**Key Informant (Bellwethers) Interview Question Set**

**Purpose.** Bellwethers are people whose positions require that they are politically informed and track a broad range of policy issues. These interviews should provide an independent view of where [organization’s] issues are on the policy agenda, whether there is political will to move ahead with these issues, and whether messaging is getting through. This set of interviews can be considered a baseline, and change can be tracked over time by repeating the interviews annually.

Intro Script for Interviewers:

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. My name is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and I work with [organization], and I am calling you on behalf of the [organization]. This conversation should last about 20 minutes.

***Answers to Frequently Asked Questions***

* **Q: Who nominated me?**
* A: We asked a few people who are familiar with policies and practices related to [organization/issue/etc.] to nominate individuals to consider in our interview sample. We selected you as somebody we had a particular interest in interviewing given your role as [legislator, editorial page editor, policy consultant].
* **Q: Are you talking with anyone else?**
* A: We are talking with others who, like yourself, are familiar with policies and practices related to [issue].
* **Can I see the results of your interviews?**
* A: TBD.
* **Q: With whom will this information be shared?**
* A: Interview results will be shared with [x].
* **Q: Who is funding your work?**
* A: TBD.
* **Q: Who can I contact to get more information?**
* A: TBD.

**INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

1. My first question asks you to think broadly about the current public policy environment in [state]. What do you think will be the top three policy areas that state legislators will address in the [x] session?
2. If [issue] was not listed: Where do you see [issue] on the state’s policy agenda? Why? How supportive would you say that state-level decision-makers are of focusing on [issue] in the [x] session? Would you say they are *very supportive, somewhat supportive, not very supportive, or not at all supportive*?

**Now I would like to ask you a series of questions relating to how supportive policymakers and voters might be of various [issue] efforts.**

1. Now I’m going to ask about your perceptions of [state] policymakers’ and [state] voters’ support for enacting state-level changes in [issue area] in the next 1-3 years? I am going to read a list of policies, and for each one, I will ask you to rate first policymakers, and then voters, on whether they are: *very supportive, somewhat supportive, not very supportive, or not at all supportive*? (Probe to explore reason for answer choice)
2. [list of policy issues of interest]
3. Are there other changes in [issue] policy, including changes relating to funding, that you feel are of high interest to policymakers? If so, what are they?
4. What individuals or organizations in [state] do you see as the **key voices in [issue area]** issues?
5. Probe for: Who do you see as the most credible voices in this discussion?
6. Using the categories *often, sometimes, rarely or never*, in general, how often is there talk about [issue area]:
   1. In the media?
   2. Among public officials or other influential people in your community?
   3. Among your colleagues?
7. Are you aware of any events or other activities currently taking place in your community in support of these types of [issue] changes? IF YES, please describe.
8. Are you familiar with [organization]? If yes, probe are they aware of any research data shared through [organization]?
9. Thank you for your time and input. Those are all the questions I have. Is there anything you’d like to add to help me understand your thoughts about policies relating to [issue/state]?