

LATINO VOTERS

Having flexed their political muscle in the 2012 election, this growing segment of the Western electorate voices strong pro-conservation views.

On Spending Time in Nature:

- Latino voters in these western states report strong outdoor recreation engagement:

	%
Hiking	52%
Camping	51%
Bird watching/ viewing wildlife	25%
Mountain biking	22%
Riding an off-road vehicle or snowmobile	20%
Boating	17%
Other	6%

- Despite their own activities, Latino voters worry that children do NOT spend enough time outdoors. Fully 86% say children not spending enough time outside is a serious problem, and 60% say it is an extremely or very serious problem. Far fewer white voters express this same level of concern (47% extremely or very serious problem).

Two-thirds (64%) of Latinos describe themselves as a conservationist, virtually the same proportion as the overall electorate.



On Water:

- Even accounting for the fact that many of these Latino voters reside in the Southwest, they still are far more likely than their Anglo counterparts to regard water as a big problem in their state. For example, seven-in-ten Latinos regard the “low levels of water in the state's rivers” (70%) as an extremely serious or very serious problem, compared to 57% of those who identify as white.
- Nearly half (48%) say “inadequate water supplies” is an extremely or very serious problem, with one-in-three saying it is an extremely serious or very serious problem (74% at least somewhat serious problem).
- Similarly, 81% register concern about pollution of rivers, lakes and streams (saying it is a serious problem).
- More than two-thirds (68%) of Latino voters agree that the increasing number of extreme weather events, such as wildfires and droughts, is the result of climate change – fully 10 points higher than among white voters.



On Public Lands:

- Latinos voters are avid supporters of public lands, with 79% believing public lands in the state support the economy, provide recreation opportunities and enhance quality of life, rather than being a fiscal burden and preventing creation of jobs in traditional industries (17%) – that's a 62 point margin.
- They are nearly unanimous that public lands are an essential part of the state's economy (82% agree) and two-thirds agree that the presence of these lands help attract high quality employers and good jobs (66%).
- An overwhelming majority of Latinos oppose selling some federal public lands as a way to reduce the nation's budget deficit (26% support / 70% oppose).

On Energy Development:

- Latinos would prioritize renewable energy sources and energy efficiency as the way to power their state. When asked for the two energy sources they want to see encouraged, They say their state should primarily encourage solar (64%) and wind (39%), followed by energy efficiency efforts (26%).
- Conversely, they would discourage the use of coal (54%) and nuclear (47%).
- A majority of Latinos say environmentally sensitive places on public lands should be permanently protected from drilling (52%), or prefer to limit drilling entirely on public lands (31%) rather than opening more areas to energy development (16%).
- When provided with a simulation of the debate on this issue, Latinos side with those advocating for stronger standards and protecting certain lands, rather than increasing energy development on public lands.

More than 38 million acres of public lands - including land in six national parks - are currently leased by oil and gas companies, and oil production on public lands has been steadily climbing. Public lands that are drilled are often closed for other uses - like hunting or hiking - and the effects of contamination on the land can linger for generations. We need to ensure strong standards are in place and that drilling is not allowed in critical locations near recreation areas, water sources, and wildlife.

Bureaucratic red tape, burdensome federal regulations, and government policies that block access to federal lands have stood in the way of the West reaching its full energy and jobs potential and our country gaining energy independence. Energy production on public lands has declined, while increasing by double digits on private lands. We need to allow more public lands to be opened to responsible energy development.

65%

28%

