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Majority of Western Voters Believe Environmental Protections, Strong Economy Can Co-Exist

First-ever “Conservation in the West Survey” measures voters’ environmental attitudes in Colorado, Montana, New Mexico, Utah and Wyoming

COLORADO SPRINGS, CO — A new bi-partisan poll of inter-mountain West voters shows that a strong majority (77 percent) believe that environmental standards and a strong economy can co-exist. The findings, from the first-ever “Conservation in the West Survey,” reveal differences and many points of agreement among voters on issues such as conservation, regulations, renewable energy and other environmental issues.

The poll, conducted by Lori Weigel at Public Opinion Strategies (a Republican firm) and Dave Metz at Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates (a Democratic firm), measured environmental attitudes of 2,200 voters in the five Western states January 23-27, 2011. The survey is being released by the Colorado College [State of the Rockies Project](#), which, for the past eight years, has worked to increase public understanding of vital issues affecting the Rockies through annual report cards, free events, discussions and other activities.

“This research underscores an interesting and important trend in these five states,” said Walt Hecox, Ph.D., professor at Colorado College and director of the State of the Rockies Project. “While there are differences of opinion on a range of issues, there are true common values shared between each state, including a commitment to protect the important natural resources that make this region so unique.”

“Particularly interesting is the emergence of renewable energy sources – such as solar and wind power – as a much more attractive option over traditional fossil fuels,” added Hecox. (According to the results, voters indicate more positive impressions of solar and wind power as energy sources than they do for coal or oil.) “Voters see renewable energy as producing jobs, and they have ambitious goals for using more of these sources to supply their states’ overall energy needs.”

Below are some of the key findings. To view the executive summary or entire report, please visit: http://www.coloradocollege.edu/StateoftheRockies/conservationinthewestsurvey_e.html

Issue	Western Region	Colorado	Montana	New Mexico	Utah	Wyoming
Voters believe that clean water, air, natural areas and wildlife are fragile aspects of life in their state that could change if not protected.	69%	71%	64%	68%	70%	67%
Voters agree that “even with state budget problems, we should still find the money to protect our land, water and wildlife.”	84%	87%	81%	80%	81%	84%
Nearly half of voters believe current environmental laws are tough enough but should be better enforced.	48%	49%	47%	46%	45%	49%
Voters overwhelmingly believe that we can protect land and water and still have a strong economy with jobs – without having to choose one over the other.	77%	77%	75%	77%	76%	81%
Voters believe increasing the use of renewable energy will create, not cost, jobs in their state.	67%	69%	64%	75%	57%	63%
Voters would dramatically increase the amount of their state’s electricity needs produced by renewable sources. Desired percentages of that overall makeup include:	65%	64%	66%	68%	64%	62%
Except for Wyoming, a majority of voters would pay \$10 more per month to increase the amount of energy coming from renewable sources.	54%	55%	52%	52%	53%	46%
While views on climate change are mixed, voters solidly support the EPA requiring reductions in carbon emissions from power plants, cars and factories to reduce global warming.	67%	70%	62%	65%	63%	56%

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About Colorado College

Colorado College is a nationally prominent, four-year liberal arts college that was founded in Colorado Springs in 1874. The college operates on the innovative Block Plan, in which its 2,025 undergraduate students study one course at a time in intensive 3½-week segments. Visit: www.ColoradoCollege.edu. For the past eight years, the college also has run the [State of the Rockies Project](#), which seeks to increase public understanding of vital issues affecting the Rockies through annual report cards, free events, discussions and other activities.

About Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates

Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates (FM3) – a national opinion research firm with offices in Oakland, Los Angeles and Madison, Wisconsin – has specialized in public policy-

oriented opinion research since 1981. FM3 offers a wide range of opinion research, communications strategy and consulting services to assist political candidates, ballot measure committees, corporations, nonprofits and government agencies. The firm has assisted hundreds of political campaigns, public agencies, businesses and public interest organizations with opinion research and strategic guidance.

About Public Opinion Strategies

Public Opinion Strategies (POS) is a national political and public affairs opinion research firm, with 12 partners working across the country, including in Denver and Albuquerque. Founded in 1991, POS has interviewed more than 5 million voters and consumers in all 50 states and in more than two dozen foreign countries. With roots in political campaigns, the firm also conducts issue-related research that extends to corporate image, branding, community relations and policy research for Fortune 500 corporations, trade associations, not-for-profit organizations, government entities and industry coalitions throughout the nation.

About the Polling Partnership of FM3 and POS

FM3 and POS have conducted bipartisan research on a wide range of issues over the last seven years, in particular on conservation-related initiatives and policies. Together, the two firms have jointly conducted research on behalf of political campaigns, businesses, not-for-profit organizations and public agencies in 35 states and nationally. In these five states, the two firms have conducted 290,000 interviews among voters and consumers.