



**TO:** Interested Parties  
**FROM:** Lori Weigel & Kathryn Hahne / New Bridge Strategy  
**DATE:** May 17, 2022  
**RE:** North Carolina Voters Support Direct Vehicle Sales

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New Bridge Strategy recently completed a survey of voters statewide in North Carolina to test support for drivers to be able to purchase vehicles straight from the manufacturer.<sup>1</sup> The survey found that North Carolina voters overwhelmingly support allowing consumers to purchase new vehicles from the manufacturer. Support cuts across party lines, regions of the state and all demographic sub-groups. Support only increases once they hear that this will initially and primarily affect EV manufacturers. North Carolina voters perceive a range of positive outcomes from this policy change – from their ease of purchasing vehicles to the overall state economy.

The specific key findings include:

- **More than four-in-five North Carolina voters support the ability to purchase a vehicle straight from the manufacturer.** Respondents were presented with the following explanation and description: “Actually, under North Carolina law, consumers cannot buy a new vehicle straight from a manufacturer - whether that is a personal car or a bus purchased by a school district or city. Instead, consumers have to buy a new vehicle through a franchised auto dealership, which is a separate, third-party company. Vehicle manufacturers are not allowed to own retail locations that offer vehicle sales and maintenance service. Would you support or oppose allowing North Carolina drivers to purchase a vehicle straight from the manufacturer, and to receive routine service and repairs on a vehicle from the manufacturer, without having to go through a dealership?”

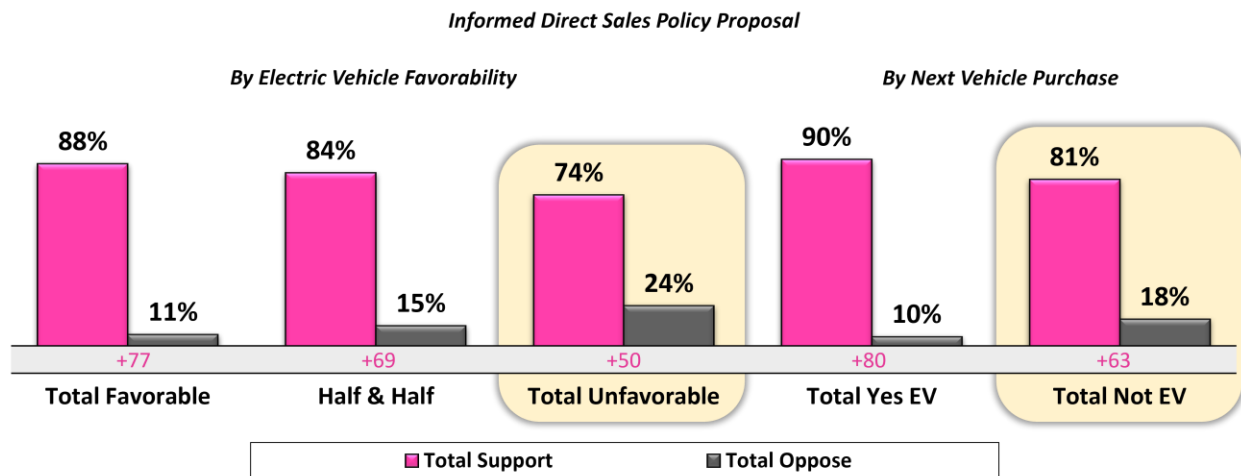
Fully 83 percent support the proposal, with nearly half (48 percent) strongly supporting it. Support is strong throughout the state, including:

- 80% of Republicans, 91% of Independents, and 78% of Democrats
- 87% of men and 80% of women;
- 83% of voters under age 45, 90% of voters age 45-64, and 75% of voters ages 65 and over;
- 83% in the Raleigh-Durham media market, 82% in the Charlotte market, 83% in the Wilmington and Greenville markets, 85% in the Greensboro/Winston-Salem market, and 89% in the rest of the state; and,

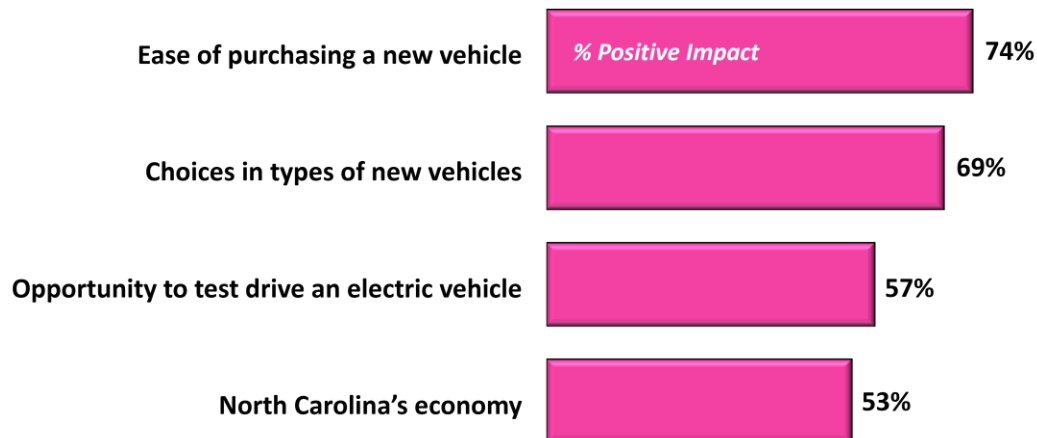
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<sup>1</sup> **Methodology:** From April 21-27, 2022, New Bridge Strategy completed 600 interviews among voters statewide in North Carolina. The interviews were conducted online and via telephone. The sample was drawn proportionally throughout the state and is demographically and politically representative of the electorate. The margin of sampling error for the study is +/-4.0% at the 95% confidence level; margins of error for population subgroups within the sample will be higher. Due to rounding, not all totals will sum to 100%.

- 81% of urban residents, 86% of suburbanites, 86% of small-town residents, and 74% of rural voters.
- **After hearing more details about the fact that the current policy primarily affects electric vehicles at this time, voters continue to strongly support the proposal.** Respondents read or heard the following additional information about the impact on EV manufacturers and were asked again if they support or oppose direct sales: “Today, 80% of electric vehicles in the U.S. are purchased directly from the manufacturer. Tesla started this way of selling cars in North Carolina by obtaining a special exception to the dealership law. There are dozens of other electric vehicle manufacturers, but they are prohibited by state law from opening a showroom in our state and selling their vehicles directly to consumers.” Support increases slightly after hearing that this policy currently limits access to EV only manufacturers, with 85% of North Carolina voters saying they support the proposal and 55% strongly supporting it.
- **Support for direct sales is overwhelming even among voters who hold negative views of electric vehicles or who say they would not consider an EV for their next car purchase.** The graph below shows voters’ support for allowing direct sales after respondents heard the additional information regarding its impact on electric vehicle access, based on their views of electric vehicles and by whether they would consider an electric vehicle for their next purchase. Even those who are not considering an EV for their next vehicle, still support allowing direct sales.



- **Voters agree that manufacturer-direct purchasing has a host of benefits, in particular they see it as positively impacting ease of purchasing and choice of vehicles. Majorities also believe it will positively impact the state economy too.** Younger men, non-white men, and post-graduates are the most likely to believe the economy will be impacted positively. The graph below details how voters overall see the potential impacts of this proposal.



*In conclusion, an overwhelming majority of voters in North Carolina support allowing consumers to purchase new vehicles from the manufacturer. This support cuts across all major sub-groups in the state and increases when voters learn the change would most impact electric vehicle manufacturers. Voters feel the change will have positive impacts in the state ranging from the ease of purchasing vehicles to the overall state economy.*