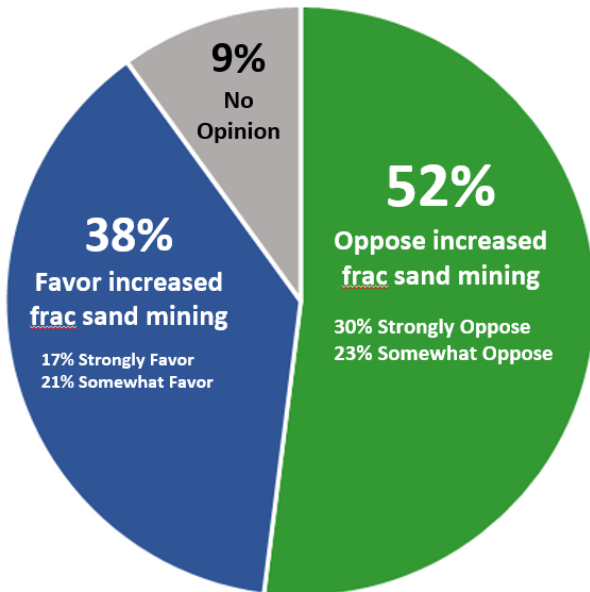


# Statewide poll on frac sand shows majority of Minnesotans oppose increased frac sand mining and strong support for moratorium in southeast MN

Poll done by bipartisan research team of Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin & Associates and Public Opinion Strategies in February 2014

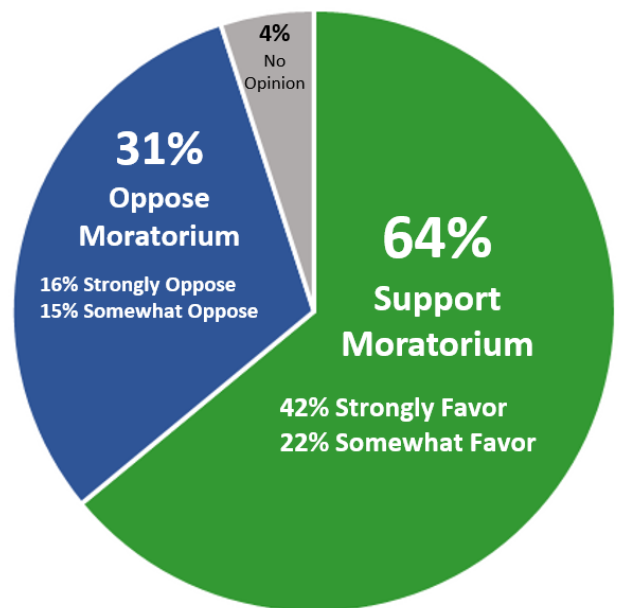
## 1. Majority of Minnesota Voters Oppose Increased Frac Sand Mining



**Question:** Minnesota has deposits of high quality silica sand that is used in hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, to extract natural gas and oil. When the frac sand is forced into underground rock formations it creates cracks, releasing natural gas. There are numerous proposals for increased frac sand mining in Minnesota, which scrape or blast off bluff tops and top soil before the sand is dug. The sand is then chemically cleaned near the mine and shipped out of state. Does increased frac sand mining sound like something you would favor or oppose?

## 2. Strong Support from Minnesota Voters for Two-Year Moratorium in Southeast Minnesota on Frac Sand Mining

**Question:** Much of this high quality sand is located in southeast Minnesota where the unique geology includes fractured limestone, which makes groundwater particularly vulnerable to contamination. Would you favor or oppose a two-year suspension of new frac sand mines in southeast Minnesota while the potential environmental impacts are more fully assessed and state regulations are developed?



For full polling results go to [www.landstewardshipproject.org](http://www.landstewardshipproject.org) or call Bobby King at LSP at 612-722-6377.



**PUBLIC OPINION STRATEGIES**

*Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates - FM3*

*Public Opinion Research & Strategy*

SANTA MONICA • OAKLAND • MADISON • MEXICO CITY

TO: Interested Parties

FROM: David Metz  
Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates

Lori Weigel  
Public Opinion Strategies

RE: Public Support for Frac Sand Mining in Minnesota

DATE: March 30, 2014

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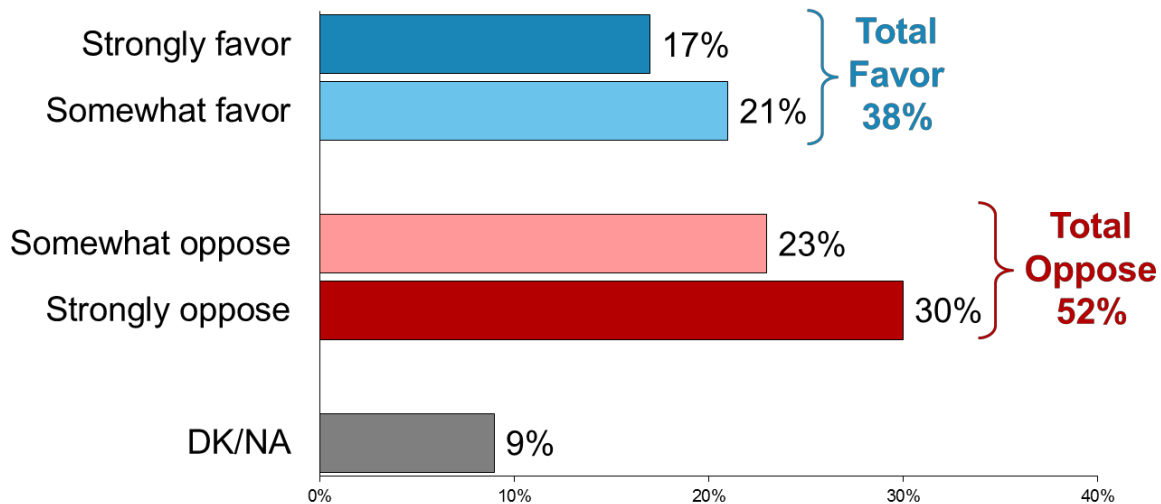
The bipartisan research team of Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin & Associates (D) and Public Opinion Strategies (R) recently completed a statewide survey of Minnesota voters to assess, among other issues, their views on frac sand mining in the state.<sup>1</sup> Overall, the survey results show **strong opposition to frac sand mining – both statewide and in southeastern Minnesota – and strong support for a two-year moratorium to assess the impacts of such mining.**

Among the key specific findings of the survey were the following:

- **A majority of voters statewide oppose increased frac sand mining.** As detailed on the following page in **Figure 1**, when given a brief description of the practice most voters express opposition to increased frac sand mining. Fully 52 percent are opposed, with only 38 percent in favor. And tellingly, the opponents of frac sand mining feel more strongly about the issue than do supporters – the “strong opponents” of increased frac sand mining outnumber the “strong supporters” by a margin of nearly two to one (30% to 17%). Opposition to frac sand mining is prevalent among many critical subsets of the electorate, including independent voters – who reject the practice by a margin of 50% to 38%.

**FIGURE 1**  
**Opposition to Frac Sand Mining in Minnesota**

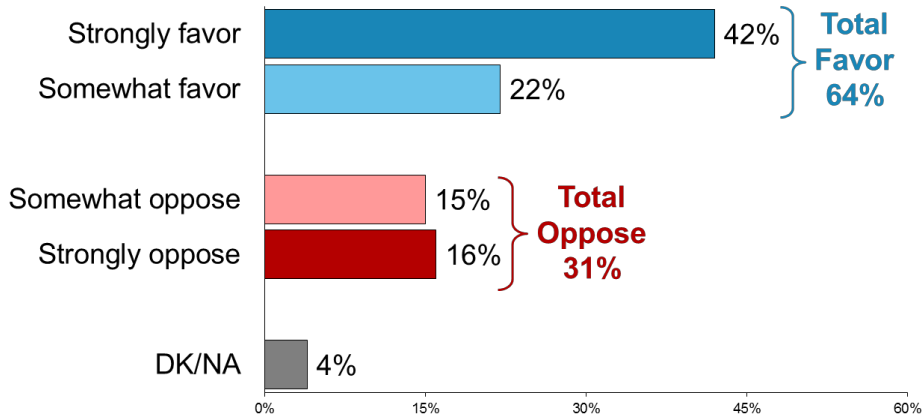
*Minnesota has deposits of high quality silica sand that is used in hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, to extract natural gas and oil. When the frac sand is forced into underground rock formations it creates cracks, releasing natural gas. There are numerous proposals for increased frac sand mining in Minnesota, which scrape or blast off bluff tops and top soil before the sand is dug. The sand is then chemically cleaned near the mine and shipped out of state. Does increased frac sand mining sound like something you would favor or oppose?*



- **Perhaps not surprisingly, given their reservations about frac sand mining, voters back the idea of a two-year moratorium on new mining to assess its impact on the environment.** **Figure 2** on the following page shows that an overwhelming majority of voters back the idea of a two-year suspension of new frac sand mining, with 64 percent in favor and less than half as many (31 percent) opposed. Backing for a moratorium is broad and cuts across most major segments of the Minnesota electorate, including:
  - 73% of Democrats, 64% of independents, and 50% of Republicans;
  - 65% of women and 64% of men;
  - 70% of voters with a college degree and 61% of voters without one; and
  - Majorities of voters in every region of the state.

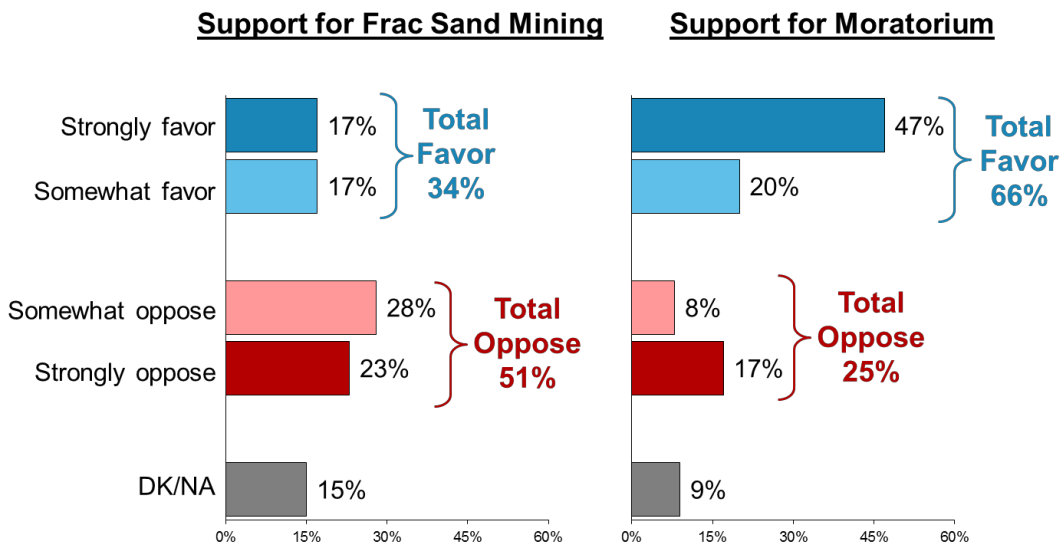
**FIGURE 2**  
**Support for a Two-Year Moratorium on Frac Sand Mining in Minnesota**

*Much of this high-quality sand is located in southeast Minnesota where the unique geology includes fractured limestone, which makes groundwater particularly vulnerable to contamination. Would you favor or oppose a two-year suspension of new frac sand mines in southeast Minnesota while the potential environmental impacts are more fully assessed and state regulations are developed?*



- **Voters in the southeastern Minnesota counties that are home to frac sand mining share the perspective of voters elsewhere in the state.** As detailed in Figure 3, only 34 percent of voters in the frac sand counties support increased mining, while 66 percent favor a two-year suspension. In both regards, voters in this region of the state are little different in their opinions than voters elsewhere.

**FIGURE 3**  
**Position on Frac Sand Mining and a Potential Moratorium, in Six Southeastern Minnesota Counties**



Taken together, these survey findings show that Minnesota voters harbor deep reservations about frac sand mining – and overwhelmingly favor taking more time to assess its environmental impacts before increased mining is allowed.

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<sup>i</sup> **Methodology:** From February 4-6, 2014, FM3 completed 667 telephone interviews (on landlines and cell phones) with voters Minnesota. The sample included 600 voters statewide and an oversample of 167 voters in six southeastern Minnesota counties: Fillmore Goodhue, Houston, Olmstead, Wabasha, and Winona. All data have been weighted to reflect the true geographic distribution of voters across the state. The margin of sampling error is +/-4.0% at the 95% confidence level for the statewide sample, and +/- 6.9% for the southeastern counties; margins of error for population subgroups within each sample will be higher. Due to rounding, not all totals will sum to 100%.