



Memphis City Council Members
Shelby County Commissioners
Mayor Jim Strickland
Shelby County Mayor Lee Harris
MLGW President & CEO J.T. Young

February 24, 2020

Honorable Council Members, Commissioners, Mayors, and President Young:

A majority of Memphis residents would like to see Memphis, Light, Gas, and Water leave TVA for cheaper, greener power according to a new poll by the nationally renowned polling firm Public Policy Polling, commissioned by Friends of the Earth. The research found that Memphis voters are more likely to support elected officials who support leaving TVA for a lower-cost, greener power option.

Our research found Memphis residents supported leaving TVA for a lower-cost power provider at a ratio of more than two-to-one, 57 percent supported leaving TVA, and only 20 percent opposed leaving TVA. Currently, 60 percent of Memphians oppose a rate hike by MLGW. If Memphis were to leave the TVA, 75 percent of Memphians responded they "would prefer a lower-cost, cleaner and greener power option."

Although 63 percent of respondents said they would be less likely to vote for a city council member who voted to allow MLGW to increase its rates, 59 percent said they would be more likely to vote for a council member who supported leaving TVA for a greener and cleaner power source while 64 percent said they would be more likely to support a council member who voted to leave TVA for a lower-cost power source.

Similar to a poll reported in January, produced by Chism Strategies and paid for by a separate organization, our results found broad support among Memphis residents for Memphis Light, Gas and Water to leave the Tennessee Valley Authority if it means avoiding a higher utility bill.

As reported in *The Commercial Appeal* in January, the Chism poll executive summary said, "When presented with three options — staying with the TVA and accepting a rate hike, buying power from a lower cost provider, or maintaining the status quo — 61% of respondents say they would prefer to buy power from a lower cost provider."

When asked a similar question in our poll (switching from TVA to a lower cost power provider or increasing rates to pay for repairs and upgrades), 63 percent of Memphians supported leaving TVA.

For more details, please see the attached memo from our pollster.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michelle Chan", with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Michelle Chan
Vice President of Programs
Friends of the Earth



From: Katherine Patterson, Public Policy Polling

To: Interested Parties

Subject: Broad Support for City of Memphis Leaving TVA for Lower Cost Alternative Power Provider

Date: February 13, 2020

A new Public Policy Polling survey finds consistent support among Memphis voters for leaving the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) for a lower cost energy provider. A majority (57%) support the idea of the City of Memphis leaving the TVA and buying power from a lower cost provider, with 20% opposed.

Memphis Light, Gas and Water has asked the City Council for an increase in how much customers can be billed in order to cover repairs and renovation costs, but a majority (60%) of voters oppose a rate increase and only 30% support it.

When given options for the future of Memphis Light, Gas and Water (MLGW), with or without raising rates, voters prefer leaving the TVA to lower utility costs.

- **63% prefer leaving the TVA over raising MLGW rates for customers in order to make needed major repairs.** Just 12% of voters prefer raising utility rates for customers over leaving the TVA.
- **67% prefer for the City of Memphis to leave the TVA for a lower-cost power provider over making a long-term contract agreement with the TVA,** while only 14% of voters prefer taking the agreement.

If the City of Memphis should leave the TVA, a large majority of voters (75%) prefer a lower cost, cleaner, and greener alternative power provider, while just 10% prefer relying primarily on coal and natural gas. Voters across all parties prefer switching to a greener alternative, including 80% of Democrats, 75% of independents, and 56% of Republicans.



Memphis voters are also less likely to vote for City Council members who support utility rate increases.

- **63% of Memphis voters are less likely to support City Council members who vote for rate increases**, including 65% of independents and 62% of Republicans and Democrats.
- **64% are more likely to vote for a City Council member who supports leaving the TVA for a lower-cost provider to reduce customers' monthly utility bills**, including 66% of Democrats, 61% of Republicans, and 60% of independents.
- **59% of voters are more likely to vote for a City Council member who supports leaving the TVA for a greener and cleaner power source**, including a majority of independents (65%) and Democrats (62%), and a plurality of Republicans—41% say they are more likely to vote for such a City Council member, and just 29% are less likely.

Public Policy Polling (PPP) surveyed 743 Memphis voters from February 5-6, 2020. The margin of error is +/- 3.6%. 70% of interviews for the survey were conducted by telephone and 30% by text message.

PPP is a public opinion polling firm that provides a highly accurate alternative to expensive traditional telephone surveys. For nearly 20 years, PPP has been an industry leader in conducting and analyzing polling.