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## Press Release

### ***Healthy People – Healthy Planet Poll: Residents of the Great Lakes State Support Protections for Streams and Wetlands***

*A vast majority of Michigan residents support protections for streams and wetlands regardless of their political affiliations*

East Lansing, MI – Results from the Healthy People – Healthy Planet (HP2) Poll, found that 78% of Great Lake States residents “support” or “strongly support” protections for streams and wetlands under the Clean Water Act; protections that have been slated for removal under the Trump administration. Although the support for these protections varies some by political affiliation, the data shows support is high in all groups. Among self-identified Democrats and Independents who consider themselves closer to the Democratic Party, 86% support or strongly support these protections. On the other side of the spectrum, 71% of self-identified Republicans and Independents who consider themselves closer to the Republican Party also support or strongly support protections for streams and wetlands in the Great Lakes watershed.

“The results from this new poll clearly show that our streams and wetlands are important to Great Lakes residents across all backgrounds,” said study lead Dr. Dan Bergan, Associate Professor in Michigan State University’s (MSU) Department of Communication. “This is not surprising considering people’s love for the Great Lakes and is worth considering as policy decisions are made about the watershed.”

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The study also showed a relationship between residents' sense of ownership for the Great Lakes and their support for the protections. Support for water protections is higher among those who feel more connected to one of the Great Lakes. Among those who consider one of the Great Lakes their "own", 82% support or strongly support streams and wetland protections, versus 67% support among those are not closely connected to one of the Great Lakes.

Another factor that was shown to sway support for protections was whether or not participants were informed about expert or public opinion concerning these protections. Compared to a control condition that did not provide respondents with information, being informed of expert consensus for the protections increased reported support as did information about resident support. A 2017 study from the League of Conservation Voters indicated both experts and residents supported Clean Water Act Protections.

"Being informed about what experts and people in the community believe about an issue does not matter when it comes to forming our own opinion," said Dr. Maria Lapinski, Director of the Health and Risk Communication Center at MSU, "In this case, it is evident that convincing people to support these protections might rely on promoting visibility of expert or public opinion.

The HP2 is a public service of the Health and Risk Communication Center (HRCC) at MSU, an interdisciplinary center with over 50 faculty affiliates. The HRCC supports and facilitates research on health, risk, environment, and science communication and is home to the Health and Risk Communication MA program and the Iris Scholars Program which translates research findings into practice. For more information on the HRCC or the HP2 study, including an executive summary and data tables, visit <http://hrcc.cas.msu.edu/>.

The survey was led by Dr. Bergan and Dr. Lapinski as well as Professor Shawn Turner, also an HRCC affiliate. It included a quota sample of residents from Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin. It was paid for by the HRCC and the College of Communication Arts and Sciences.