



MEMORANDUM

TO: INTERESTED PARTIES

FROM: GLEN BOLGER/JIM HOBART

RE: KEY FINDINGS – SURVEY OF REPUBLICANS AND INDEPENDENTS IN MINNESOTA'S 1ST, 2ND, AND 3RD CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICTS

DATE: MARCH 26, 2018

Methodology

Public Opinion Strategies conducted a telephone survey of Republican and Independent likely voters in Minnesota's 1st, 2nd, and 3rd congressional districts. The survey was completed with 500 likely voters, with interviews equally distributed across the three congressional districts. Forty-percent (40%) of interviews were conducted with cell-phone respondents. The survey was completed, March 21-24, 2018, and has a margin of error of $\pm 4.38\%$ in 95 out of 100 cases.

Key Findings

1. ***Republicans and Independents in these three key congressional districts oppose allowing Xcel Energy to make more than one billion dollars in improvements to their power plants, if it would mean weakening the power of state regulators.***

Voters were read the following question:

As you may know, Xcel Energy is encouraging the state legislature to pass a bill that would allow Xcel Energy to make more than one billion dollars in improvements to their power plants. Xcel's bill would also weaken the power of state regulators to control for cost and quality. Would you favor or oppose this bill?.

Thirty-eight percent (38%) of GOPers and Independents in these districts favor this bill, while 50% are opposed. Twice as many voters are strongly opposed to the bill (20%) as are strongly in favor (8%).

Women are especially opposed, with 31% saying they are in favor, compared to 54% who are opposed.

2. ***Voters express concern over this bill upon learning that it would limit the oversight of Xcel Energy's power plants in the state.***

Respondents were given the below information:

Because it is the largest utility company in the state, Xcel Energy is overseen by a government agency charged with overseeing quality and cost controls of utilities. Xcel Energy's bill would significantly limit this oversight for some of the company's power plants in the state.

They were then asked how concerning limiting the oversight was to them. Fully 71% of Republicans and Independents in these congressional districts say this is concerning to them, with 20% saying it is very concerning.

Limiting the oversight is especially concerning to older men, always a key Republican constituency.

The Bottom Line

Minnesota Republicans and Independents in three key congressional districts are skeptical of the bill Xcel Energy currently has in front of the state legislature. Fully 50% are initially opposed to the bill, and concern grows once voters have more information.

As a result, support for this bill has the potential to be politically problematic.