

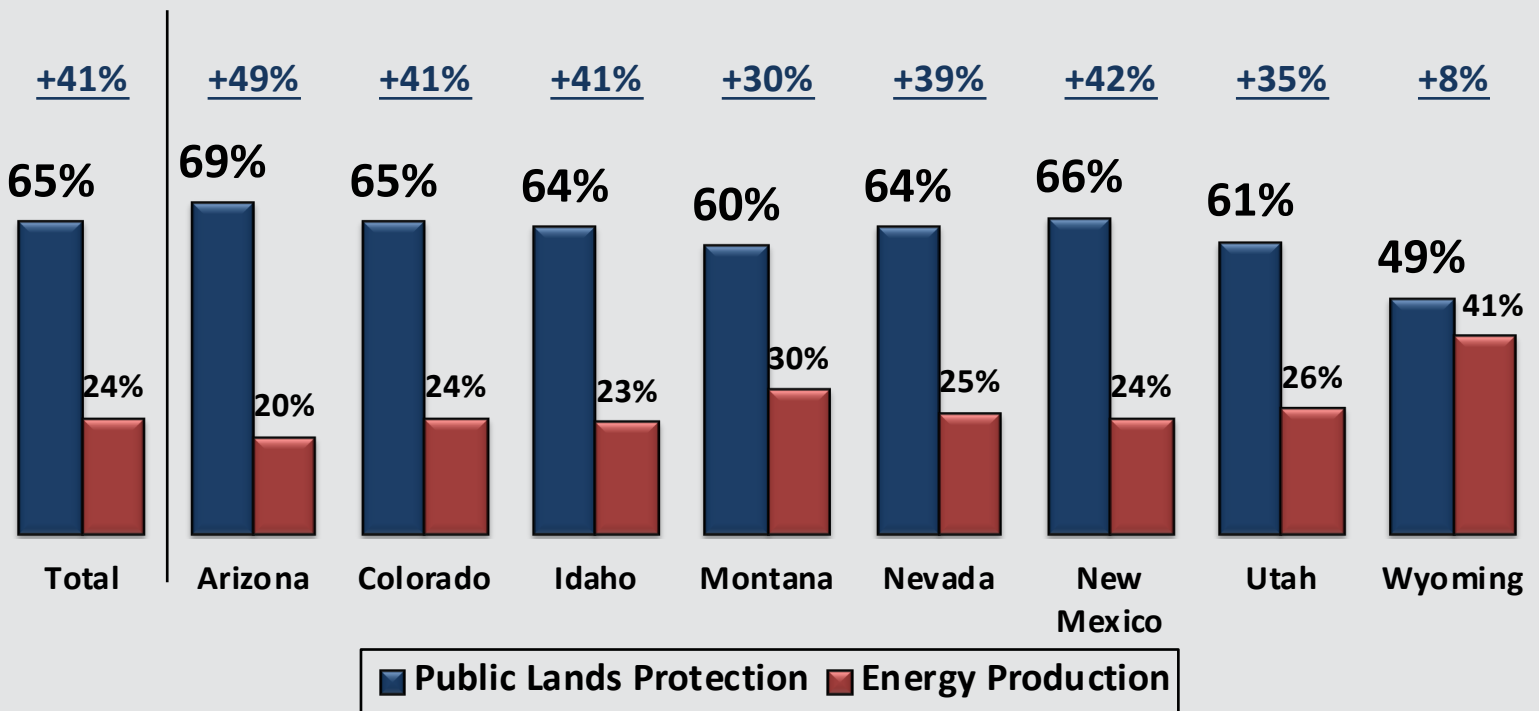
# West Rejects Washington Policies

*By nearly a three-to-one margin, voters advocate for emphasizing conservation over energy production on national public lands.*

Sixty-five percent (65%) of voters prefer that the new Congress place more of an emphasis on protecting “sources of clean water, our air quality, and wildlife habitat, while providing opportunities to visit and recreate on our national public lands,” rather than on producing more domestic energy on public lands by making more land available for “responsible oil and gas drilling and mining” (24%).

In every single state, voters advise placing greater emphasis on protection over production on public lands.

## Preferred Emphasis for Public Lands – By State

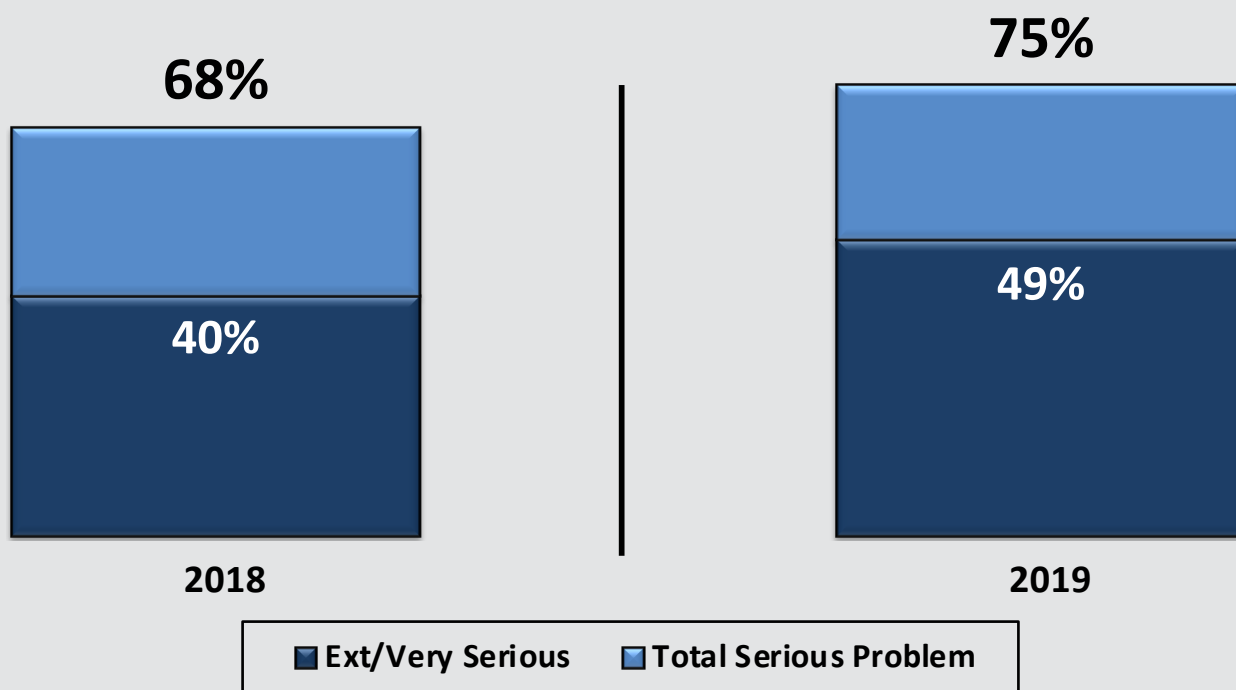


There are distinctions based on partisan affiliation. Republicans prefer protecting lands by an eleven point margin (48% protect public lands/37% energy production), while Independents (68%/20%) are more closely aligned with Democrats (82%/11%) on this issue.

**Three-quarters of Westerners view rollbacks of environmental laws as a serious problem – up from one year ago.**

There is a seven point uptick in those saying rollbacks of laws that protect our land, water, and wildlife are a serious problem, with a nine point increase in those saying rollbacks are an extremely/very serious problem. Respondents in Nevada (55% ext/very serious) and New Mexico (53% ext/very serious) are the most concerned.

**Rollbacks of Laws That Protect Our Land, Water and Wildlife – By Year Total**



***Voters characterize a number of changes in policies affecting land, water and wildlife as more bad than good.***

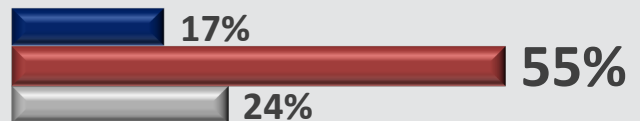
**Removing national monument protections from lands in the West which contain archaeological and Native American sites, but also have oil, gas and mineral deposits**



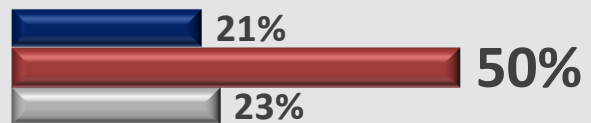
**Removing Clean Water Act protections from smaller streams and seasonal wetlands**



**Reducing the amount of time that the public can comment on proposed changes affecting public lands, such as leasing for oil and gas or mining**



**Allowing increased oil and gas production on eighty percent of the “critical habitat” that western states had identified in 2015 in order to try and restore the threatened sage grouse**



■ Good Change      ■ Bad Change  
■ Neither Good Nor Bad

More Westerners say that removing national monument protections from lands in the West which contain archaeological and Native American sites, but also have oil, gas and mineral deposits is a bad idea than any other government policy change. The view that changes to national monuments has been a bad change is evident across party lines. A majority of Republicans in the West (56%) say this is a bad change, along with most independents (68%) and Democrats (78%).



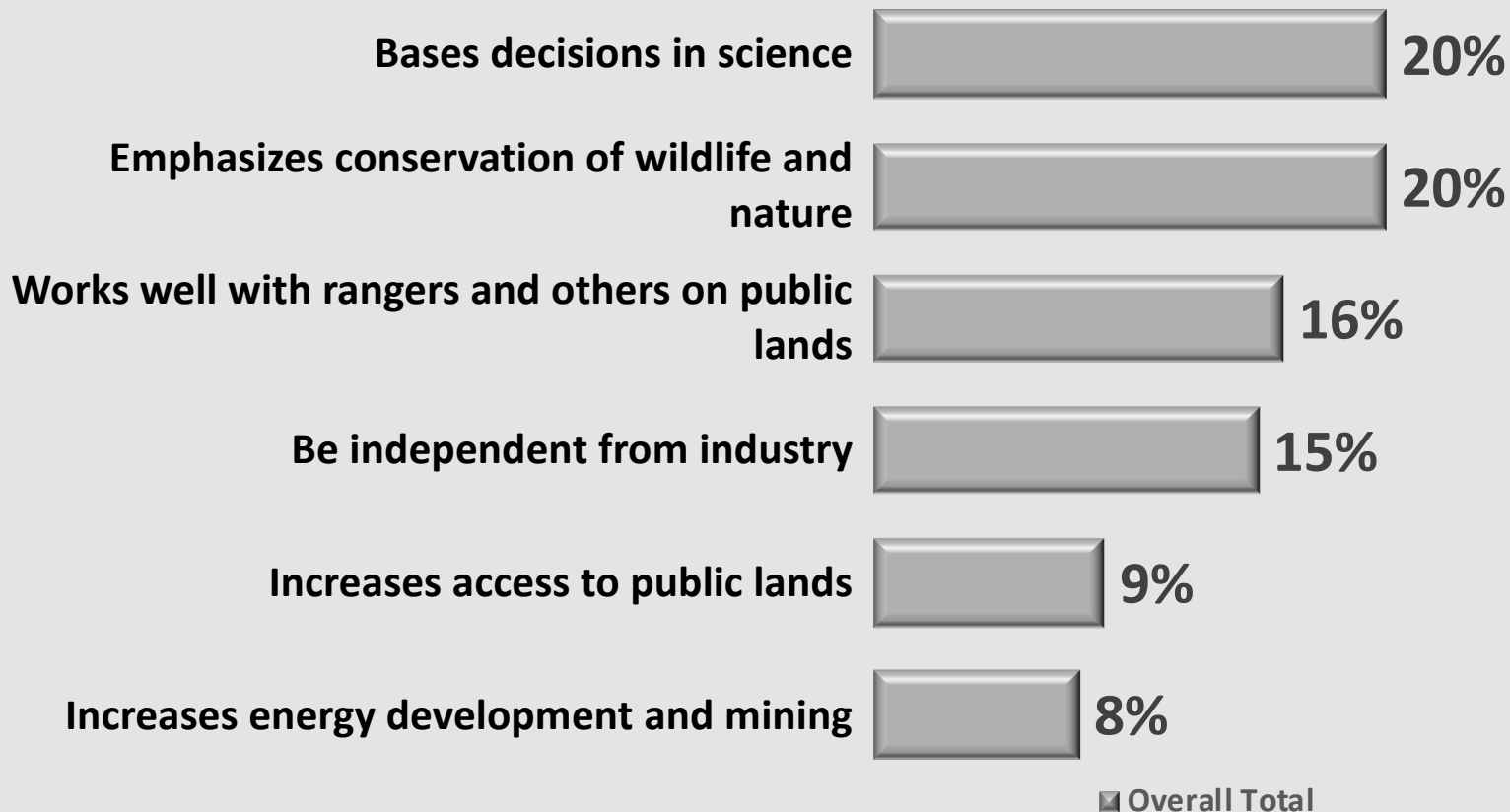
These policy changes are more likely to be viewed as bad ideas than good ideas by voters across party lines, in every state and every type of community. For example, voters living in small town and rural areas of the West tend to reject the policy changes, although not as strongly as those in urban and suburban areas of the region.

**% Labeling Each Federal Policy a “Bad Change” –  
By Type of Community**

<b>Big City</b>	<b>Suburban</b>	<b>Small Town</b>	<b>Rural</b>
Removing national monument protections from lands in the West which contain archaeological and Native American sites, but also have oil, gas and mineral deposits <b>(71%)</b>	Removing national monument protections from lands in the West which contain archaeological and Native American sites, but also have oil, gas and mineral deposits <b>(68%)</b>	Removing national monument protections from lands in the West which contain archaeological and Native American sites, but also have oil, gas and mineral deposits <b>(63%)</b>	Removing national monument protections from lands in the West which contain archaeological and Native American sites, but also have oil, gas and mineral deposits <b>(63%)</b>
Removing Clean Water Act protections from smaller streams and seasonal wetlands. <b>(60%)</b>	Removing Clean Water Act protections from smaller streams and seasonal wetlands. <b>(63%)</b>	Removing Clean Water Act protections from smaller streams and seasonal wetlands. <b>(59%)</b>	Removing Clean Water Act protections from smaller streams and seasonal wetlands. <b>(58%)</b>
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Allowing increased oil and gas production on eighty percent of the critical habitat that western states had identified in 2015 in order to try and restore the threatened sage grouse <b>(53%)</b>	Allowing increased oil and gas production on eighty percent of the critical habitat that western states had identified in 2015 in order to try and restore the threatened sage grouse <b>(50%)</b>	Allowing increased oil and gas production on eighty percent of the critical habitat that western states had identified in 2015 in order to try and restore the threatened sage grouse <b>(52%)</b>	Allowing increased oil and gas production on eighty percent of the critical habitat that western states had identified in 2015 in order to try and restore the threatened sage grouse <b>(45%)</b>






*Western voters want the next Secretary of the Interior to emphasize conservation and base decisions primarily in science.*



In considering the qualities that could be held by the next leader at the Department of the Interior, voters throughout the West prioritize conservation of wildlife and nature, along with basing decisions in science. They focus least on increasing energy development and mining and on access to public lands. The only exception to this is in Wyoming where an emphasis on energy is on par with a host of other qualities.

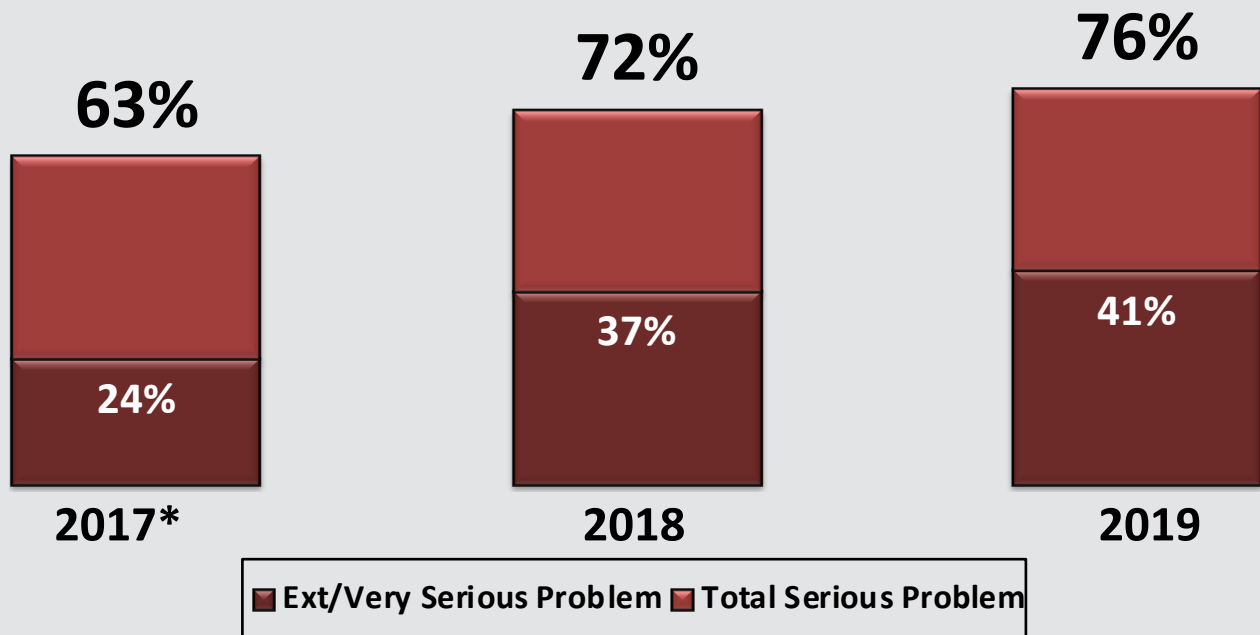
There are a few interesting distinctions among various sub-groups of Western voters:

- Sportsmen are more likely to focus on emphasizing conservation of wildlife and nature (18%), while increasing access to public lands rates lower (12%);
- Rural voters prioritize working well with rangers and others on public lands (21%) as do GOP voters as seen in the graph below (19%);
- College-educated voters, millennials and Democrats are most apt to focus on basing decision in science (25% college +, 29% under age 35, and 27% of Democrats).

<i>Actions Ranked by % Overall Total</i>	<b>Overall Total</b>			
<b>Bases decisions in science</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>27%</b>
<b>Emphasizes conservation of wildlife and nature</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>27%</b>
<b>Works well with rangers and others on public lands</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>12%</b>
<b>Be independent from industry</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>17%</b>
<b>Increases access to public lands</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>5%</b>
<b>Increases energy development and mining</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>3%</b>

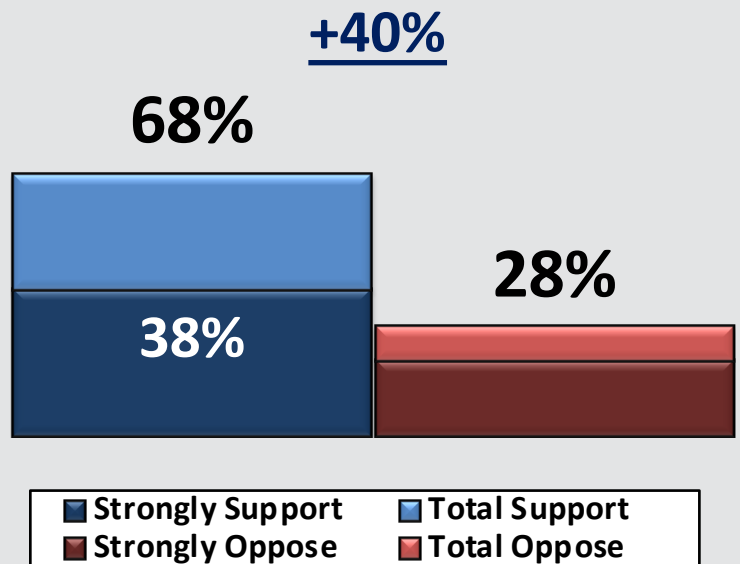


*Lack of resources to care for public lands is at the highest level we have seen in the West.*



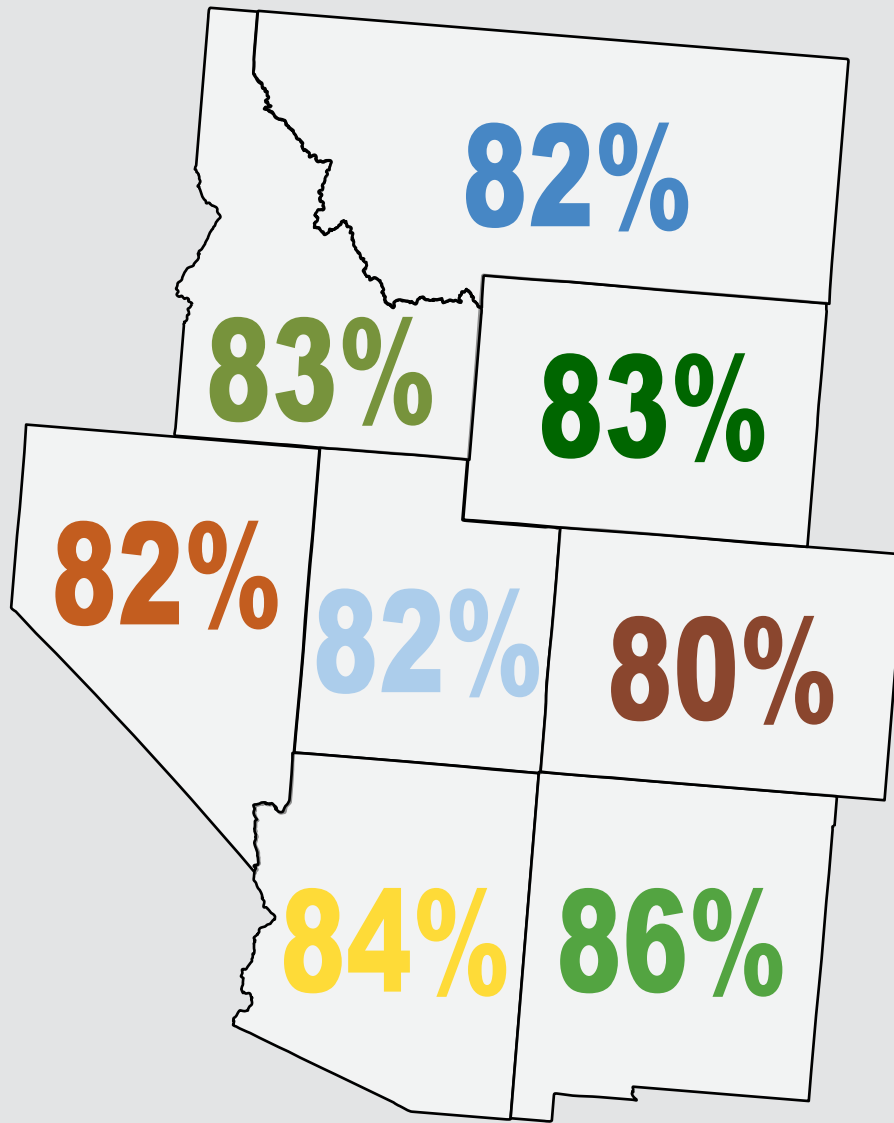
Given the increasing concern about funding, we asked voters if they would “support or oppose a small increase in local taxes or fees in order to protect water, conserve wildlife habitat, and ensure opportunities for outdoor recreation” in their part of their state. More than two-thirds (68%) indicate support, and a majority of voters across the political spectrum also support a tax increase for conservation.

Would you support or oppose a small increase in local taxes or fees in order to protect water, conserve wildlife habitat and ensure opportunities for outdoor recreation in your part of your state?



*The overwhelming majority of Western voters (83%) also want Congress to pass Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) re-authorization.*

**% Total Support Re-Authorization of LWCF**



Support for re-authorization today is higher than it was three years ago when we asked about renewal. In 2015, overall support stood at 75%, with 46% strongly in support. Support is also strong across party lines, with 76% of Republicans, 81% of independents and fully 92% of Democrats supporting reauthorization.



***Priorities for conservation funding are protecting and restoring water followed by wildlife habitat.***

If additional funds are available, Western voters provide clear guidance for how those funds should be prioritized. First and foremost, voters in these states say it is extremely or very important to manage forests to help prevent catastrophic wildfires (84% extremely/very important) or to protect and restore the health of rivers, lakes and streams (81%). Projects related to wildlife also rate highly among Western voters, although majorities find each of these potential uses of funds to be at least very important.

