

MEMORANDUM

TO: NextGen Climate Action
FROM: Geoff Garin and Mark Bunge
DATE: September 22, 2014
RE: Findings from Recent Polling in the Florida Governor's Race

Garin-Hart-Yang recently completed a survey among 1,062 likely general election voters in Florida, including a statewide cross section of 602 likely voters, plus oversamples in the Tampa, West Palm Beach, and Ft. Myers media markets. The oversamples were weighted down to reflect their proper proportion of the electorate. Interviewing was conducted by telephone from September 10 to 14, 2014, including both cell and landline interviews. The survey has an overall margin of error of ± 3.6 percentage points.

- 1. Despite the fact that Rick Scott has outspent Charlie Crist dramatically, Governor Scott remains unpopular among Florida voters, and currently trails Charlie Crist by three points.** Statewide, Governor Scott's personal and professional ratings are "upside-down," with favorability of just 36% positive compared with 44% negative, and more disapproving (49%) than approving (44%) of the job he is doing as governor. Not surprisingly, only 31% say he deserves to be reelected, and he currently trails Charlie Crist by 46% to 43% in the head-to-head matchup.
- 2. Governor Scott's poor environmental record and his pattern of looking out for corporate campaign donors (including Big Sugar) at the expense of average Floridians is a major liability, and NextGen's efforts to educate voters on these issues are paying clear dividends.**
 - Since our benchmark survey in early July, Rick Scott's standing has eroded significantly in all three media markets where NextGen has been running ads. Scott's personal negatives increased 11 points in Ft. Myers (from 30% to 41%), and four points in Tampa (from 42% to 46%) and West Palm Beach (from 49% to 53%). His net job approval rating dropped 11 points in West Palm Beach (-6 to -17), six points in Tampa (from +1 to -5), and five points in Ft. Myers (from +27 to +22).
 - As a result, the gubernatorial trial heat has also shifted toward Crist in all three markets. Since early July, Crist has taken over the lead in Tampa, going from a three-point deficit to a two-point lead; he has expanded his lead from three points to 12 points in West Palm Beach; and he has reduced Scott's lead in the Republican stronghold of Ft. Myers from 28 points to just 19 points.

- The ad highlighting Rick Scott's ties to Big Sugar has broken through, and voters say his connections to and bailout of the industry raise serious doubts about him. Fully 64% of voters in the West Palm Beach and Ft. Myers media markets recall hearing about Rick Scott's campaign contributions from Big Sugar and the use of taxpayer money to clean up water pollution caused by the sugar industry, including majorities of Democrats, Republicans, and independent voters. Moreover, 74% of voters in West Palm Beach who have heard about the issue say it gives them concerns about supporting Rick Scott (including 63% who say it gives them MAJOR concerns), as do 66% of voters in the Ft. Myers media market (42% major concerns), which is particularly impressive given the two-to-one Republican registration advantage in Ft. Myers.
- In Tampa, voters have heard the message about Governor Scott's support by and from Duke Energy. More than two-thirds of voters (69%) in the Tampa media market have heard about Governor Scott allowing Duke Energy to charge consumers for closed or inoperable power plants while taking large campaign contributions from Duke. Again, large majorities of Democrats, Republicans, and independents have all heard about the issue, and two-thirds of those who have heard about it say it gives them concerns about supporting Rick Scott, including 51% who say it gives them major concerns about him.