



Montana Survey

Key Findings

April 2025

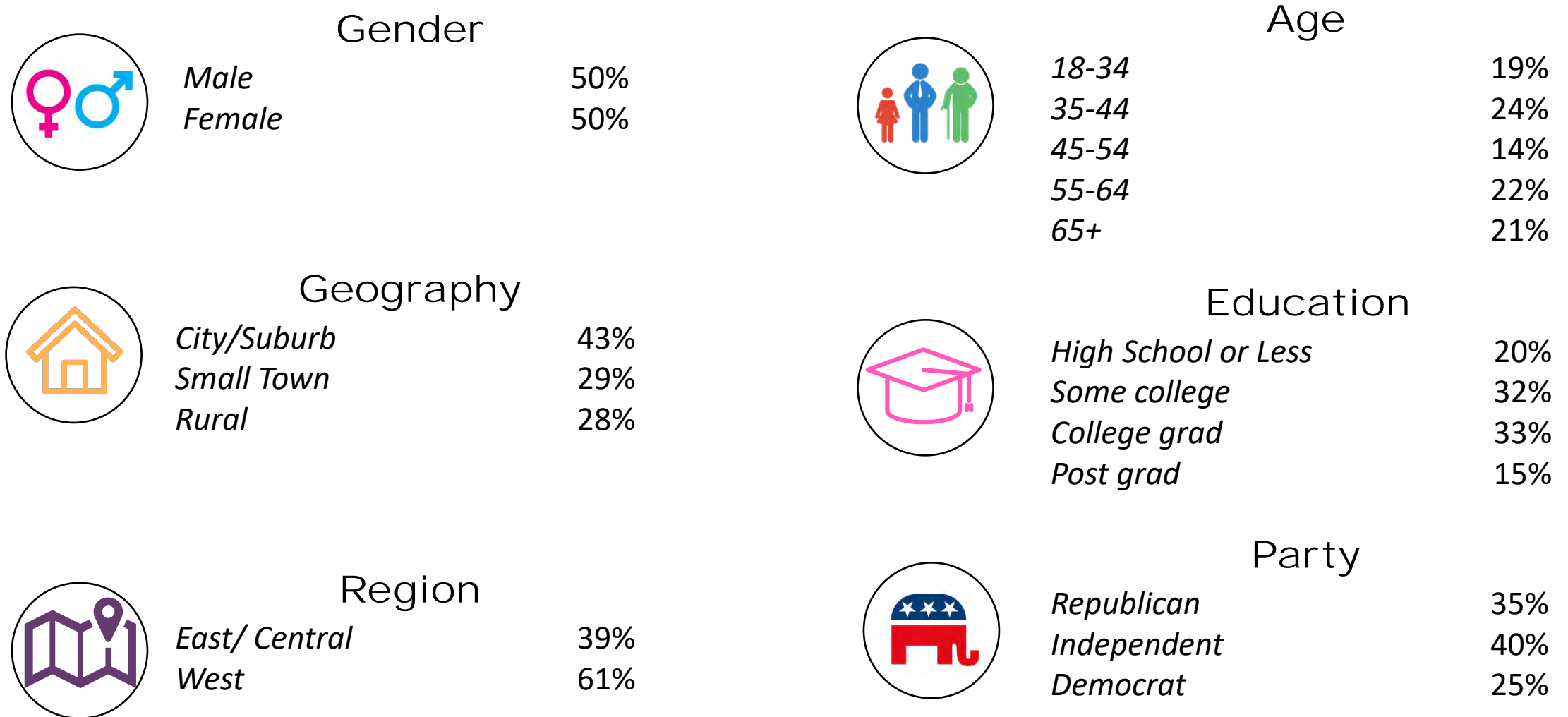
Methodology

New Bridge Strategy conducted a survey among N=400 registered voters throughout Montana from March 27 - 31, 2025.

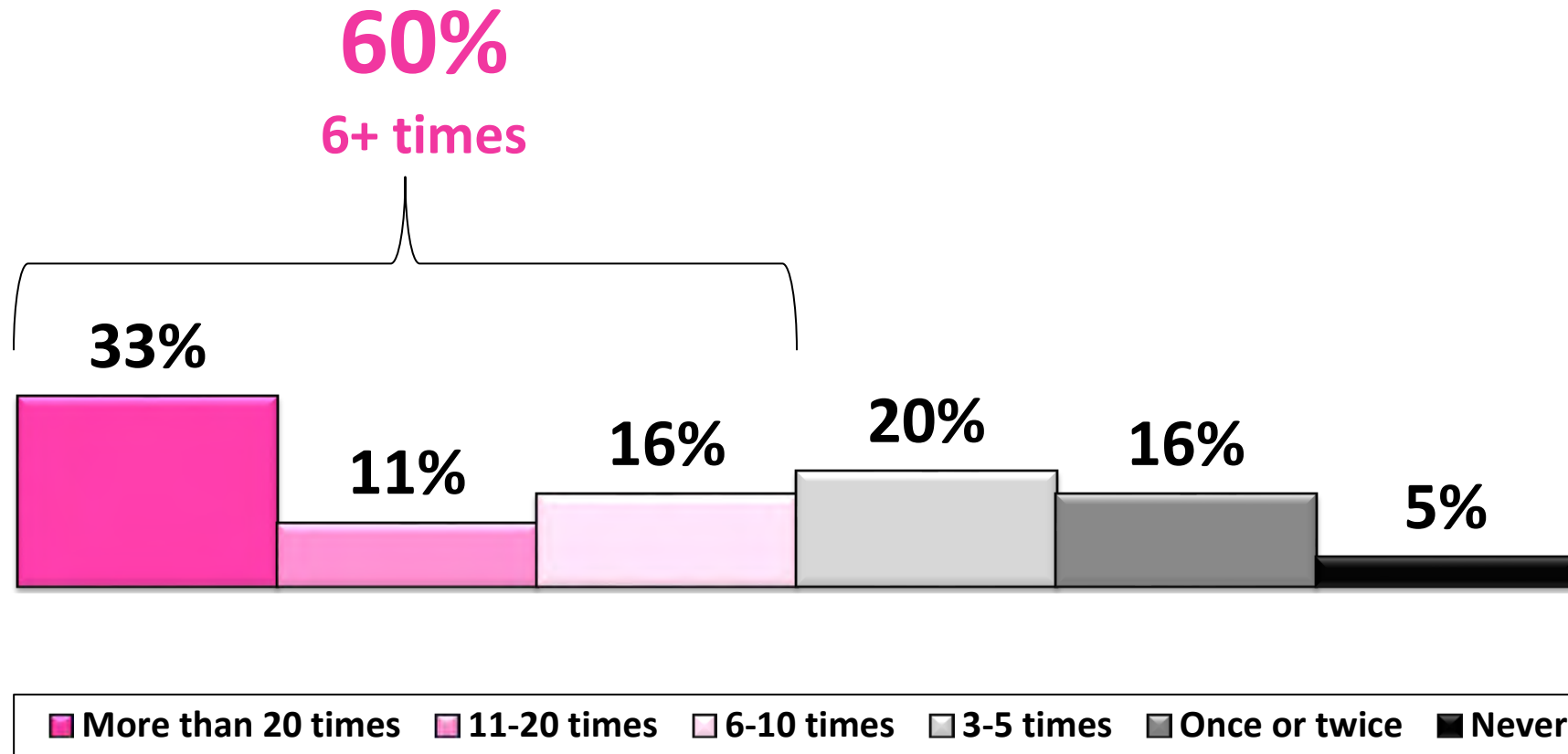
Interviews were conducted via live telephone interviews (both cell phones and landlines) and online via email invitation and text-to-web. Quotas were set for key demographic sub-groups, such as gender and age. Interviews were distributed proportionally throughout the state.

The margin of error is $\pm 4.9\%$ for the overall sample. The margin of error will vary for sub-groups.

Key Demographics



Most Montanans have visited national public lands in the last year, and one-in-three have visited more than 20 times.



Thinking about national public lands – Over the past year, how many times do you think you have visited public lands such as national parks, national forests, national monuments, national wildlife refuges, or other national public lands?

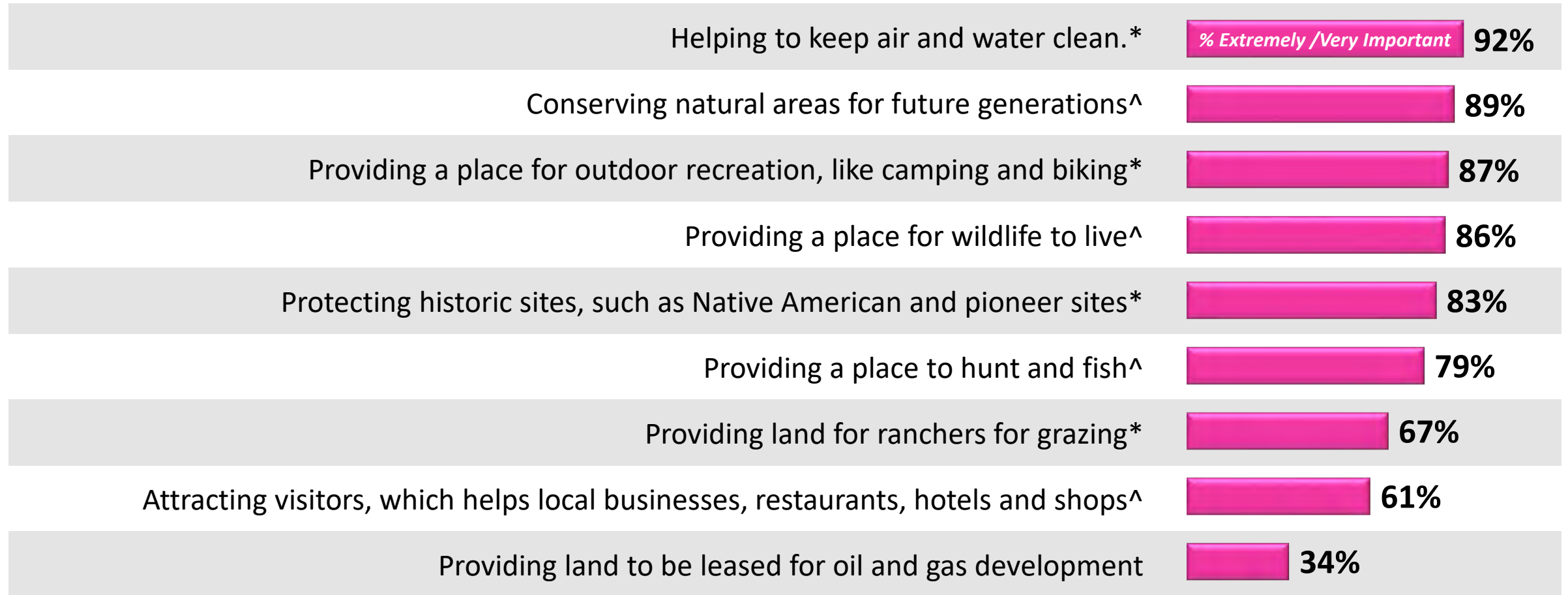
More than nine-in-ten participate regularly in one of these outdoor activities.

| | |
|--|-----|
| Hiking or trail running | 77% |
| Camping | 63% |
| Bird watching and viewing wildlife | 51% |
| Kayaking, canoeing or boating | 45% |
| Snow shoeing, skiing or boarding | 35% |
| Riding an off-road vehicle or snowmobile | 31% |
| Mountain biking | 19% |
| None of these | 5% |

60%
Total Hunter/ Angler

*Do you consider yourself to be a hunter, an angler or both?
Which of the following types of outdoor activities do you participate in regularly?*

Majorities of Montanans say all of these benefits of national public lands are extremely or very important except oil and gas development.



The following are some attributes and potential benefits of having national public lands in the Western United States. For each one, please indicate how important that is to you personally as a benefit of national public lands: is it extremely important, very important, somewhat important, or not important?

*Asked of Sample A, N=211 ^Asked of Sample B, N=189

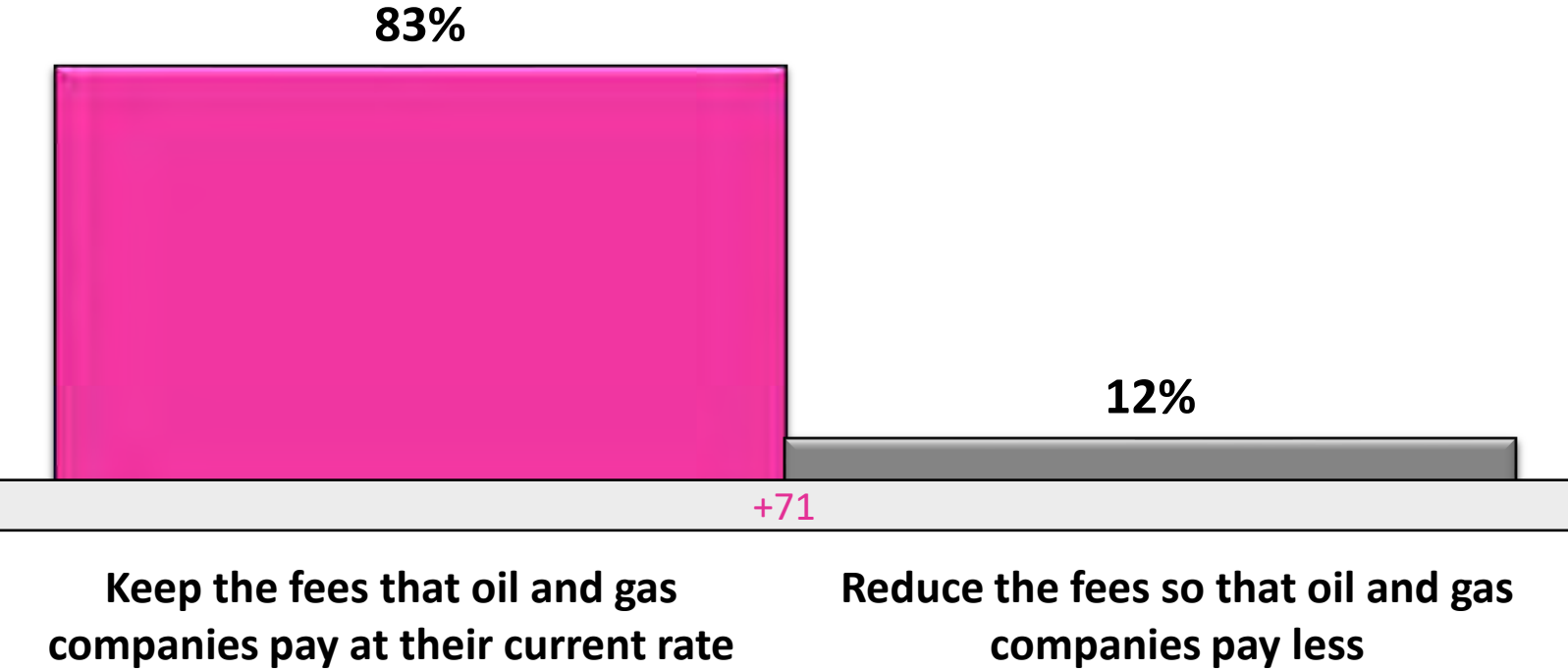


Policies affecting oil and gas development on national public lands

We provided the following information to respondents:

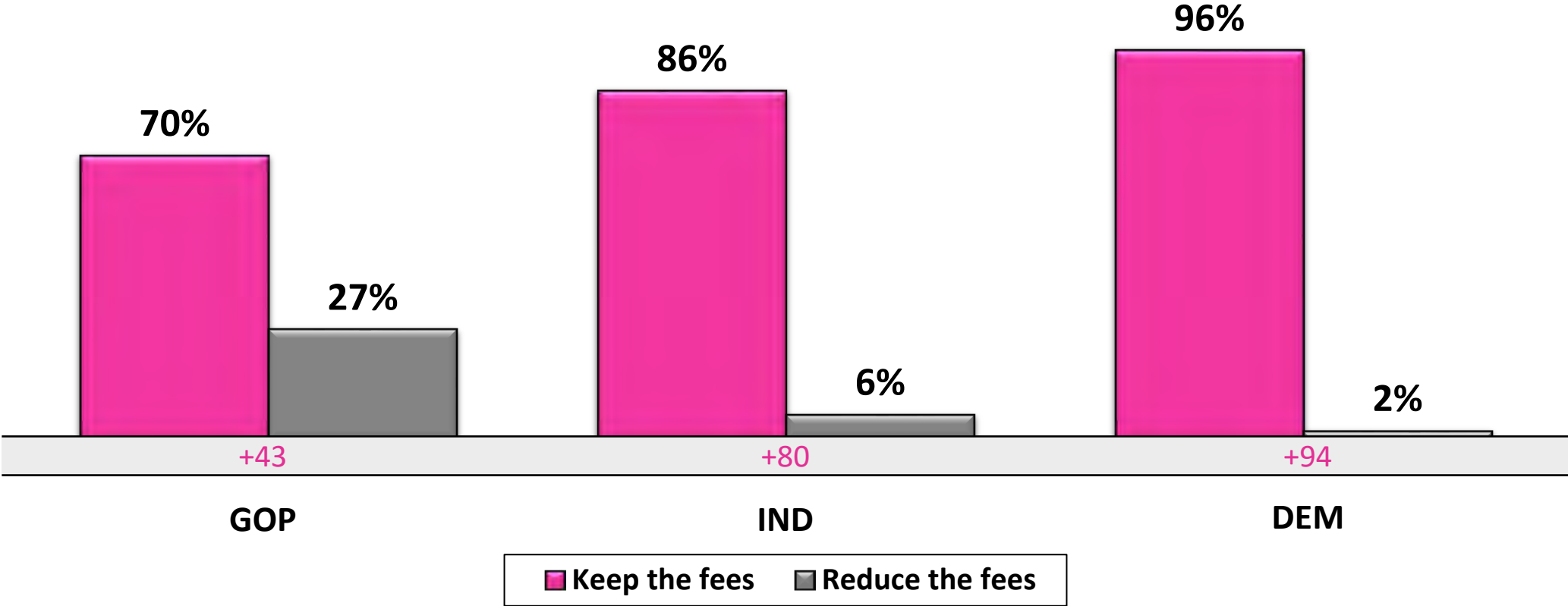
Oil and gas companies pay landowners in order to develop on their land. In the case of national public lands, they pay certain fees and a percentage of the value of the oil and gas they produce on national public lands to the Department of Interior and the affected state. Congress and the Bureau of Land Management recently increased some of these fees to help cover land management costs and provide funding to state governments.

More than four-in-five voters say we should keep the fees that oil and gas companies pay at their current rate.



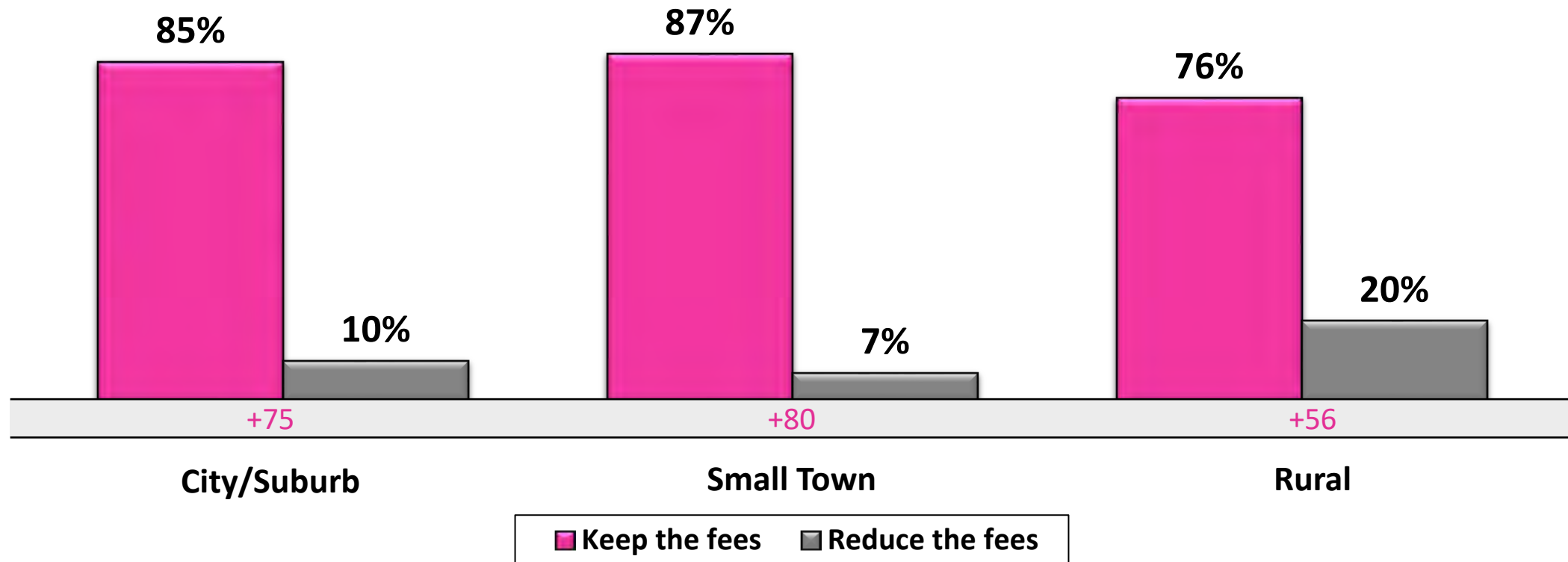
Some people have suggested that these fees related to oil and gas development on national public lands should be reduced. Do you think we should -

Strong majorities across partisan affiliation think we should keep the fees the same.



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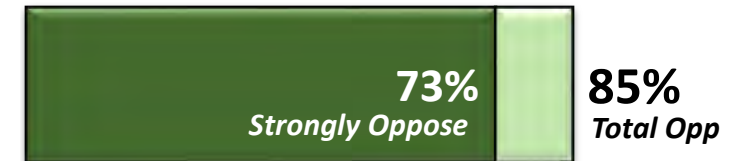
And voters across the state, including those in rural areas, think we should keep the fees the same as well.



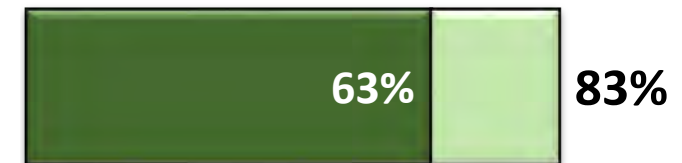
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Three-in-four Montana voters oppose changing current standards and fees for oil and gas development on public lands.

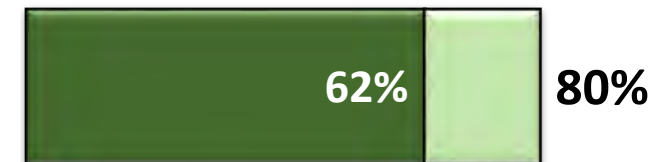
(Eminent Domain) One proposal would increase the use of eminent domain, where the federal government takes a portion of privately owned property, including portions of family farms and ranches, for the purpose of building oil and gas pipelines that move oil and gas from where it is produced on national public lands to where it can be refined or used.



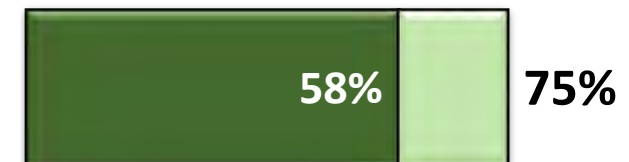
(No flexibility) One proposal would require that government agencies allow oil and gas companies access to lands they can develop, even if local community members, hunters or anglers, nearby farmers and ranchers, and others raise concerns about impacts on wildlife, water and other resources



(Nomination fee) One proposal would get rid of the \$5 per acre fee paid by oil and gas companies that helps cover the cost to review whether lands that oil and gas companies want to drill on are appropriate for development or whether they should be prioritized for wildlife habitat, outdoor recreation or other uses.



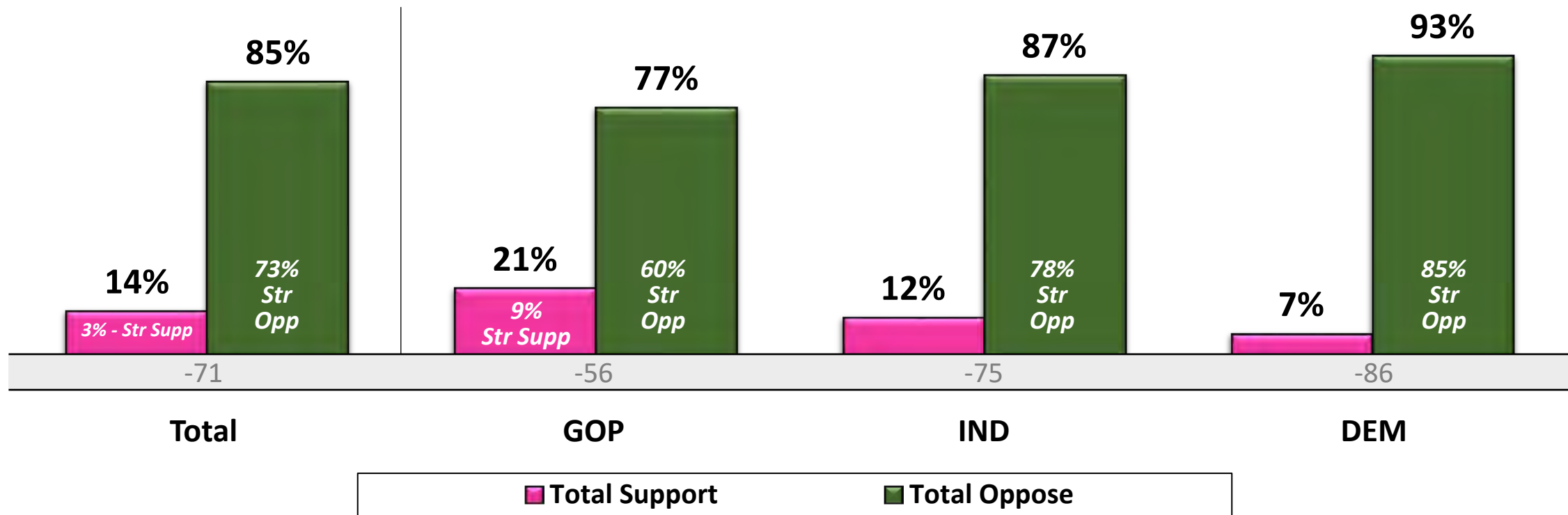
(Reduce Public Input) One proposal would reduce the review process and opportunities for nearby communities and local residents to give input regarding decisions about what takes place on national public lands, including potential oil and gas development



Some people have made proposals that would set standards for how oil and gas companies operate on national public lands. For each one of these, please indicate whether that sounds like something you would strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose.

Increasing the use of eminent domain in order to build pipelines is opposed by the vast majority of Montanans.

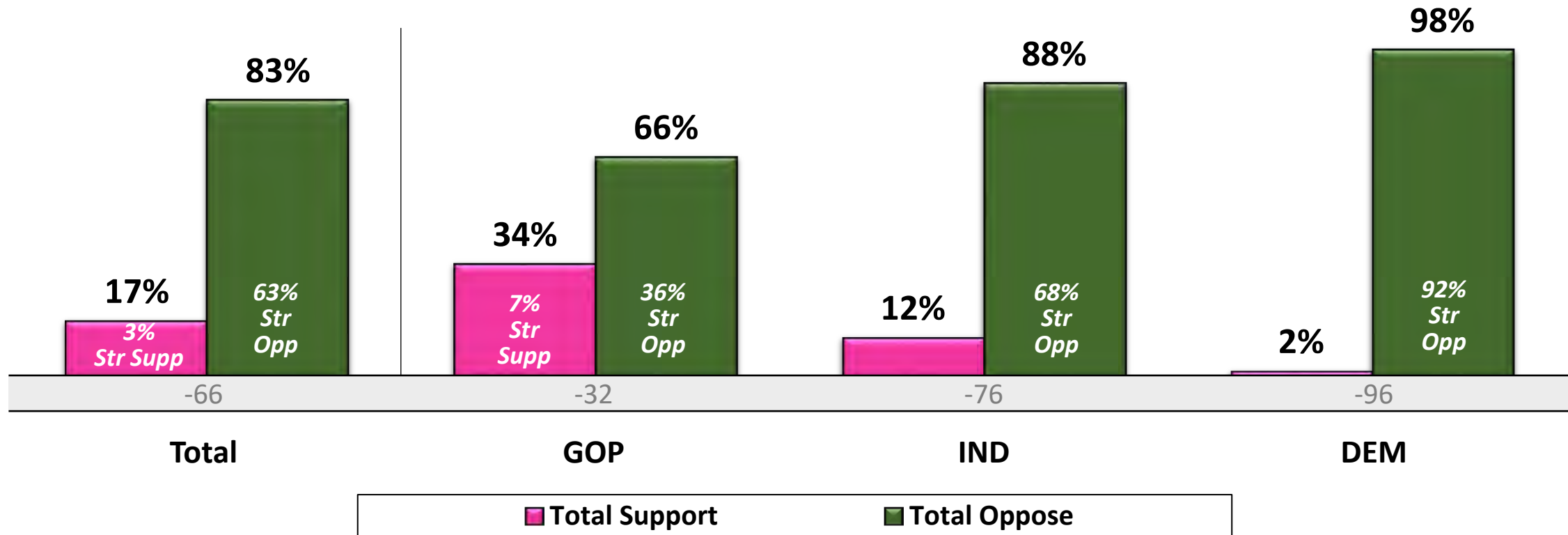
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Montana voters across party lines oppose limiting flexibility for agencies to adjust based on community input, including two-in-three Republicans.

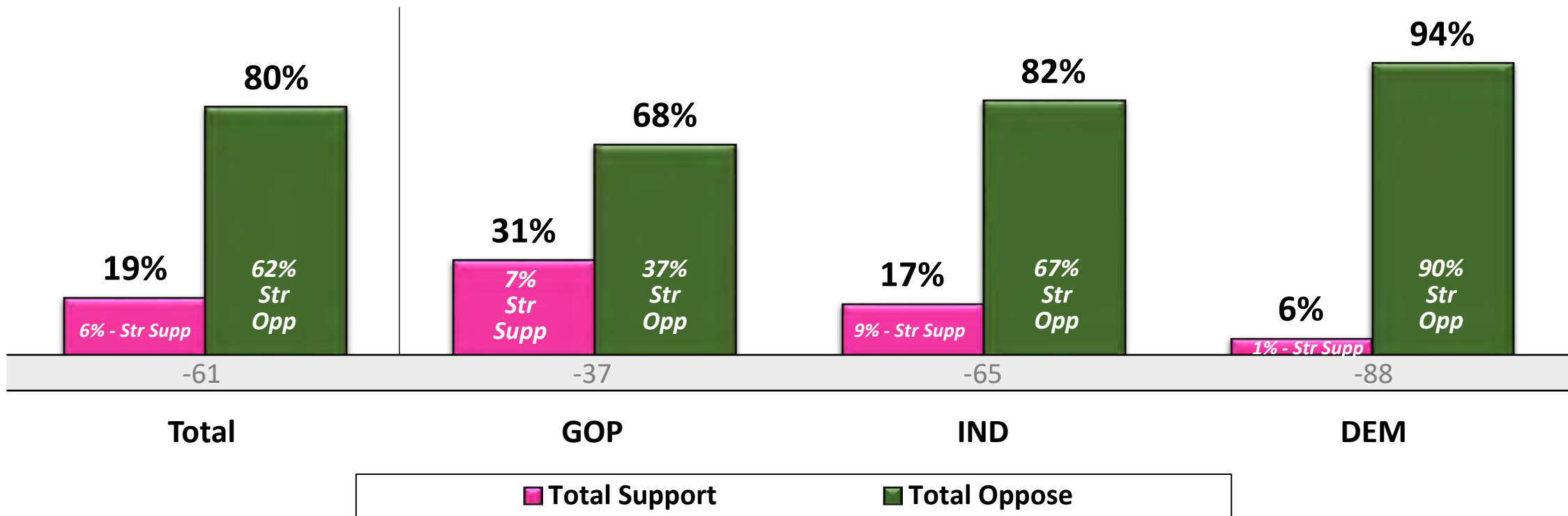
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Majorities are opposed to eliminating the nomination fee as well.

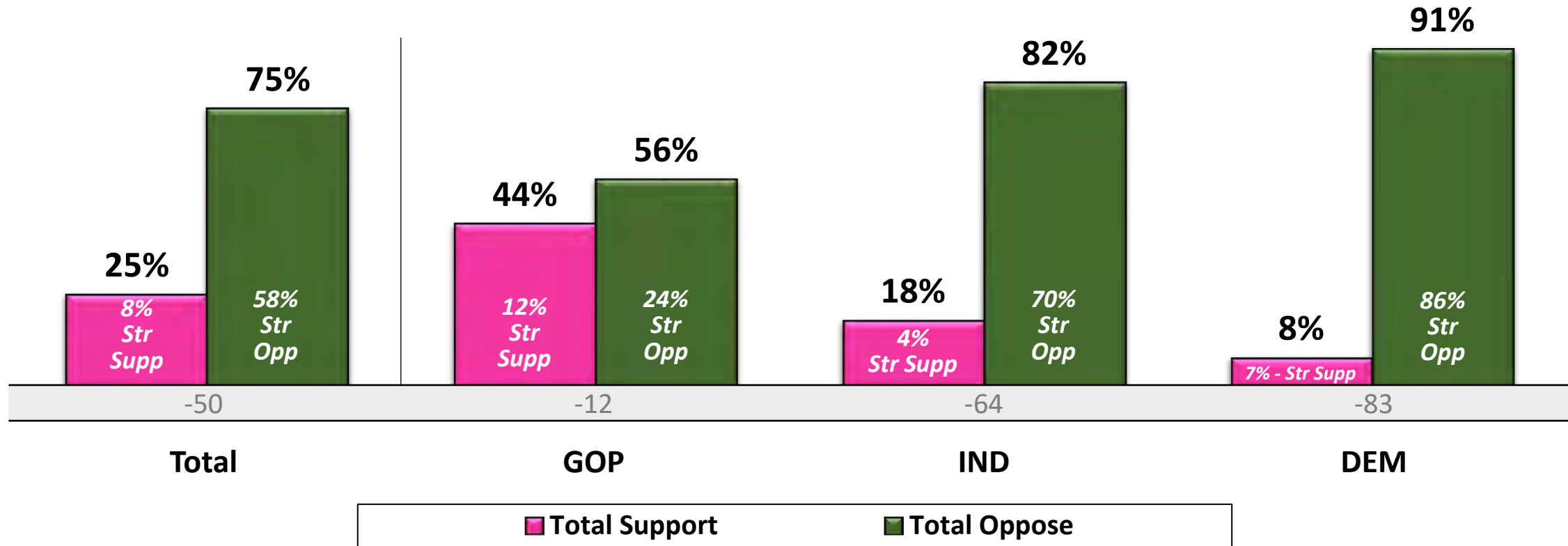
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A majority of voters across party lines oppose reducing the review process and thereby public input.

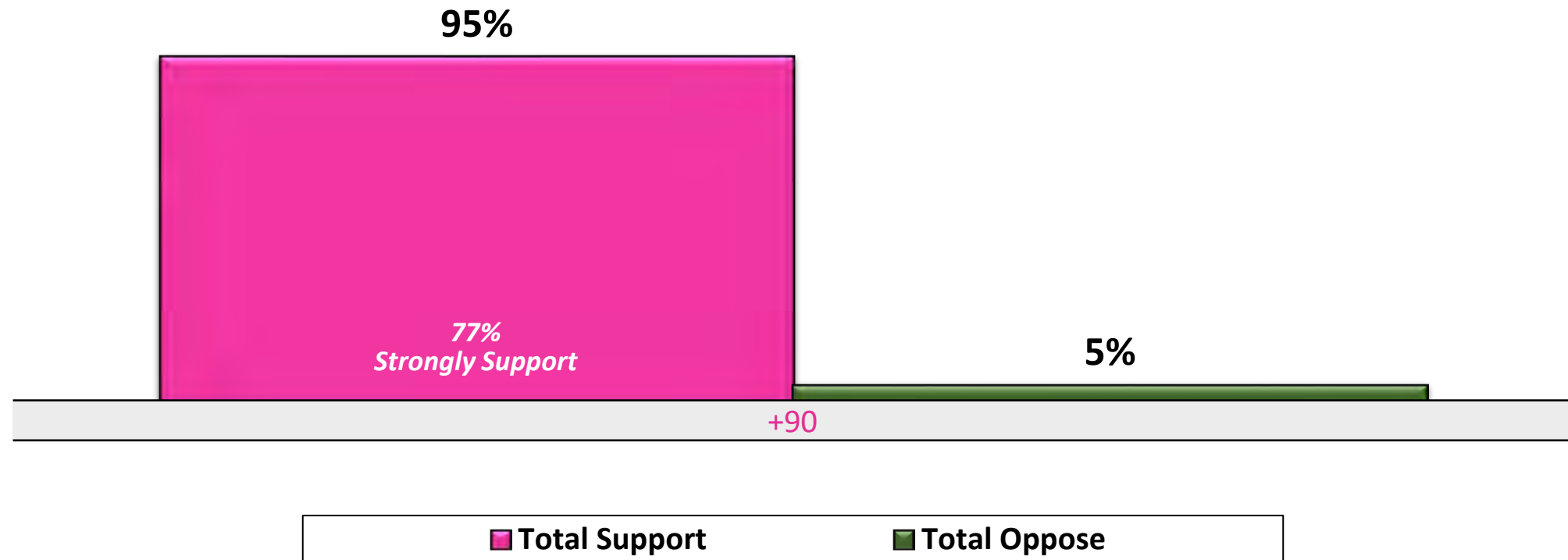
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In a survey from January, we found Montanans are nearly unanimous in support for bonding requirements.

Keeping the requirement that oil and gas companies, rather than taxpayers, pay for all of the clean-up and land restoration costs after drilling is finished.

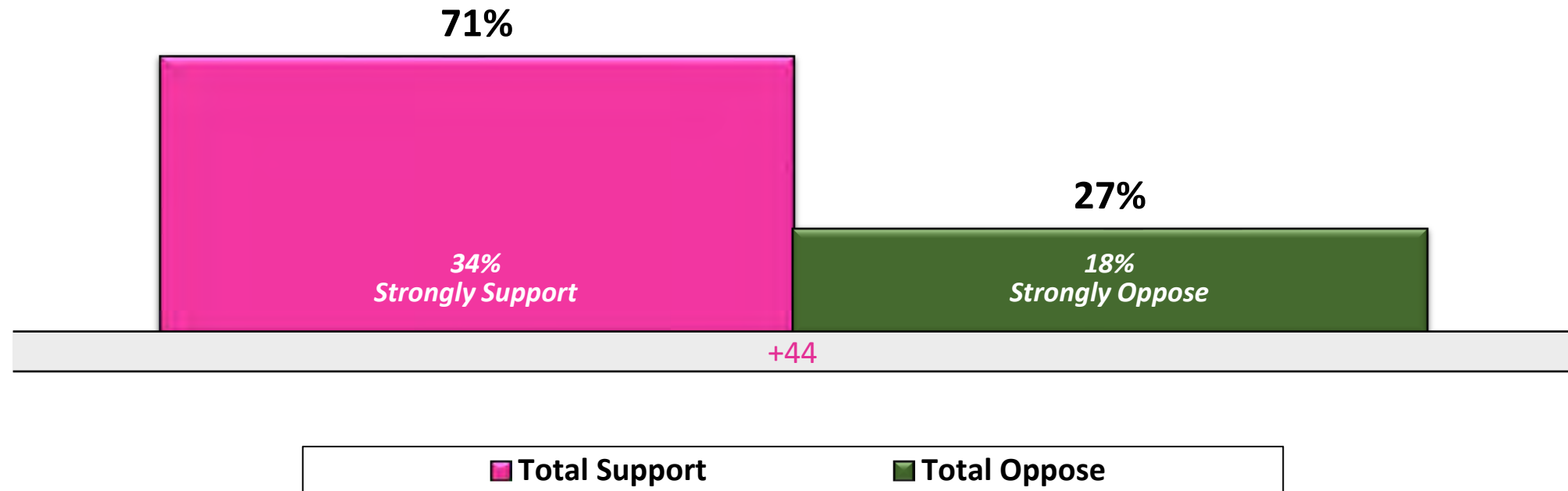


Thinking now about our national public lands, such as U.S. forests and national monuments. There are a number of actions which could be taken in the next year or two. For each one, please indicate if you would support or oppose each one.

*Data from 2025 State of the Rockies Project

Nearly three-in-four in January were supportive of restricting drilling only to areas with high likelihood to produce oil and gas.

Only allowing oil and gas companies the right to drill in areas of public land where there is high likelihood to actually produce oil and gas.



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*Data from 2025 State of the Rockies Project

A majority of Montana voters are very concerned about the loss of federal employees who oversee national public lands.

| | Very Concerned | Total Concerned |
|--|----------------|-----------------|
| Having fewer park rangers and other employees who provide visitor services and maintain national public lands. | 57% | 76% |
| Having fewer employees who monitor and oversee oil and gas sites and other industry activities on national public lands. | 54% | 73% |
| Having fewer scientists and wildlife biologists to monitor and care for fish and wildlife on national public lands. | 54% | 71% |

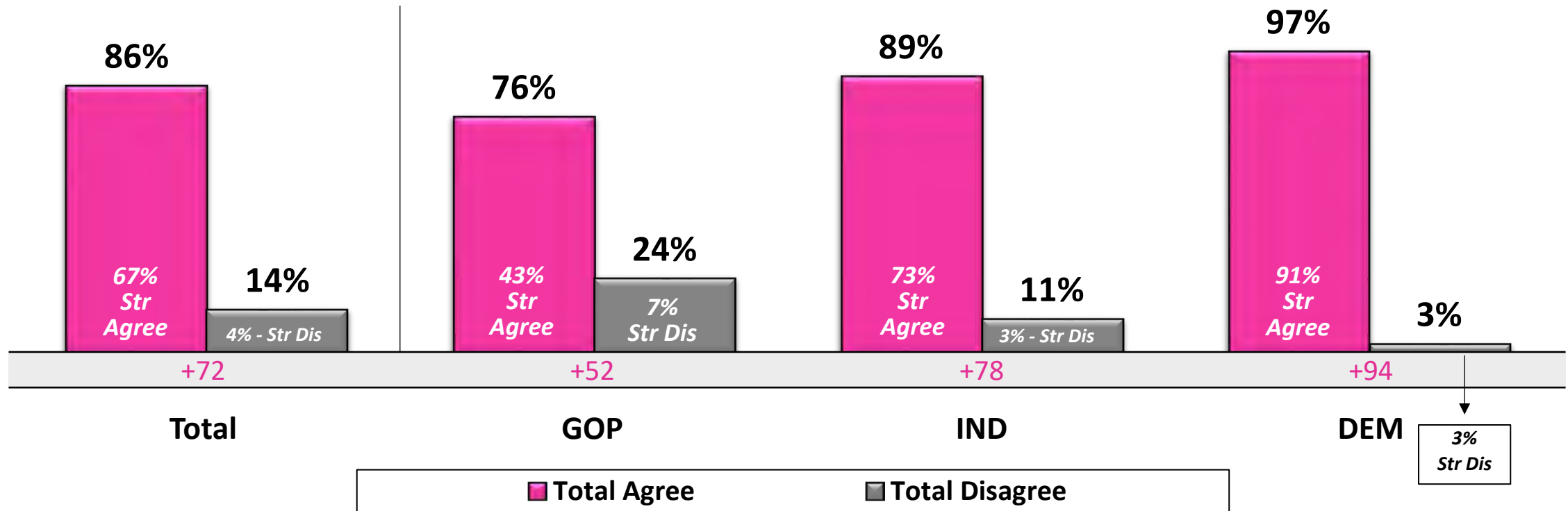
Switching topics – As you may know, some employees of government agencies which oversee national public lands like the ones we have been discussing have been fired in recent weeks. How concerned are you about each of the following – very concerned, somewhat concerned, not very concerned, not at all concerned.



Strong agreement on core values related to national public lands policies

Montanans overwhelmingly agree with ensuring the broader public interest, rather than limiting uses of public lands through leasing.

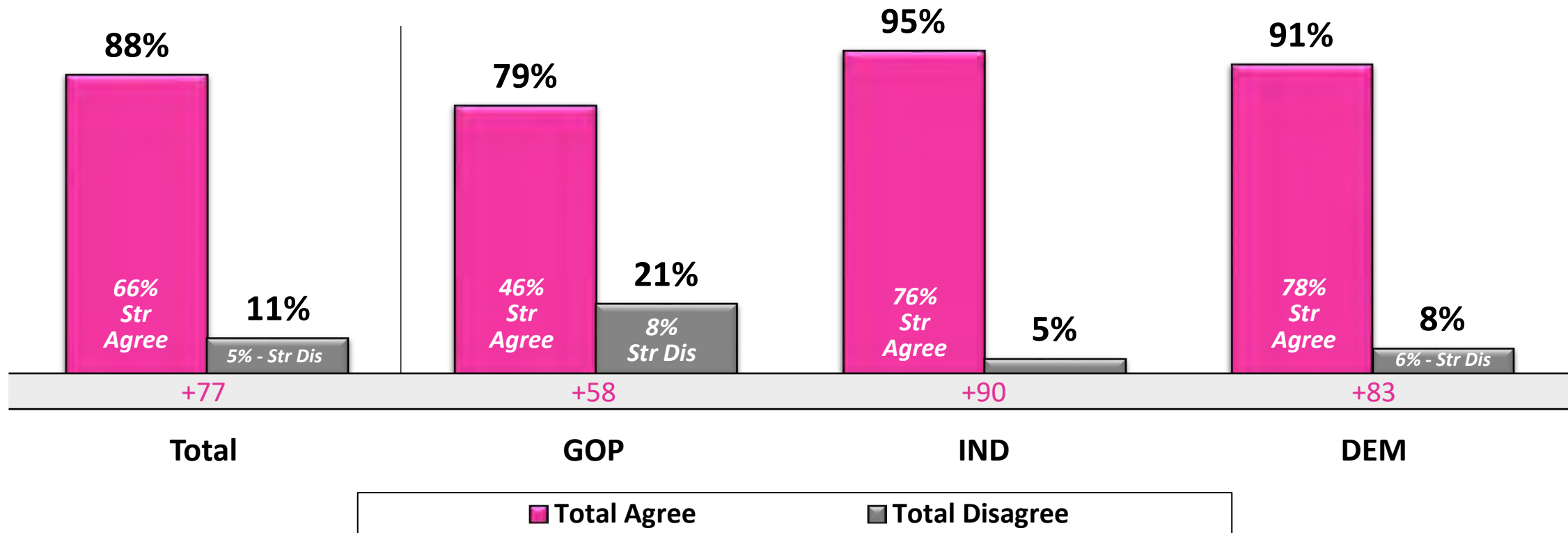
When land is leased to oil and gas companies it can limit other uses of that land, including hunting, fishing, viewing wildlife, riding ATV's and other recreation. We need to ensure the broader public interest is represented in all decisions about how national public lands are used so that future generations of Americans can enjoy them as we do today.



Taking a step back for a moment – For each one, please indicate whether you generally agree or disagree.

Nearly four-in-five Republicans and more than nine-in-ten Independents and Democrats say we should be cautious with oil and gas development on public lands.

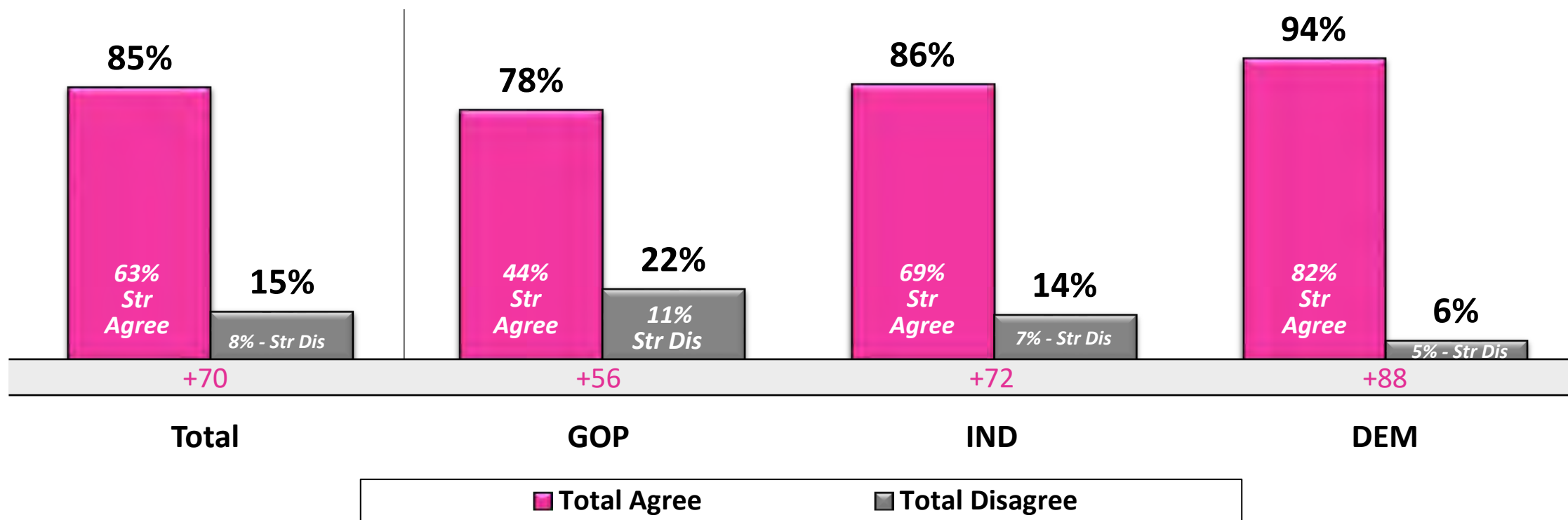
Oil and gas development can take place in some areas of national public lands responsibly, but some areas close to rivers and streams or where threatened wildlife migrate are too important to risk. We need to be cautious, allow adequate public input, and not risk potentially impacting sources of drinking water and wildlife habitat.



Taking a step back for a moment – For each one, please indicate whether you generally agree or disagree.

Majorities of voters of all partisan persuasions agree with this statement about the importance of protecting private landowners' rights as well.

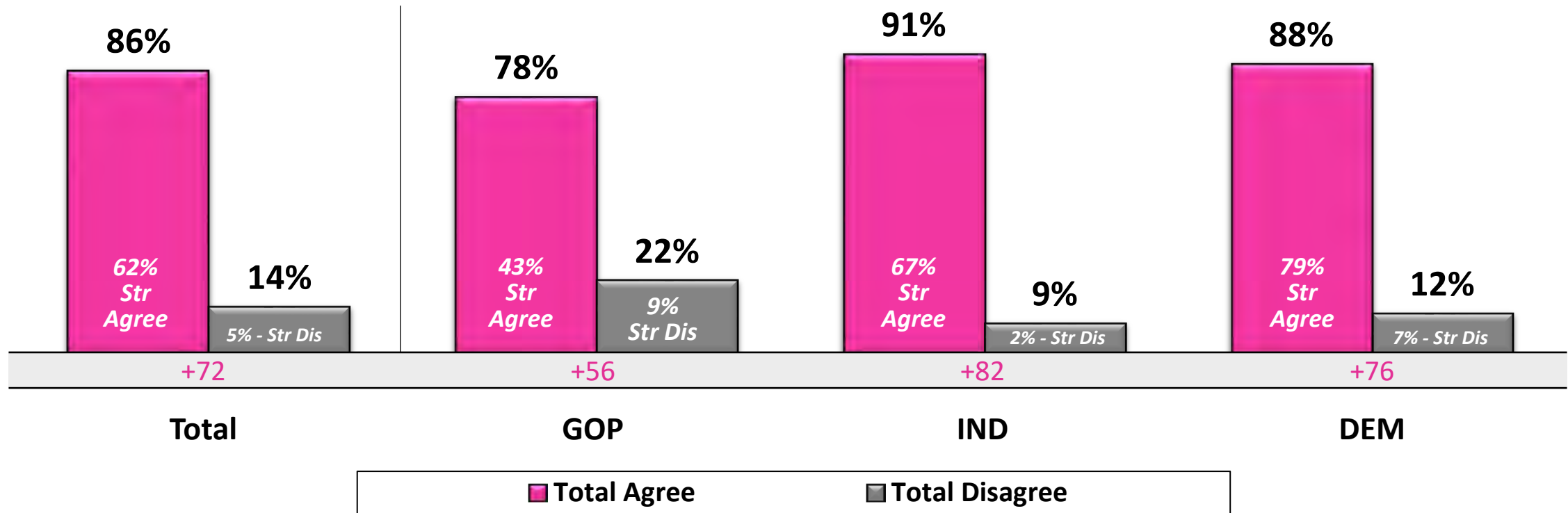
Increasing oil and gas development will not just affect national public lands, but also farms, ranches and nearby communities. The government has indicated that they may take private land through eminent domain to complete oil and gas pipelines. We need to not only protect our national public lands, but private landowners' rights as well.



Taking a step back for a moment – For each one, please indicate whether you generally agree or disagree.

More than three-in-four Montanans across the political spectrum want to see taxpayer interests protected when it comes to oil and gas on public lands.

Taxpayers have lost out on billions of dollars in revenue from the oil and gas industry's development on our national public lands and sometimes been stuck with the bill for cleaning up abandoned wells. We should keep those updated rates in place to protect taxpayers.



Taking a step back for a moment – For each one, please indicate whether you generally agree or disagree.



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