Executive Summary:

The North Fork Valley Energy Survey conducted in 2020 is the first comprehensive survey conducted in Delta County that focused on the economic, social, and environmental impacts of energy development. With 325 respondents, 3.25% of the North Fork Valley population and 4.4% of eligible voters, the response rate far exceeded the Delta County response rate on the Master Plan and the Land Use Code Revision of less than 1%.

Survey topics included the following: (a) attitudes towards fossil fuel extraction and renewable energy, including the role of the government; (b) climate and action; (c) economic and social outlooks of the North Fork Valley (NFV); and (d) role of the community and elected public officials. Responses consistently reflected priority concern for the health of the community, the environment, and expectation of responsibility by a County to support a transition to a renewable energy economy and climate-conscious future.

When asked about new energy jobs, 91% of respondents indicated they want renewable energy jobs to stabilize climate and positively impact water quantity and quality, and air quality, compared with 4% wanting fossil fuel energy industry jobs, even if the impact of such fossil fuel energy industry jobs may degrade the environment, water quantity and quality, and air quality.

With regards to extractive industry activity, 93% of participants responded that they do not support new oil and gas developments in the NFV. Ninety-five percent of participants do not believe that new developments are necessary for increasing county-wide revenue or creating new jobs. More than 60% of participants believe that the oil and gas industry negatively affects aspects of NFV lifestyle, including the arts, agriculture, transition to a clean energy economy, tourism, property values, public health and environmental quality. When asked about climate action, 92% of participants expressed support for the establishment of a Delta County climate action plan.

When asked what respondents were most hopeful about regarding the future of the NFV, only two respondents mentioned energy extraction. All other respondents emphasized regional qualities related to sustainability, agriculture, healthy lifestyles, and innovative business opportunities. Ninety-two percent of respondents expressed that they do not trust that the current elected officials in Delta County are working to maintain a healthy lifestyle and environment for the community. Further, 96% of participants believe that the community needs more representation in all county decisions pertaining to energy development.

HIGHLIGHTS OF FINDINGS:

91%
Want renewable energy jobs

4%
Want fossil fuel energy industry jobs

93%
Do not support new oil and gas developments in the NFV.

95%
Do not believe that coal and natural gas extraction are necessary for economic development and jobs

60%+
Participants believe that the oil and gas industry negatively affects the community

92%
Support the establishment of a Delta County climate action plan
The results of this survey serve as a strong refutation of the county’s consistent staunch support for new oil and gas drilling in the region. A clear message has been given by a clear majority of survey respondents that the future for economic development in the region depends on industries that represent healthy, sustainable practices, and not those that contribute to air and water pollution. Accordingly, the report recommends that the County government should conduct comprehensive economic studies that consider the impacts by and to each of: a) established industries, b) emerging industries that are relatively younger and presently experiencing growth in the county, and c) those other industries that may continue to supplement the economy on a sustainable, lasting basis, including and particularly, while the county considers further expansion of fossil fuel development.

The following report delves into details of the survey methodology, findings, and offers recommendations for how elected officials and community leaders should incorporate the information into their decision making.

**HIGHLIGHTS OF FINDINGS:**

- **99%** Said the future of the North Fork Valley is in non-extractive industries
- **92%** Do not trust Delta County to protect public health, safety and welfare
- **96%** Believe the community is not represented in energy development decisions