



KEY FINDINGS

THE 2012 SURVEY OF THE ATTITUDES OF VOTERS IN SIX WESTERN STATES



CONDUCTED BY: LORI WEIGEL / PUBLIC OPINION STRATEGIES DAVE METZ / FAIRBANK, MASLIN, MAULLIN, METZ
& ASSOCIATES

JANUARY 2012



METHODOLOGY

- ❖ 2,400 telephone (cell and landline) interviews with 400 registered voters in each of 6 states: Arizona, Colorado, Montana, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming.
- ❖ Interviews conducted January 2-7, 2012, in Spanish and English.
- ❖ The margin of overall sampling error is $\pm 2.08\%$ at the 95% confidence interval for the total sample; and $\pm 4.9\%$ for each state.
- ❖ The total numbers have been statistically weighted to reflect the true geographic distribution of voters throughout the region. Interviews within each state were distributed proportionally by region and each sample is demographically representative of their electorate.
- ❖ Bi-partisan research team of Public Opinion Strategies and Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates.



More Westerners identify as a “conservationist” than with other social movements.



Conservationist

65%



Tea Party Supporter

29%



Occupy Wall Street Supporter

25%

The label “conservationist” bridges many diverse groups – irrespective of political views or other factors.



Tea Party Supporter

Not Tea Party Supporter

Identify as Conservationist

67%

63%



Active Military

Veteran Household

62%

66%



Fox News

Broadcast

CNN or MSNBC

John Stewart/Colbert

59%

66%

71%

67%



Jobs and Conservation

 THE COLORADO COLLEGE
STATE OF THE ROCKIES PROJECT
Conservation in the West Poll

Voters continue to view a good economy and environmental protections as not in conflict.

"I'm going to read you a pair of statements, and please tell me which one comes closest to your own views, even if neither of the statements matches your views exactly."

We can protect land and water and have a strong economy with good jobs at the same time, without having to choose one over the other.

<u>2009</u>	<u>2012</u>
74%	78%

Sometimes protections for land and water and a strong economy are in conflict and we must choose one over the other.

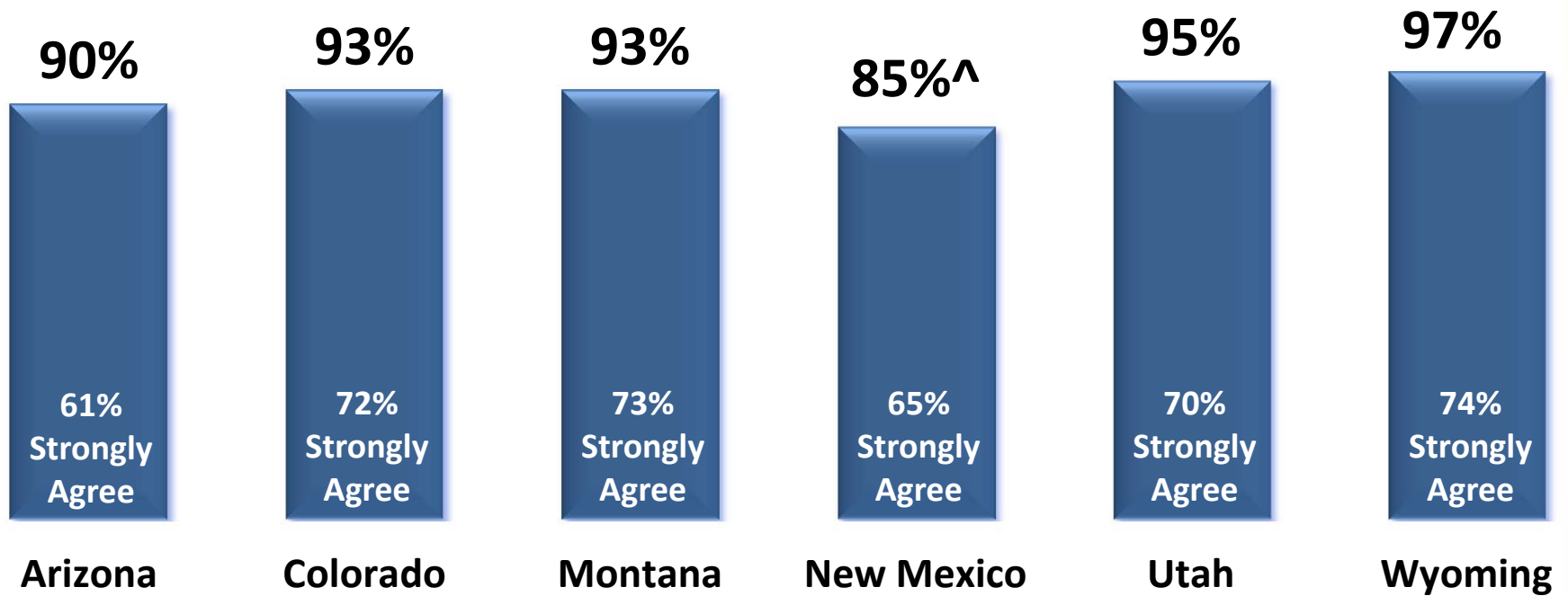
24%	19%
-----	-----

The view that having a good economy and protecting land and water is compatible is held across the political spectrum.

	<i>GOP</i>	<i>Independent</i>	<i>Democrat</i>	<i>Tea Party</i>	<i>Not Tea Party</i>
We can protect land and water and have a strong economy with good jobs at the same time, without having to choose one over the other.	76%	75%	84%	74%	80%
Sometimes protections for land and water and a strong economy are in conflict and we must choose one over the other.	21%	21%	14%	23%	17%

There is near unanimity that public lands are essential to their state's economy.

"Our national parks, forests, monuments, and wildlife areas are an essential part of your state's economy."

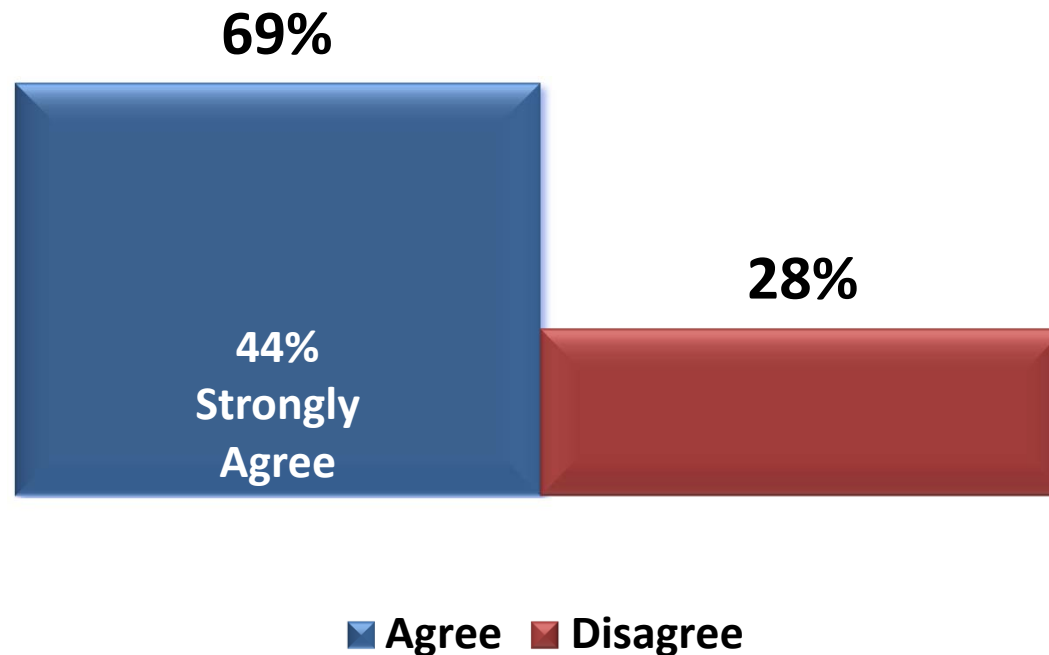


■ Agree

^ Denotes Rounding

Voters do not like the idea of private companies' activities on public lands affecting their ability to recreate or access these areas.

We should NOT allow private companies to develop our public lands when their doing so would limit the public's enjoyment of - or access to - these lands.



Voters overwhelmingly believe that their state should continue to fund conservation.

% Strongly Agree

% Total Agree

Even with state budget problems, we should still find money to protect your state's land, water and wildlife.

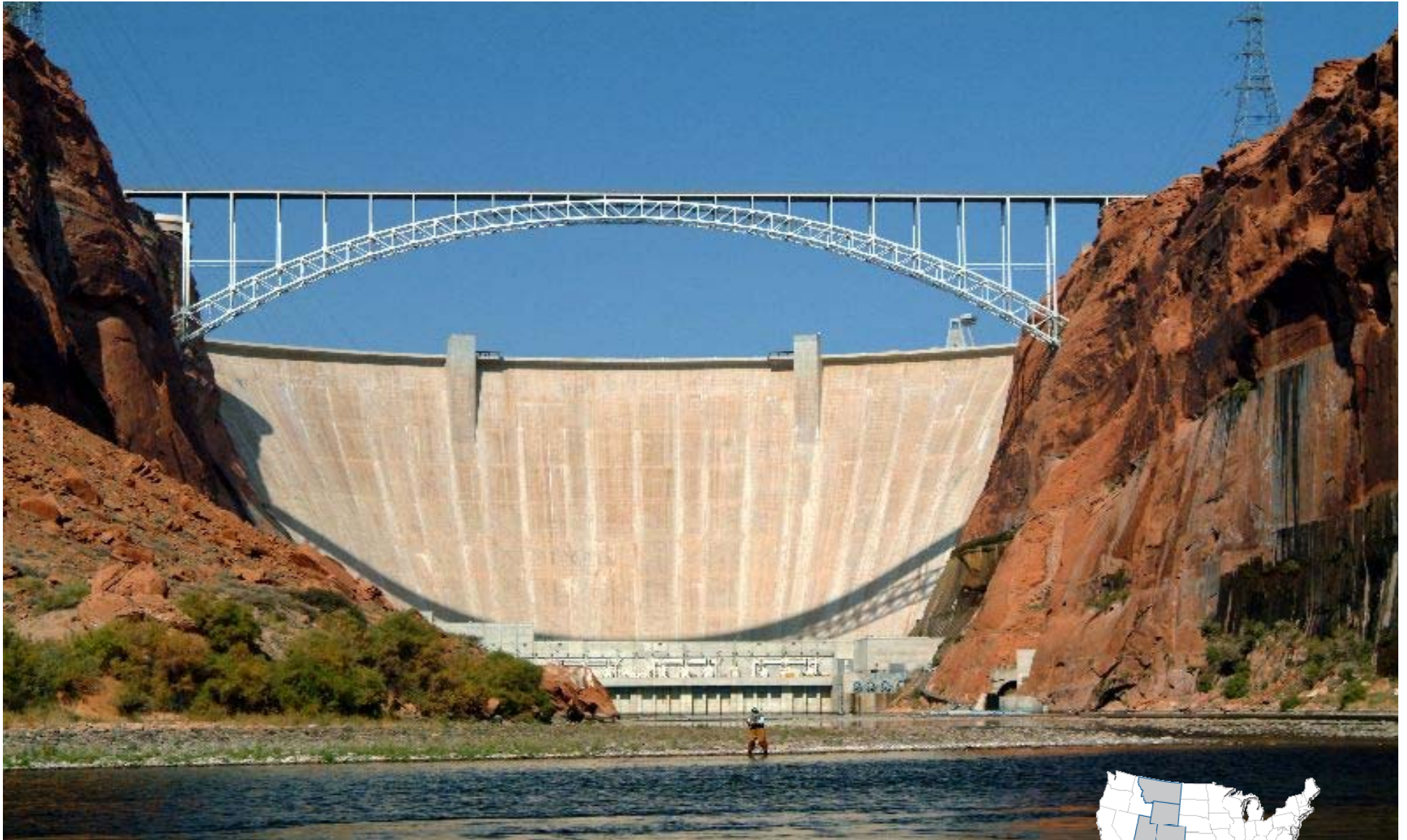
53%

86%

Even with state budget problems, we should still find money to protect and maintain state parks.

51%

85%



Environmental Regulations

By greater than a two-to-one margin, voters in the West perceive environmental standards positively.

“And when you hear about the laws that govern industry's responsibility for your state's clean water, clean air, natural areas and wildlife do you think those are more likely to be...”

Important safeguards to protect private property owners, public health and taxpayers from toxic pollution and costly clean-ups

63%

Burdensome regulations that tie up industry in red tape, hurt them too much financially, and cost jobs

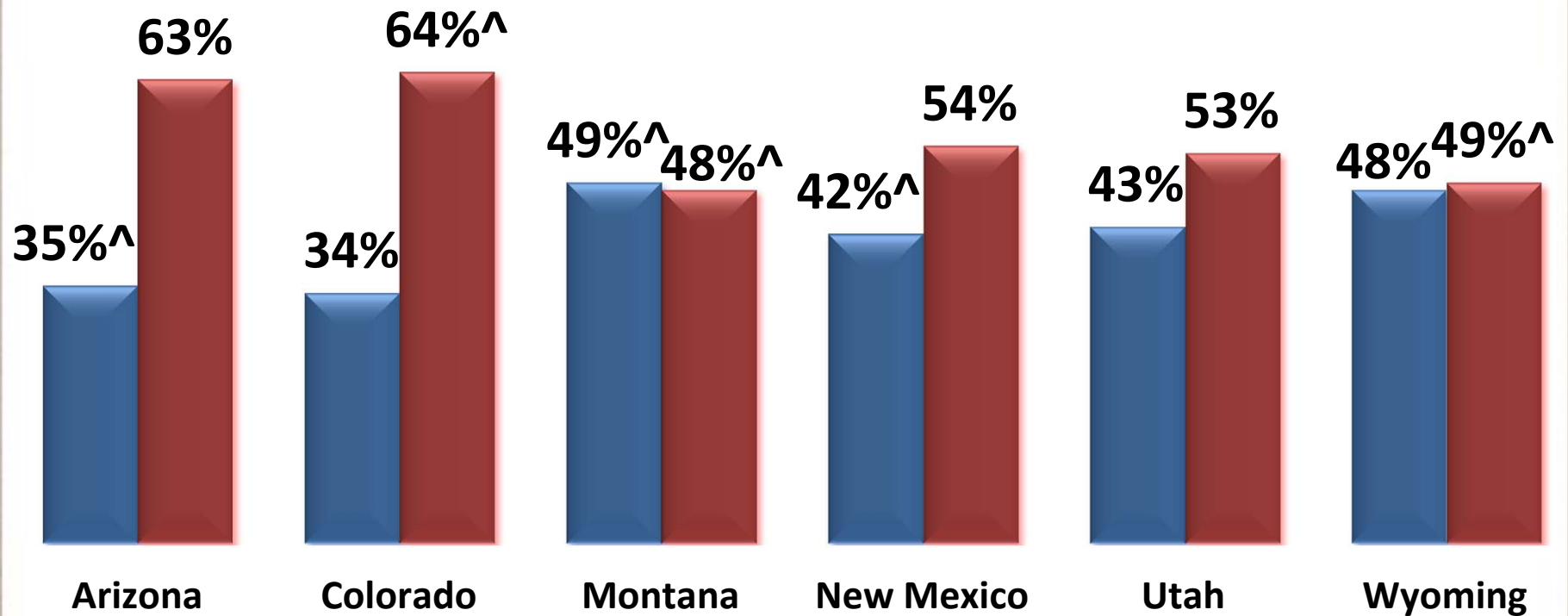
29%

Voters in every single state are more likely to view regulations as safeguards and protections.

	<i>Safeguards and Protections</i>	<i>Burdensome Regulations</i>
Arizona	61%	31%
Colorado	63%	29%
Montana	58%	33%
New Mexico	61%	31%
Utah	69%	23%
Wyoming	62%	27%

Three-in-five Western voters reject the idea that cutting back environmental regulations is one of the best ways to create jobs.

“One of the best ways to create jobs is to cut back environmental regulations that are weighing down your state’s businesses.”



^ Denotes Rounding

■ Agree

■ Disagree

In fact, Western voters ascribe a number of positive outcomes to environmental regulations – including saying it has a positive impact on jobs.

“Thinking some more about regulations on industry that are designed to protect land, air, water and wildlife here in your state. For each of the following, please tell me if you think these regulations have a positive impact, negative impact, or almost no impact on that.”

Ranked by Difference Score

	Positive	Negative	No Impact	Difference Score
Natural beauty of our state	79%	7%	12%	+72
Public safety	70%	10%	16%	+60
Quality of life	72%	13%	12%	+59
Public health	66%	14%	16%	+52
Outdoor recreation	60%	17%	20%	+43
Hunting and fishing	55%	18%	20%	+37
Jobs	47%	30%	18%	+17

Voters in every state – border or not – reject the idea that a suspension of environmental protections is a necessary step in reducing illegal immigration along the borders.

	Arizona	Colorado	Montana	New Mexico	Utah	Wyoming
Necessary	22%	22%	21%	25%	20%	22%
Unnecessary	73%	68%	66%	65%	72%	69%

“Some members of Congress have said that, in order to help stop the flow of illegal immigrants into the US, it is necessary to suspend all environmental protections within one hundred miles of the US-Mexico and US-Canadian border, including in National Parks and other protected public lands. Would you say it is necessary or unnecessary to suspend environmental protections in order to help stop the flow of illegal immigrants into the US?”



Energy

 THE COLORADO COLLEGE
STATE OF THE ROCKIES PROJECT
Conservation in the West Poll

Meeting America's energy needs with clean, renewable energy sources is chosen by a majority in every state over resource extraction.

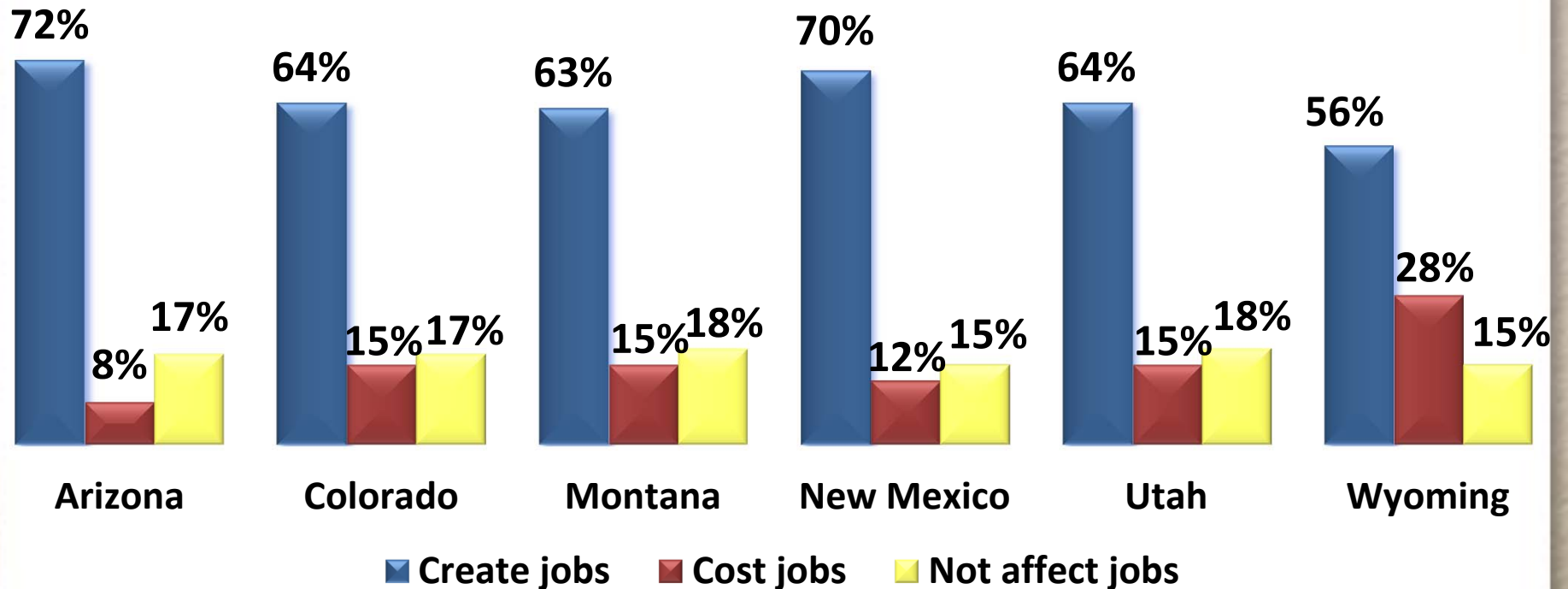
“Next, which of the following do you think should be the highest priority for meeting America's energy needs?”

	<i>Arizona</i>	<i>Colorado</i>	<i>Montana</i>	<i>New Mexico</i>	<i>Utah</i>	<i>Wyoming</i>
Reducing our need for more coal, oil and gas by expanding our use of clean, renewable energy that can be generated in the US	67%	66%	55%	66%	62%	51%
Drilling and digging for more coal, oil and gas wherever we can find it in the US	29%	29%	38%	28%	29%	41%

Increasing the use of renewable energy is perceived as a job creator throughout the West.

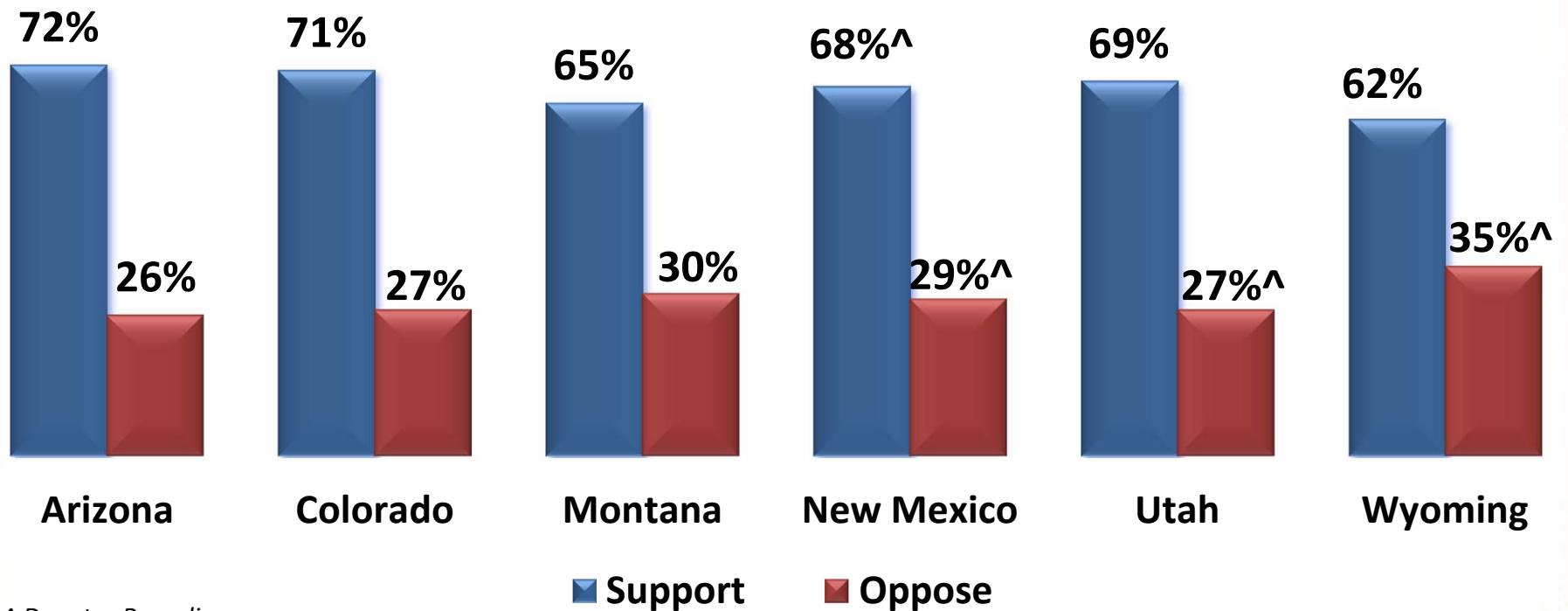
“Which of the following comes closer to your point of view: Increasing the use of renewable energy sources like wind and solar power..”

Increasing Renewable Energy Sources by State



A solid majority of voters in every state also expresses support for the EPA continuing to implement the Clean Air Act by updating standards.

“Do you support or oppose the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency continuing to implement the Clean Air Act by updating the standards for air quality, including for smog, dust, and emissions from power plants, factories and cars, based on the latest science?”



"Swing voters" across the West say that...


	<u>Swing Voters</u>	<u>Overall</u>
We can protect land and water & have good economy	80%	78%
Environmental laws are important safeguards, rather than burdensome regulations	66%	63%
Renewable energy create jobs in your state	72%	68%
EPA should implement updated air standards	78%	70%
Even with tight budgets, find funds for conservation/parks	90%	86%

THE BOTTOM LINE

- ❖ We continue to see a strong conservation ethic in the West with three-in-five identifying as a conservationist and a sense that funding the protection of land, water and wildlife needs to be maintained.
- ❖ There is a strong view that having a good economy and protecting the environment is compatible with each other. Public lands are seen as essential to their economy.
- ❖ Voters are more likely to perceive environmental laws as important protections, rather than burdensome regulations. They do not think one of the best ways to create jobs is to reduce these types of regulations.
- ❖ They support the EPA implementing the Clean Air Act and updating those standards. They reject suspensions of environmental laws along the border as a means to reduce illegal immigration.
- ❖ There is a strong preference for renewable energy use, which is strongly perceived as creating jobs.





**THE COLORADO COLLEGE
STATE OF THE ROCKIES PROJECT**
Conservation in the West Poll

*Fairbank,
Maslin,
Maullin,
Metz &
Associates*

FM3

*Public Opinion Research
& Strategy*

Dave Metz

dave@fm3research.com

(510) 451-9521



**PUBLIC OPINION
STRATEGIES**

Lori Weigel

lori@pos.org

(303) 433-4424