

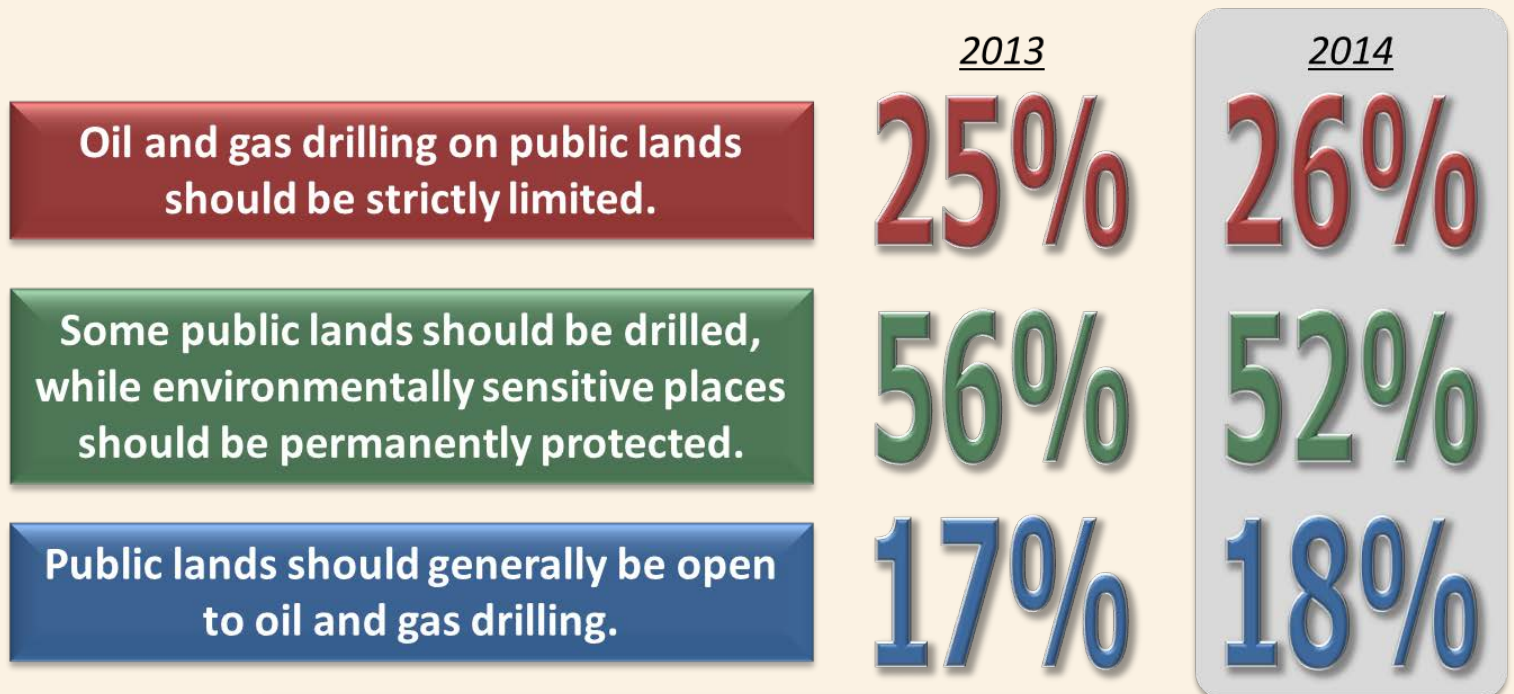
Oil and Gas Development

Western voters want to protect water, wildlife habitat, and other sensitive areas of public lands, while proceeding with energy development.

A majority of Western voters continue to want to ensure environmentally sensitive places on public lands are protected.

More than half (52%) say that environmentally sensitive places on public lands should be permanently protected when energy production is allowed. The core dynamics are essentially unchanged from 2013.

Oil and Gas Drilling on Public Lands



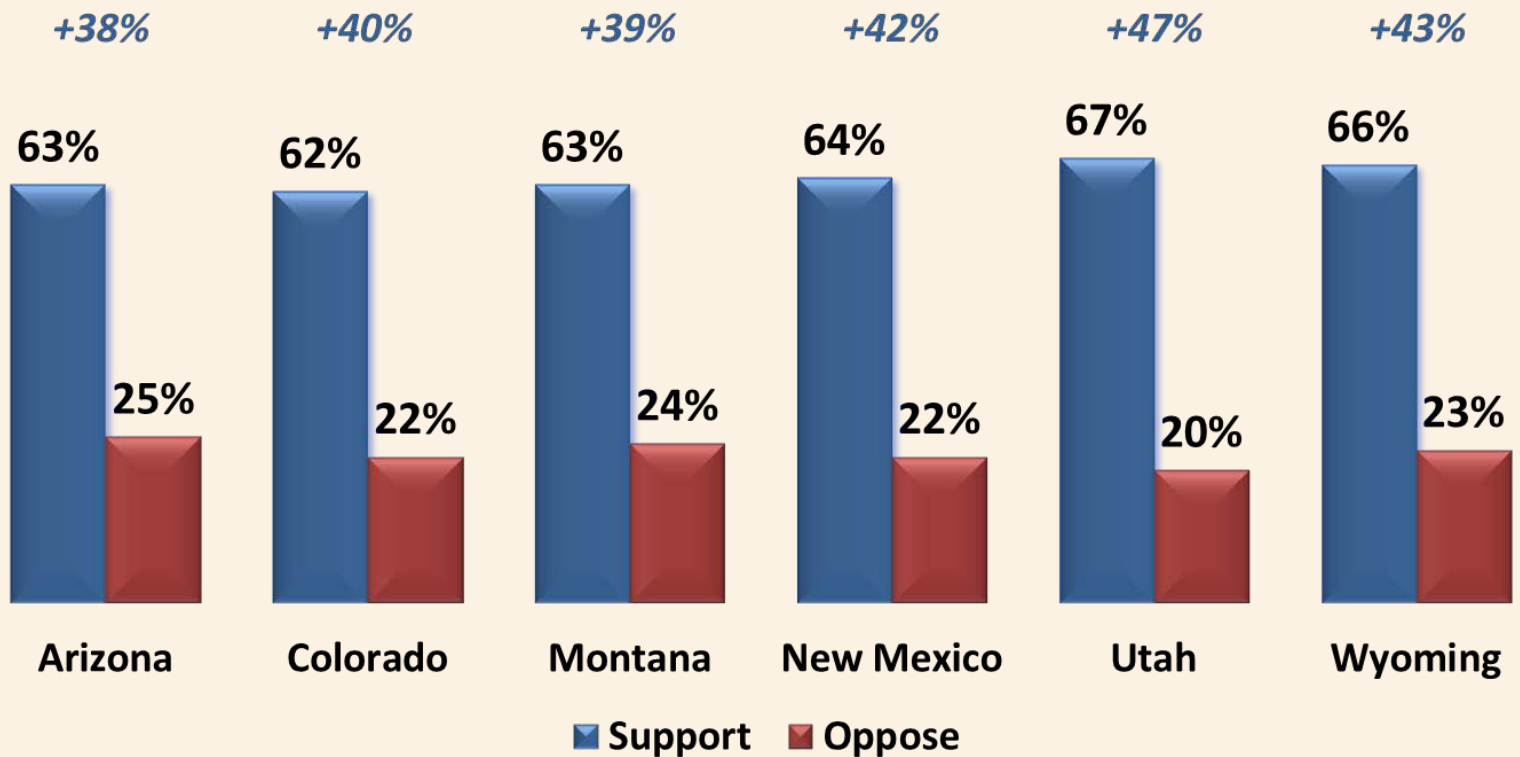
More than three-in-five voters support Master Leasing Plans being used as a tool to balance oil and gas production with protections.

Given this is a relatively new tool, survey respondents were read a brief, neutral explanation of Master Leasing Plans and then asked whether they support or oppose this tool:

“The Bureau of Land Management is responsible for balancing oil and gas drilling, fish and wildlife habitat protection, and recreational uses on millions of acres of public lands. In areas where there could be future disagreements over the best use of the land, the agency is using a new tool, called a Master Leasing Plan. Before any oil or gas drilling is considered, the Master Leasing Plan would map out specific areas appropriate for oil and gas drilling, and create protections where needed for wildlife, water and historic sites. Oil and gas companies, local governments, local businesses environmental organizations, and the public will be able to provide input in the design of the plan.”

Significant majorities of voters in all of these states express support for Master Leasing Plans (MLPs).

Master Leasing Plans By State



Support for MPL's extends across virtually all sub-groups – including Tea Party supporters.

Even after replicating some of the potential debate over MLP's, voters stand fast in their support for this tool as seen here:

Those who support master leasing plans say that some places are appropriate for drilling, but on some public lands drilling could negatively affect our rivers, wildlife, or opportunities for hunting, fishing, and outdoor recreation. These plans will resolve conflicts in advance so that wildlife habitats, air quality and water quality are protected, and leasing can move forward in appropriate areas with fewer delays.

62%

Those who oppose master leasing plans say that the government already takes years planning for whether or not oil and gas drilling can occur in specific sites. Master leasing plans are yet another layer of red tape that will slow down responsible energy production on public lands, making it take even longer for oil and gas companies to develop our country's energy resources.

25%

Voters are more mixed over how to address hydraulic fracturing , although a majority would toughen either existing laws or enforcement.

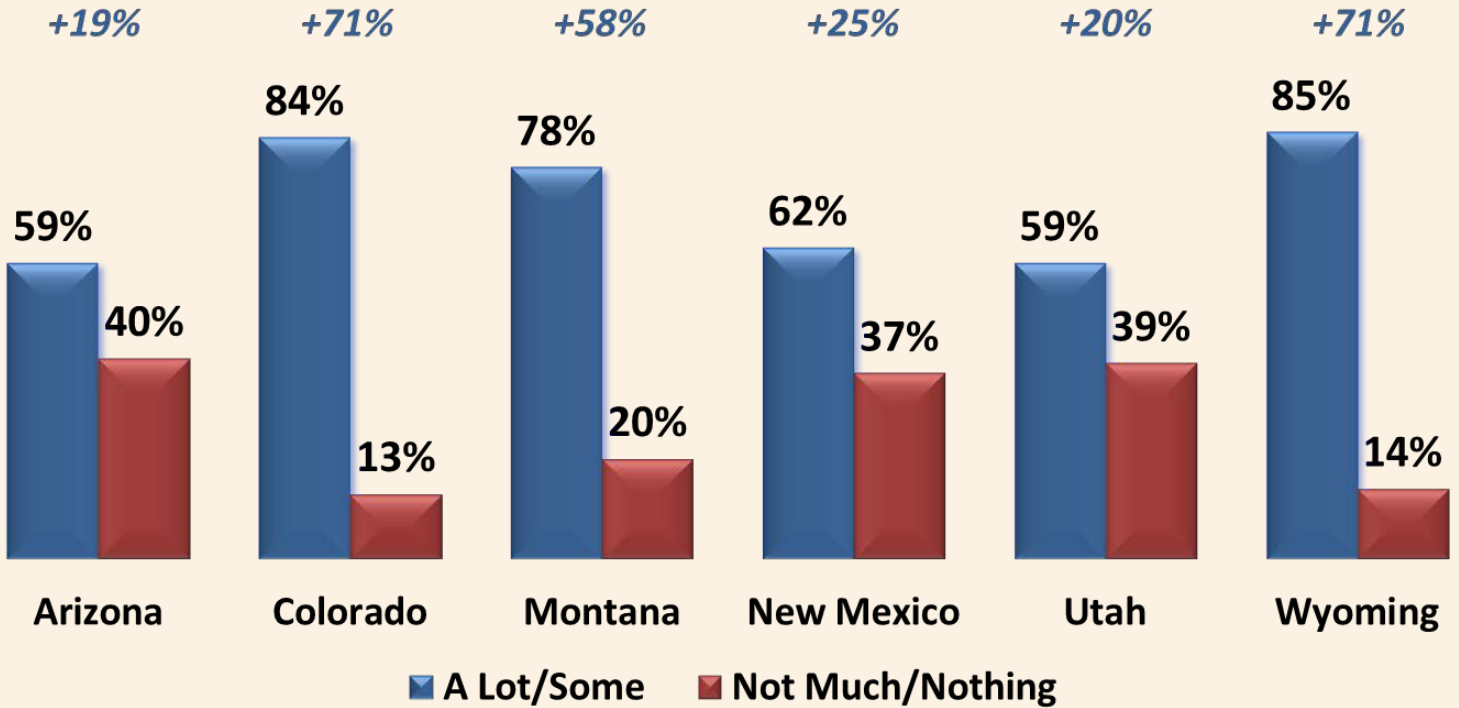
Voters who are familiar with hydraulic fracturing were given four options on the laws which oversee the practice of fracking in their states. Twenty-seven percent (27%) of voters say that the laws ought to be made tougher, and another 27% say that while the laws are tough enough, they need to be better enforced. Far fewer think things are about right currently (16%) and another 17% would reduce regulations on this practice. By state, Arizona and New Mexico are most inclined to toughen laws or enforcement; Utah and Wyoming the least.

Voters in Wyoming, Colorado, and Montana are most aware of the practice of hydraulic fracturing.

Overwhelming majorities of voters in Wyoming (85%), Colorado (84%), and Montana (78%) are aware of the practice of hydraulic fracturing, also known as fracking.



Hydraulic Fracturing Awareness By State



Hydraulic fracturing has become a ballot issue in at least one of these Western states.

With a potential ballot measure facing voters in Colorado, we asked voters there to tell us their inclinations on the dynamics of that issue. Fully one-in-five in the Centennial State are not even willing to provide an opinion on this issue yet, but of the remainder, twice as many opt for local control over statewide regulations.

Allow local communities to regulate the location and extent of fracking, so that they can decide what happens in their community

55%

Have the state regulate the location and extent of fracking, so that there are consistent standards

22%

Do not have an opinion at this time

20%

For a candidate, reducing red tape in order to foster more oil and gas development can be a powerful negative OR positive, bearing a strong relationship to voter's partisan affiliation.

Overall, more than half (54%) of voters would be more likely to vote for a candidate who supported reducing red tape so that there could be more oil and gas development in their state, with 35% saying they would be MUCH more likely. Advocating for this position is a strong positive among Republicans, soft positive for Independents, but is a clear negative among Democrats in this region.

Reduce Red Tape/Oil and Gas Development By Party

