

NEW POLL: Montana Voters Strongly Reject Congressional and Executive Branch Proposals that Will Cost Taxpayers Money, Eliminate Public Participation, and Remove Safeguards for Wildlife, National Public Lands and Waters While Encouraging Expansive Oil and Gas Development

Montana voters – including MAGA supporters and rural Montanans – overwhelmingly reject [Congressional](#) and [Executive Branch](#) proposals that would let oil and gas companies exploit our national public lands without paying fair market rates and that would reduce local community input and safeguards for wildlife habitat, recreation (including hunting and fishing), and drinking water resources. The voters also oppose leaving taxpayers – and not oil companies – on the hook for cleanup after development. The values that unite Montanans against repeal of these essential safeguards could not be clearer, with near-universal agreement across geography and ideology that the **most important uses of national public lands are: helping to keep air and water clean (92%), conserving natural areas for future generations (89%), providing a place for outdoor recreation (87%), providing a place for wildlife to live (86%), and protecting historic sites (83%)**. Just 34% of Montanans felt the same about providing land to be leased for oil and gas development.

They know what they're talking about too – most Montana voters say they've spent time on national public lands in the past year, and one-in-three have visited more than twenty times. That's all according to a new poll of 400 Montana voters conducted by New Bridge Strategy for the National Wildlife Federation, part of a first-of-its-kind [survey](#) of 3,200 voters in eight western states – CO, MT, NV, NM, ND, SD, UT, and WY – for their views on oil and gas development on national public lands.

The survey further demonstrates broad, bipartisan support for specific wildlife, recreation, local community, and drinking water safeguards, as well as fiscal reforms that put taxpayers first in the development and subsequent clean up of public lands. This support runs counter to several of the recent Congressional and Administrative proposals that subsidize oil and gas companies at the expense of hardworking Americans and our shared national public lands:

- **Montanans are nearly unanimous (95%) in their support** for keeping the current requirements that oil and gas companies, rather than taxpayers, pay for all of the clean-up and land restoration costs after drilling is finished.
- **More than four-in-five Montanans** want to keep the fees that oil and gas companies pay to lease and develop publicly-owned resources at their current levels.
- **The majority (80%) of Montanans** are opposed to eliminating the \$5 per acre fee that oil and gas companies who want to drill on national public lands must pay, which helps cover the cost to review whether those lands are appropriate for development or whether they should be prioritized for wildlife habitat, outdoor recreation, or other uses.
- **Nearly three-in-four Montanans** say drilling should be restricted to areas where there is a high likelihood of producing oil and gas.

- **A majority (75%) of voters in Montana across party lines** oppose reducing the review process and opportunities for public input regarding decisions about what takes place on national public lands, including potential oil and gas development.
- **A majority (88%) of Montana voters, across party lines,** agree on the importance of exercising caution when it comes to oil and gas development on national public lands, including by avoiding development near rivers and streams that could risk drinking water sources, or wildlife migration areas.

You can access the full polling results [here](#) and a point-by-point contrast between current Administrative and Congressional proposals against westerners' views [here](#).