

TO: Interested Parties
FROM: Andrew Baumann, Global Strategy Group
DATE: June 29, 2018
RE: **NJ-03 Survey Findings: Environmental Messaging Puts Tom MacArthur in Significant Danger**

A new survey conducted by Global Strategy Group of likely 2018 voters in New Jersey's 3rd Congressional District shows Congressman Tom MacArthur in a tight race for his seat. Despite winning re-election in his district by 20 points in 2016, MacArthur is currently tied with Democratic challenger Andy Kim.

Facing an already tight race, MacArthur risks alienating undecided voters and moderates in New Jersey by continuing to support Trump's anti-environment policies. Plans to cut EPA funding, reduce clean air and water regulations, and open public lands to oil and gas drilling are opposed by sizable majorities of voters in this district.

Most important, after voters are presented with a short series of critiques of MacArthur's positions on a range of environmental issues (along with one message on healthcare or taxes), Kim catapults to a 16-point lead over MacArthur. These messages are effective across demographic groups and both move registered independents to Kim while also peeling away a significant number of Republicans from MacArthur.

KEY SURVEY FINDINGS:

MacArthur starts out in a weak position. This district prefers a generic Democrat by 4 points when compared to a Republican, despite MacArthur's win in 2016. After 2 terms in office, MacArthur himself is familiar to only 71% of the electorate, and more voters are unfavorable (38%) to the Congressman than are favorable (33%). MacArthur must also struggle with the significant unpopularity of Republicans in Congress (28% favorable to 53% unfavorable) and working with an unpopular President (43% favorable to 52% unfavorable).

Environmental groups and the EPA are popular, but anti-environmental actors like Scott Pruitt and the Koch Brothers are decidedly not. "Environmental groups" are viewed favorably by a 60% to 23% margin and the EPA has strongly positive ratings as well (63% favorable to 24% unfavorable). Meanwhile, EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt¹ is well underwater at 15% favorable to 40% unfavorable and the Koch Brothers are known by more than half the electorate and very unpopular, at 17% favorable vs. 39% unfavorable.

MacArthur's positions on environmental issues are deeply unpopular. Many of the policies proposed and/or enacted by anti-environment Republicans like MacArthur in Washington – led by efforts to open our public lands to oil and gas companies and cut funding for the EPA – are quite unpopular, even more than the highly unpopular Republican health care plan.

¹ Asked with the label "EPA Administrator"

Support for Trump Policies

	Support	Oppose	Net Support
The Republican plan to reduce clean air and water regulations	37	54	-17
The health care plan that Republicans tried to pass through Congress last year	34	53	-19
The Republican plan to allow oil and gas companies to drill in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska	30	67	-37
The Republican plan to allow oil and gas companies to drill in national public lands	26	70	-44
The Republican plan to reduce funding for the EPA by 30%	25	71	-46

Environmental and health concerns raise serious doubts about voting for Tom MacArthur. Several messages that critique MacArthur for his environmental record resonate strongly with voters – generating doubts with majorities of the electorate, including among more right-leaning non-college voters. These messages resonate almost as strongly as a critique against MacArthur for his vote on the healthcare bill, and there are clear opportunities to tie the health impacts of the incumbent’s anti-environmental actions to his vote on health care, including among independent voters in his district.

Doubts about Voting for MacArthur

	Total Doubts	Total Doubts among Independents
[HEALTH CARE] Tom MacArthur supported the Republican health care plan that, would have ended protections for pre-existing conditions, cut Medicare, and, according to AARP, imposed an age tax on older Americans, charging people age 50 to 64 premiums that are up to five times more than what younger consumers pay.	71	86
[POLLUTON AND HEALTH] Tom MacArthur wants to gut commonsense protections like the Clean Air and Water Acts and allow big corporations to spew more toxic pollution into our air and water. Doctors say that will lead to more asthma, heart and lung disease and even cancer - especially among children and seniors.	65	66
[POLLUTION AND HEALTH COSTS] First, Tom MacArthur supported a plan that sabotaged the Affordable Care Act and is already causing health care premiums to increase by up to 50% in some parts of the country. Now Tom MacArthur wants to gut common-sense limits on air and water pollution, which will lead to more disease and even higher health care costs.	62	66
[CENSORED SCIENCE] Tom MacArthur won’t hold polluters accountable. These companies put our health at risk with toxic pollution in our air and water. But MacArthur supported a bill that censors science and keeps Americans in the dark about the chemicals that companies dump into our air and water	75	77

Environmental messaging shifts the race significantly toward the Democratic candidate. After respondents hear a short series of messages critiquing MacArthur for his environmental positions (plus a critique on either the health care or tax bill), Kim’s original margin expands from a tie to a 16-point advantage.

Vote Shift After Messaging			
	Initial	Post-	
	Vote	Messaging	Net Shift
Andrew Kim	42	50	+8
Tom MacArthur	42	34	-8
<i>Difference</i>	-	+16	+16

MacArthur’s losses are large across all major demographic groups. The environmental messaging generates large gains for Kim across almost every major electoral bloc. After messaging, Kim’s margin improves by a net 15 points among registered independents and a net 20 points among registered Republicans. He makes major gains among both men and women, both non-college and college voters, and both older and younger parts of the electorate.

ABOUT THIS POLL

Global Strategy Group conducted a survey from November June 11-21, 2018 with 400 likely 2018 voters in New Jersey’s 3rd Congressional District. The results have a margin of error of +/-4.9% and care has been taken to ensure that the survey is weighted to reflect the makeup of the projected 2018 voter universe.