

Montana

A survey of Montana voters regarding conservation demonstrates a strong conservation ethic and support for continuing to fund conservation and maintain protections.



Montana voters overwhelmingly identify as conservationists (70%) at a level even higher than their fellow Westerners— a label that bridges partisan and ethnic lines as well as many other factors in the state.

Sub-group	Identify as Conservationist
City	64%
Suburban	66%
Rural	73%
Tea Party Supporter	74%
Occupy Wall St.	80%
GOP	69%
Independent	65%
Democrat	80%
Hunter	71%
Angler	72%
Not Sportsmen	68%

Montana voters prioritize conservation goals throughout the survey, in regard to energy, regulation, and public lands. Among the select findings from the survey:

On Jobs:

- 80% say that we can protect land and water and have a strong economy at the same time.
- 93% agree that “Our national parks, forests, monuments, and wildlife areas are an essential part of Montana’s economy.”
- When asked whether environmental regulations have a positive or negative impact on jobs in their state, Montana voters are more likely to say they have a positive impact (48%) rather than a negative impact (34%).

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On Energy:

- 63% say increasing the use of renewable energy will create jobs in Montana.
- State voters are more apt to say they would encourage the use of wind power (55%) and solar power (40%) than other sources of energy (responses are top two mentions combined).
- Three-quarters (75%) of state voters indicate support for Montana increasing the use of renewable energy sources like wind, solar and geothermal from ten percent to 25 percent by 2025. Just 19% oppose this idea. The intensity of support (48% strongly support) far exceeds intense opposition (14%). A majority of voters across the political spectrum – including 78% of Independents – support increasing the use of renewable energy to 25 percent.

For the complete 2012 Conservation in the West Poll findings and more information visit: www.stateoftherockies.com.

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On Regulation:

- 58% of Treasure state voters are more likely to view environmental laws more as “important safeguards to protect private property owners, public health and taxpayers from toxic pollution and costly clean-ups” than to view them as “burdensome regulations that tie up industry in red tape, hurt them too much financially, and cost jobs” (33%).
- 75% say that Montana should maintain protections for land, air and water in the state rather than reduce them in an effort to create jobs as quickly as possible.
- Voters in this border state reject the idea that the illegal immigration situation warrants suspending environmental laws along the border. Two-thirds (66%) say that it is not necessary to suspend environmental protections “within one hundred miles of the US-Mexico and US-Canadian border, including in National Parks and other protected public lands,” in order to reduce illegal immigration. Just 21% of Montana voters think this is a necessary step in efforts against illegal immigration.
- Less than half (49%) agree that “One of the best ways to create jobs is to cut back environmental regulations that are weighing down Montana’s businesses.”
- 65% support the EPA “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,” with a plurality (40%) strongly in support.



On Prioritizing Conservation:

- 86% say that “Even with state budget problems, we should still find money to protect and maintain Montana’s land, water and wildlife;” 85% say the same about state parks.
- 87% of Montanans view the loss of family farms and ranches as a serious problem facing their state – the highest of any state in the region.
- Virtually everyone (95%) says that public lands are essential to Montana’s quality of life.

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