



DATE: October 17, 2017
TO: Interested Parties
FROM: Southern Environmental Law Center and Alabama Rivers Alliance
RE: Key Findings from a Recent Survey of Alabama Voters

A recent survey conducted by Public Opinion Strategies shows that **the majority of voters in Alabama are concerned about threats to state waters, and offer strong support for a comprehensive state water plan.** Alabama is the only state among its neighbors that does not have a comprehensive water management plan.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The survey found that **four-in-five voters support the state legislature creating a comprehensive water plan for the State of Alabama in order to improve the water supply for drinking, irrigating crops, recreation and wildlife.** Voters view rivers and streams as state treasures that are critical to the Alabama economy. They recognize that these waterways are a major source of drinking water, and express concern about overall water quality in Alabama. Overall, there is a consensus among Alabama voters that state and local government officials must have a plan to protect water in the state, especially during periods of drought and other times of crisis.

METHODOLOGY

From July 9-12, 2017, Public Opinion Strategies conducted a survey of 598 registered voters throughout Alabama. Additional interviews were applied in less populous regions of the state to increase confidence in the data in both headwaters and downstream regions. The overall statewide survey has a margin of error of +4.9%.

The poll was commissioned by the Alabama Rivers Alliance and the Southern Environmental Law Center. Both the Alabama Rivers Alliance and the Southern Environmental Law Center have long advocated for developing a water plan in order to address Alabama's water needs, while improving and safeguarding the health of its water resources.

KEY FINDINGS

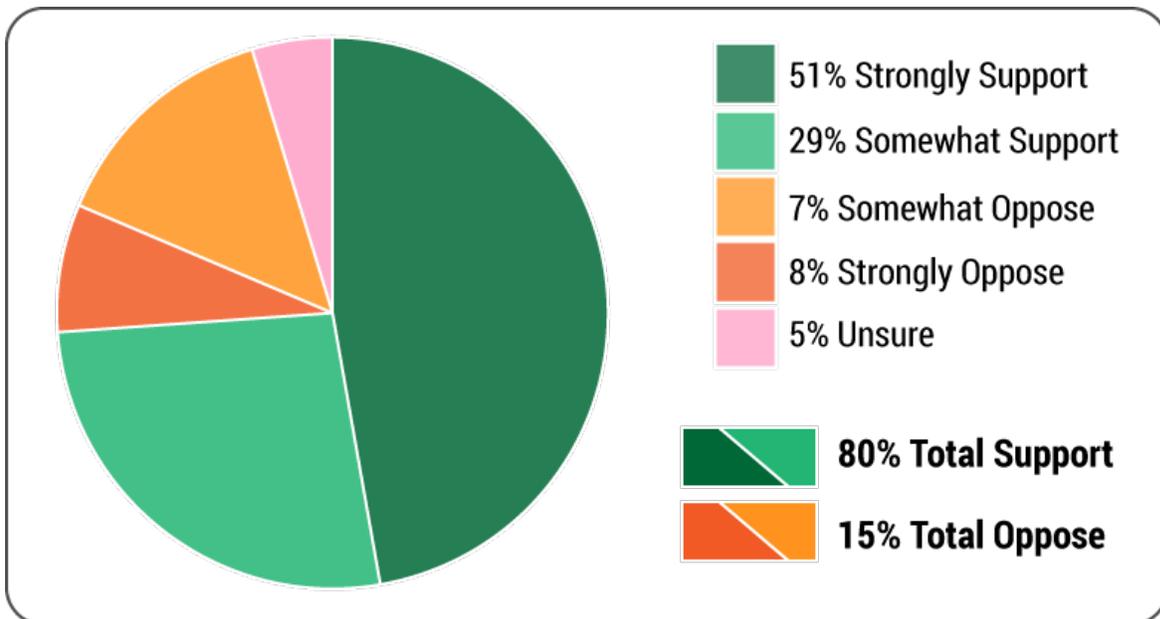
- A majority of voters view rivers and streams as critical to the Alabama economy, essential parts of the Alabama way of life, and a major source of drinking water.

Voter Perceptions of Rivers & Streams in Alabama % Describe Well/Very Well

| | |
|--|-----|
| Critical to the Alabama economy | 83% |
| State treasures that should be protected | 83% |
| Key attractions for tourism and recreation | 81% |
| A major source of drinking water | 77% |

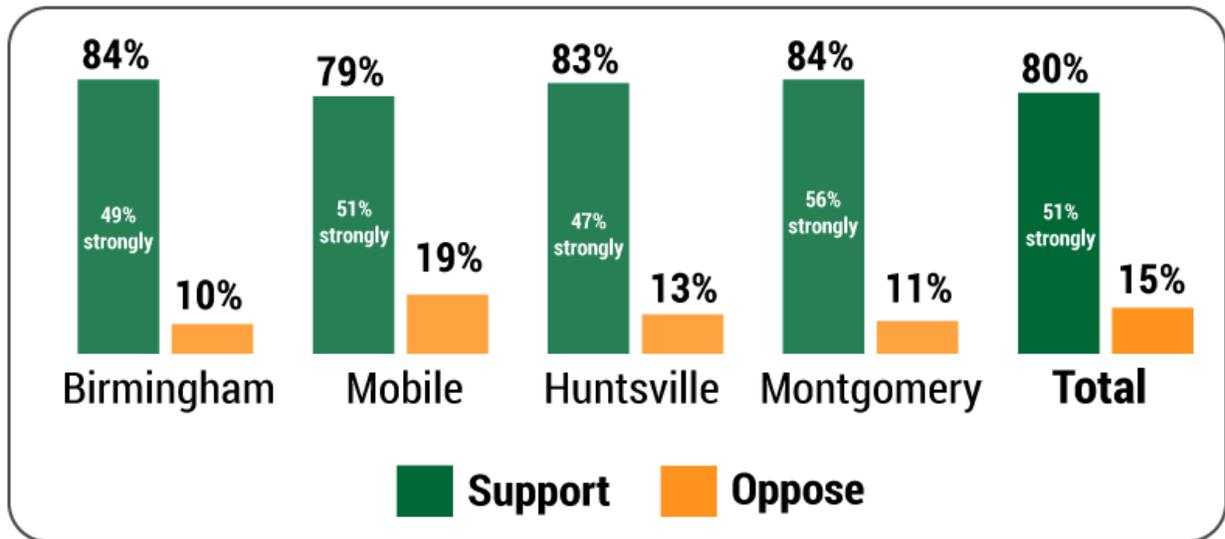
- Four-in-five voters support creating a comprehensive state water plan. [Figure 1]

[Figure 1 – Statewide Support for a Comprehensive Plan]

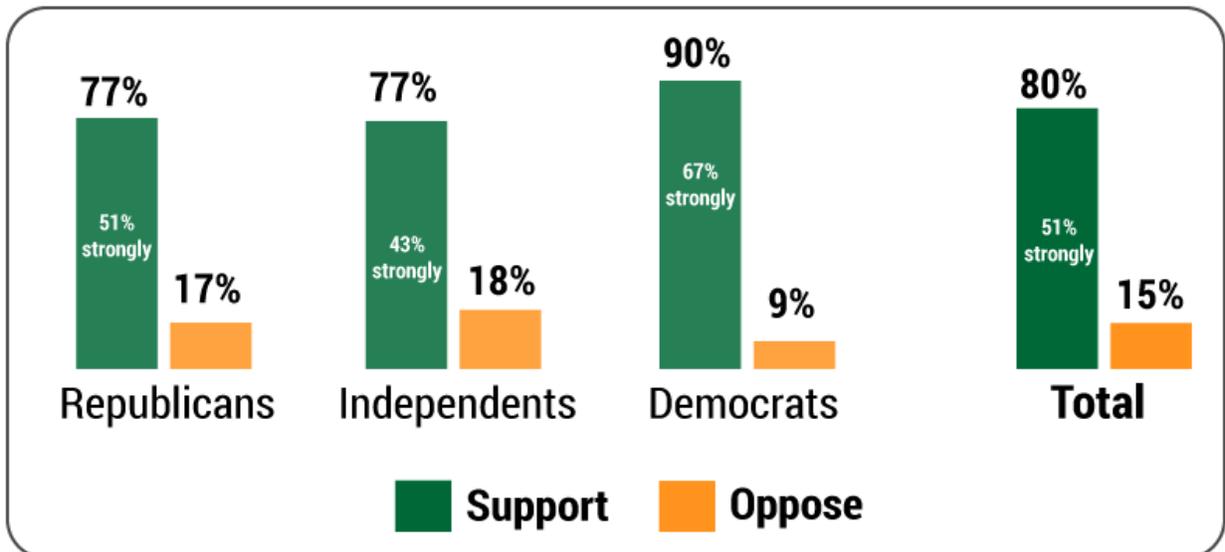


- A water plan has overwhelming support throughout the state [Figure 2] and across party lines [Figure 3].

[Figure 2 – Support by Media Market]



[Figure 3 – Support by Party]



- **Voters support a number of key goals of a comprehensive state water plan.** The findings of the survey show that voters show overwhelming support for several potential outcomes of a comprehensive state water plan:
 - Ensure that adequate local water saving measures are established during times of drought (83% support)
 - Provide funding for low cost loans or other programs to help modernize irrigation used for farms so they can use Alabama's water more efficiently (81% support)
 - Put in place conservation efforts and limit the removal of water by upstream users during water shortages, so that rivers and streams do not dry up (80% support)
 - Create a permit for major water users, like utilities, agriculture, manufacturer and others, that is reviewed annually so that the Alabama Department of Environmental Management can better measure water use (71% support)

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

Cindy Lowry, Executive Director of the Alabama Rivers Alliance (205-322-6395)

Sarah Stokes, Staff Attorney at the Southern Environmental Law Center at (205-745-3060)

About Alabama Rivers Alliance:

Alabama Rivers Alliance is a statewide network of groups working to protect and restore all of Alabama's water resources through building partnerships, empowering citizens, and advocating for sound water policy and its enforcement. For more information, please visit www.AlabamaRivers.org.

About Southern Environmental Law Center:

The Southern Environmental Law Center is celebrating its 30th anniversary this year. With nine offices across the region (Charlottesville, VA; Chapel Hill, NC; Atlanta, GA; Charleston, SC; Washington, DC; Birmingham, AL; Nashville, TN; Asheville, NC; and Richmond, VA), SELC is widely recognized as the Southeast's foremost environmental organization and regional leader. SELC works on a full range of environmental issues to protect the South's natural resources and the health and well-being of all the people in our region.

www.SouthernEnvironment.org