

TO: Interested Parties
FROM: Hart Research Associates
DATE: April 11, 2023
RE: Voter Support in Michigan for the EV Battery Manufacturing Plant

Hart Research Associates recently conducted a survey of Michigan voters to examine reactions to the recent announcement by the Ford Motor Company that it will build a new electric vehicle battery manufacturing plant in Marshall, Michigan. The survey, conducted March 30 through April 3, was designed specifically as a test of how voters respond when a plant that is part of the clean energy economy utilizes technology from China. In addition to interviewing a representative statewide sample of 600 voters, we conducted 100 additional interviews with voters in the counties surrounding Marshall to allow us to separately analyze the responses from the region most directly impacted by the plant.

The bottom line from our survey is that Michigan voters support the decision to build the EV battery manufacturing plant in Michigan, and they approve of Governor Whitmer's leadership in making sure that the plant would be built in her state, even after being informed of the reasons why Glenn Youngkin blocked the plant from being built in Virginia.

1. When told that the Ford Motor Company will invest \$3.5 billion dollars to build an electric vehicle battery manufacturing plant in Marshall, Michigan, which will create 2,500 jobs in the state, 61% of voters have a favorable reaction to the plant being built in Michigan, 19% are neutral, and 18% are unfavorable. Among voters who say they had already heard about the announcement (54% of all voters), 62% are favorable and 18% are unfavorable. The unfavorable responses come disproportionately from Republican voters, but Republicans are more favorable than unfavorable by 42% to 31%.
2. When told that the plant will use technology licensed from a company in China and then asked about their priorities in this situation, 53% of voters say it is more important to create good-paying jobs in Michigan and 44% say it is more important to prevent the involvement of China in a Michigan manufacturing plant. This response is partisan in nature: Democratic voters prioritize job creation by 73% to 23% while Republican voters prioritize preventing China's involvement by 65% to 33%. Independents put the priority on creating jobs by a margin of 54% to 41%.
3. By 49% to 32%, voters continue to be more favorable than unfavorable toward the plant even after being told in detail of Glenn Youngkin's criticism of China's involvement, with 19% saying they are neutral. Here is what voters heard about Governor Youngkin's position and Governor Whitmer's response:

Glenn Youngkin, the Republican governor of Virginia, blocked this Ford plant from being built in his state. Youngkin said the Chinese company that is providing the technology for the plant is essentially a subsidiary of the Chinese Communist Party, and he said he did

not want any Virginia tax dollars used to benefit China. Youngkin also said that China's involvement in the project raises national security concerns and threatens our economic security and privacy. Gretchen Whitmer said that Glenn Youngkin made, quote, 'a political determination,' unquote, in blocking the plant. Governor Whitmer stressed that Ford is an American company and a Michigan company, and she emphasized the important economic benefits of the plant for Michigan.

After hearing these two positions, including Youngkin's invocation of the Chinese Communist Party and threats to national security, economic security, and privacy, support for the plant is still more prevalent among Democratic voters (71% favorable, 10% unfavorable) than opposition is among Republican voters (56% unfavorable, 27% favorable). Independent voters are more favorable toward building the plant in Michigan by a two-to-one margin (51% favorable, 26% unfavorable), notwithstanding Youngkin's criticism. In the region where the plant will be located, voters are favorable toward the plant by 46% to 32%.

4. We tested the impact of six additional messages in support of the plant, and the two with the strongest impact speak to the economic impacts the plant will have:
 - *The jobs that will be created will pay between \$20 and \$50 an hour, and most of those jobs will not require a four-year college degree. These new jobs will help thousands of Michigan workers get ahead and support their families. (59% very or fairly convincing)*
 - *The plant will create 2,500 new good-paying jobs in a part of Michigan where there is a real need to expand job opportunities. (55% very or fairly convincing)*

Many swing voters also are persuaded by the need to bring the electric vehicle manufacturing supply chain home to the United States instead of letting China control battery manufacturing.

5. These messages are impactful. They move the final verdict on the plant back to 58% favorable, with just 24% unfavorable. Independents are favorable by 59% to 19%.

The final verdict on Governor Whitmer's leadership in making sure the plant would be built in Michigan also is overwhelmingly positive: 65% say they approve of her leadership role in this regard, while only 28% disapprove. Two-thirds of independents approve, as do two-fifths of Republicans.

The takeaway from this case study is clear: If you are an elected official, bringing thousands of good-paying clean energy jobs to your state is a winner, even when opponents raise the specter of China's involvement.