>GOP</th>
<th>Coastal</th>
<th>Inland</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% A lot/some</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% A little/nothing</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Voters across the state strongly support using state money to fund the Community Preparedness Flood Fund, with inland voters more supportive than their coastal counterparts. Two-thirds of Virginia voters support funding the Flood Fund, including majorities of Democrats, independents, and Republicans. And while both inland and coastal voters are strongly supportive, inland voters are actually 5 points more supportive than coastal voters.

**COMMUNITY PREPAREDNESS FLOOD FUND FUNDING SUPPORT**

While there is a primary revenue source for the Virginia Community Preparedness Flood Fund, it is not enough to meet all of the Commonwealth’s long-term flood preparedness needs. Given that, do you support or oppose investing Commonwealth money to fund the projects identified as necessary by the new Master Plan?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Likely Voters</th>
<th>Dem</th>
<th>Ind</th>
<th>GOP</th>
<th>Coastal</th>
<th>Inland</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% Support</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Oppose</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NET Support</td>
<td>+43</td>
<td>+75</td>
<td>+25</td>
<td>+17</td>
<td>+35</td>
<td>+45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ABOUT THIS RESEARCH**

Global Strategy Group conducted a multi-channel survey via telephone and online panel of 600 Virginia likely 2021 voters plus an oversample of 300 coastal voters, to achieve a total of 421 coast interviews, from April 20 and April 26, 2021. The margin of error at the 95% confidence level for statewide likely voters is +/- 4.0% and 4.8% for coastal voters. Care was taken to ensure the demographic composition of the sample matched Virginia’s voter population across a variety of demographic variables including race, gender, age, education, and region.