



THE COLORADO COLLEGE
STATE OF THE ROCKIES PROJECT

Conservation in the West Poll

KEY FINDINGS

THE 2018 SURVEY OF THE ATTITUDES OF VOTERS IN EIGHT WESTERN STATES



JANUARY 2018

CONDUCTED BY: **LORI WEIGEL / PUBLIC OPINION STRATEGIES**
DAVE METZ / FAIRBANK, MASLIN, MAULLIN, METZ & ASSOCIATES

Methodology

- ❖ 3,200 telephone (cell and landline) interviews with 400 registered voters in eight states: Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, New Mexico, Nevada, Utah, Wyoming.
- ❖ Interviews conducted December 20, 2017 and January 2-8, 2018, in Spanish and English.
- ❖ The margin of overall sampling error is $\pm 2.65\%$ at the 95% confidence interval for the total sample; and $\pm 4.9\%$ for each state.
- ❖ The total numbers have been statistically weighted to reflect the true geographic distribution of voters throughout the region. Interviews within each state were distributed proportionally by region and each sample is demographically representative of their electorate.
- ❖ Comparisons made to similarly conducted surveys in 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016 & 2017; any trend data is based on seven states, rather than eight unless otherwise specified.
- ❖ Bi-partisan research team of Public Opinion Strategies (R) and Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates (D).

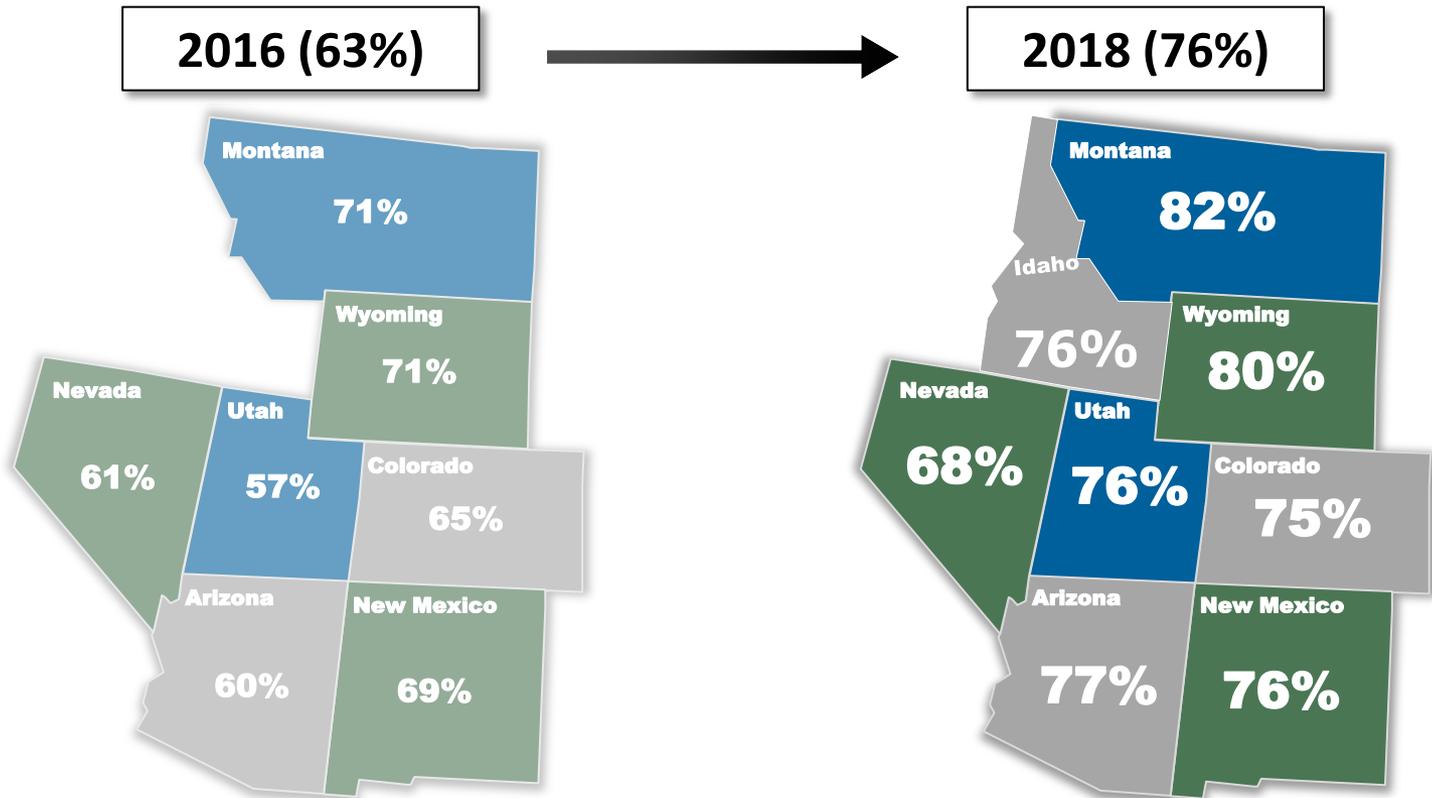




Outdoor Recreation

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Western voters are FAR more likely to identify as a conservationist today than just two years ago; increases in every single state.



Do you consider yourself to be a conservationist?

Three-quarters of Westerners identify as an outdoor recreation enthusiast.



74%

Consider Themselves an
Outdoor Recreation
Enthusiast

Do you consider yourself to be an outdoor recreation enthusiast?

And that they engage in various activities.



Hiking



Camping



Bird watching and viewing wildlife



Boating



Riding an off-road vehicle or snowmobile



Mountain biking

Western States	2017 National
63%	49%
57%	42%
37%	30%
26%	30%
23%	15%
19%	12%

Which of the following types of outdoor recreation, if any, do you participate in regularly?

Including hunting and fishing.

Hunters



Anglers



Western States

31%

2017 National

28%

37%

29%

Do you consider yourself a hunter, an angler or both?

American voters increasingly tell us they engage in many types of outdoor recreation.



Hiking

2012 National

40%

2017 National

49%



Camping

32%

42%



Bird watching and viewing wildlife

28%

30%



Boating

25%

30%



Mountain biking

14%

12%



Riding an off-road vehicle or snowmobile

11%

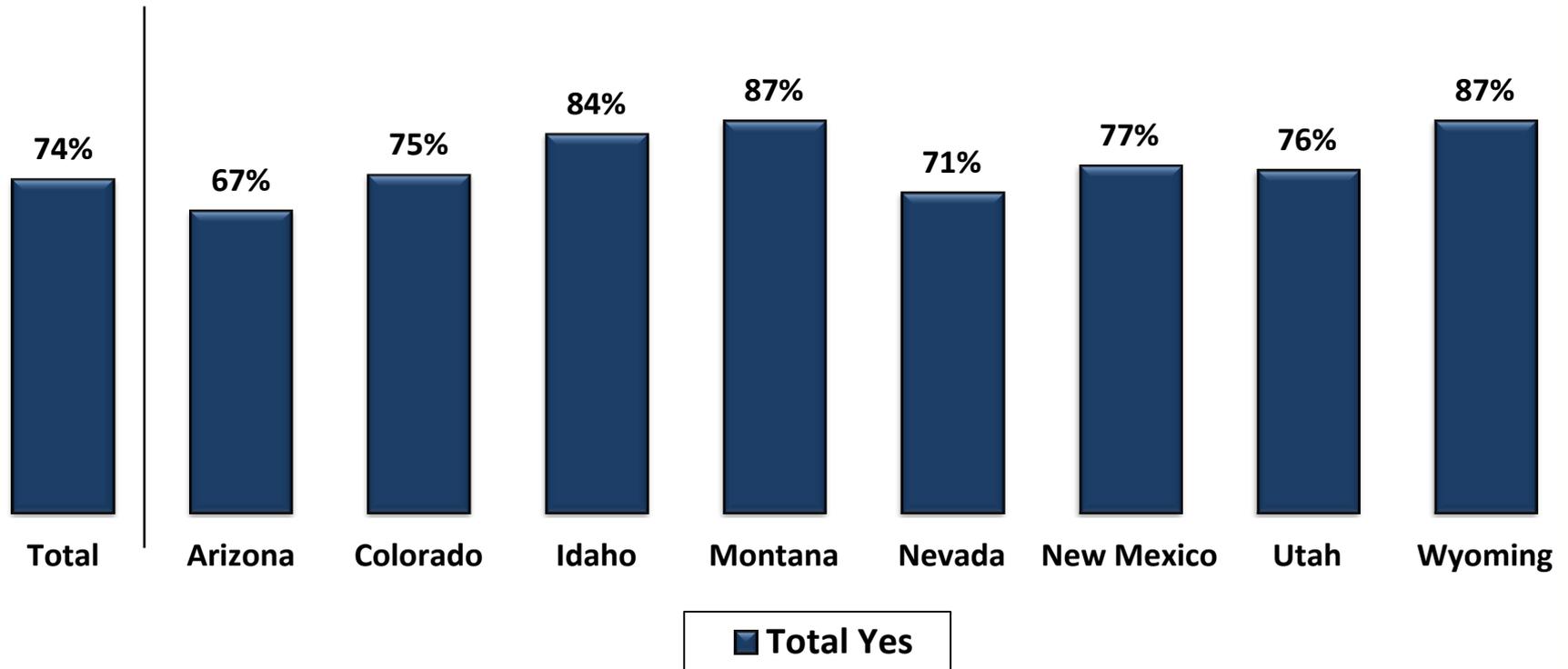
15%

Note: Totals may add up to more than 100% because multiple responses were allowed.

Which of the following types of outdoor recreation, if any, do you participate in regularly?

More than two-thirds in every Western state identify as an outdoor recreation enthusiast.

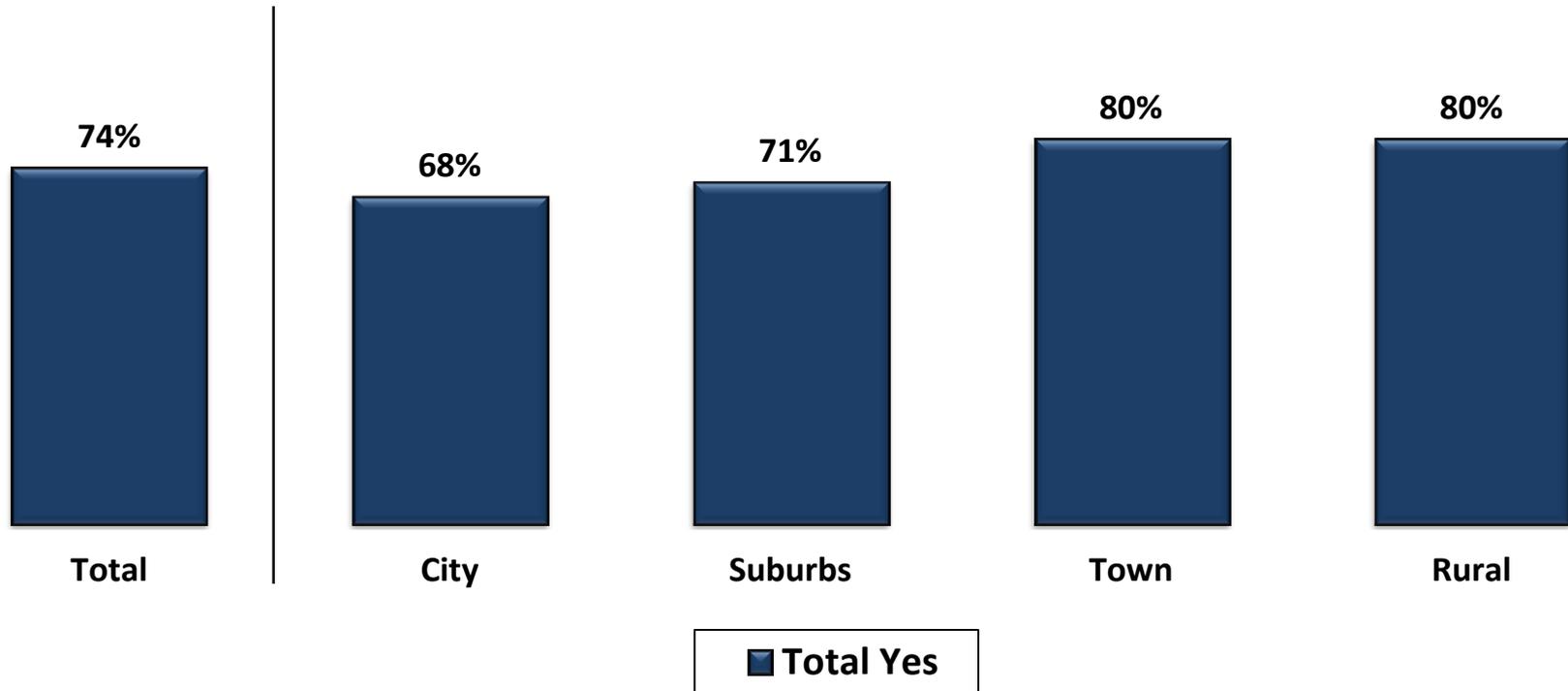
Outdoor Recreation Enthusiast – By State



Do you consider yourself to be an outdoor recreation enthusiast?

Small town and rural residents are most likely to describe themselves as outdoor recreationists.

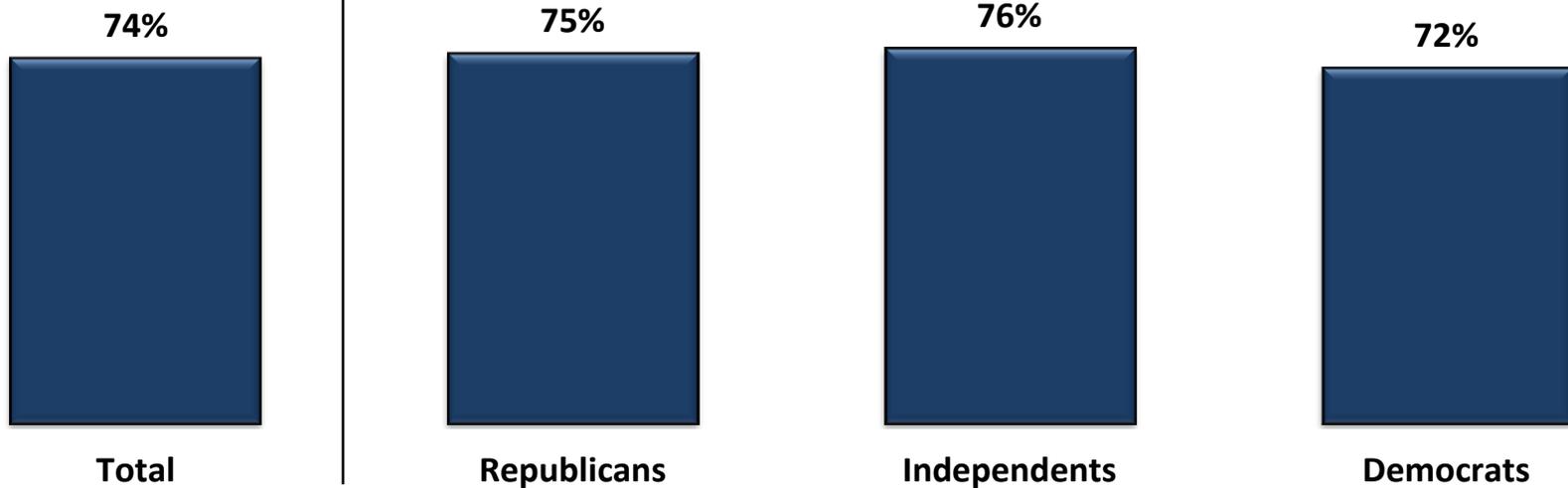
Outdoor Recreation Enthusiast – By Community Type



Do you consider yourself to be an outdoor recreation enthusiast?

Voters of all political stripes view themselves as outdoor recreation enthusiasts in the West.

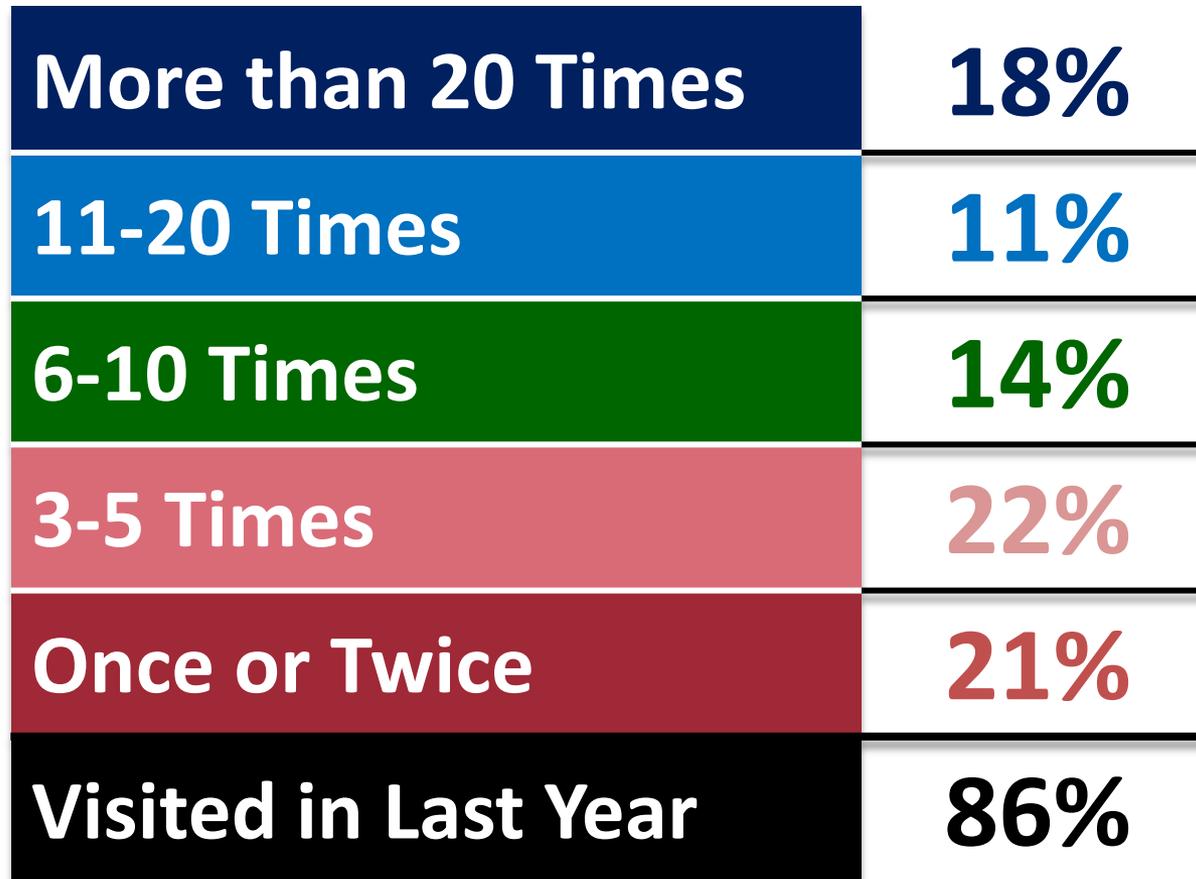
Outdoor Recreation Enthusiast – By Party



■ Total Yes

Do you consider yourself to be an outdoor recreation enthusiast?

Nearly nine-in-ten Westerners visited national public lands last year; one-in five more than 20 times.



Over the past year, how many times do you think you have visited public lands managed by U.S. agencies, such as national parks, national forests, national monuments, national wildlife refuges, or Bureau of Land Management Lands?

Sportsmen and outdoor rec enthusiasts have visited public lands much more often.

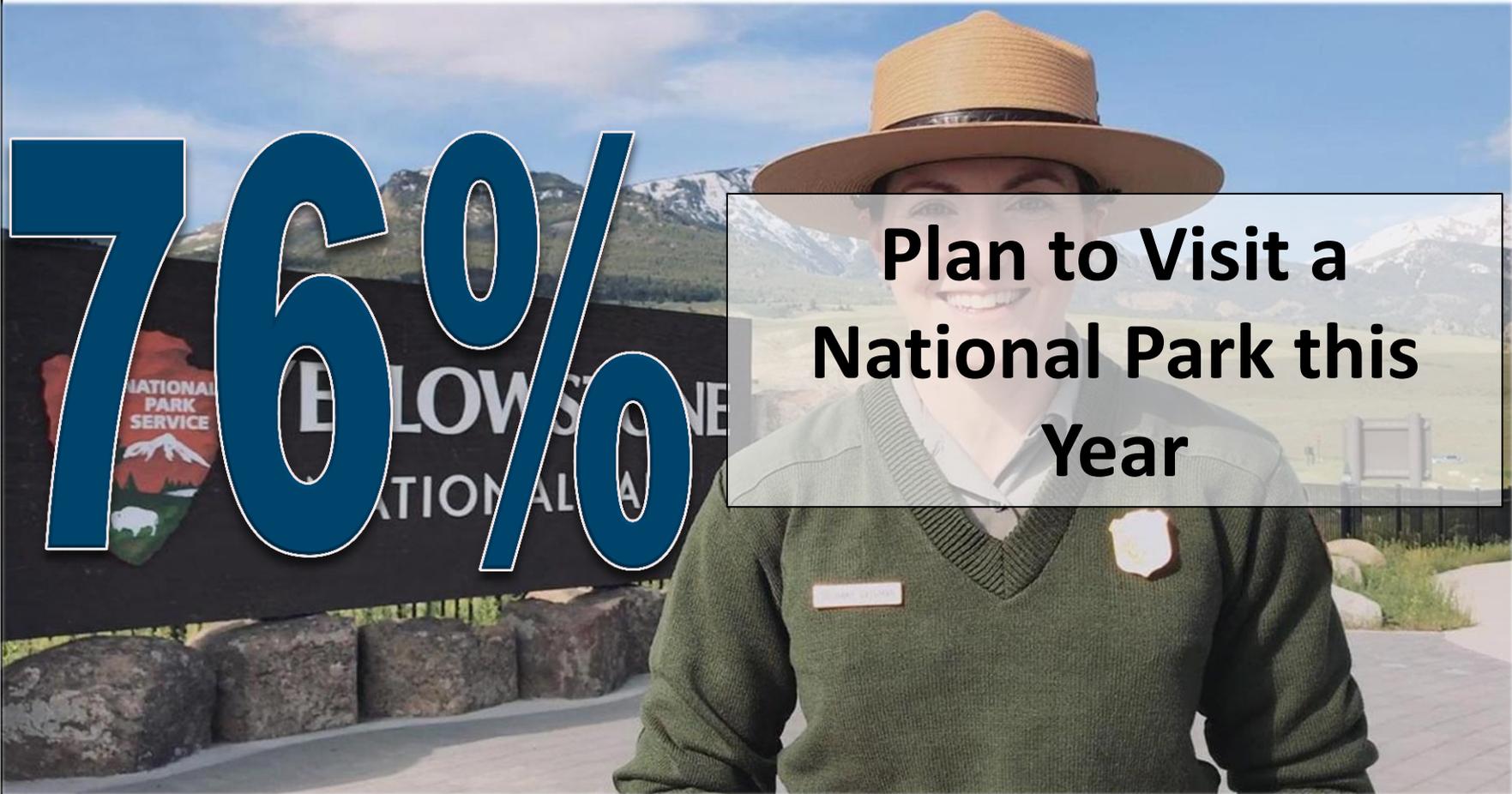
Ranked by Total % Visits

	Total	Sportsmen	Outdoor Rec Enthusiasts
More than 20 Times	18%	28%	23%
6-20 Times	25%	28%	30%
1-5 Times	42%	36%	38%
Visited in Last Year	86%	91%	91%

Over the past year, how many times do you think you have visited public lands managed by U.S. agencies, such as national parks, national forests, national monuments, national wildlife refuges, or Bureau of Land Management Lands?

Three quarters of Westerners say they plan to visit a National Park in 2018.

76%

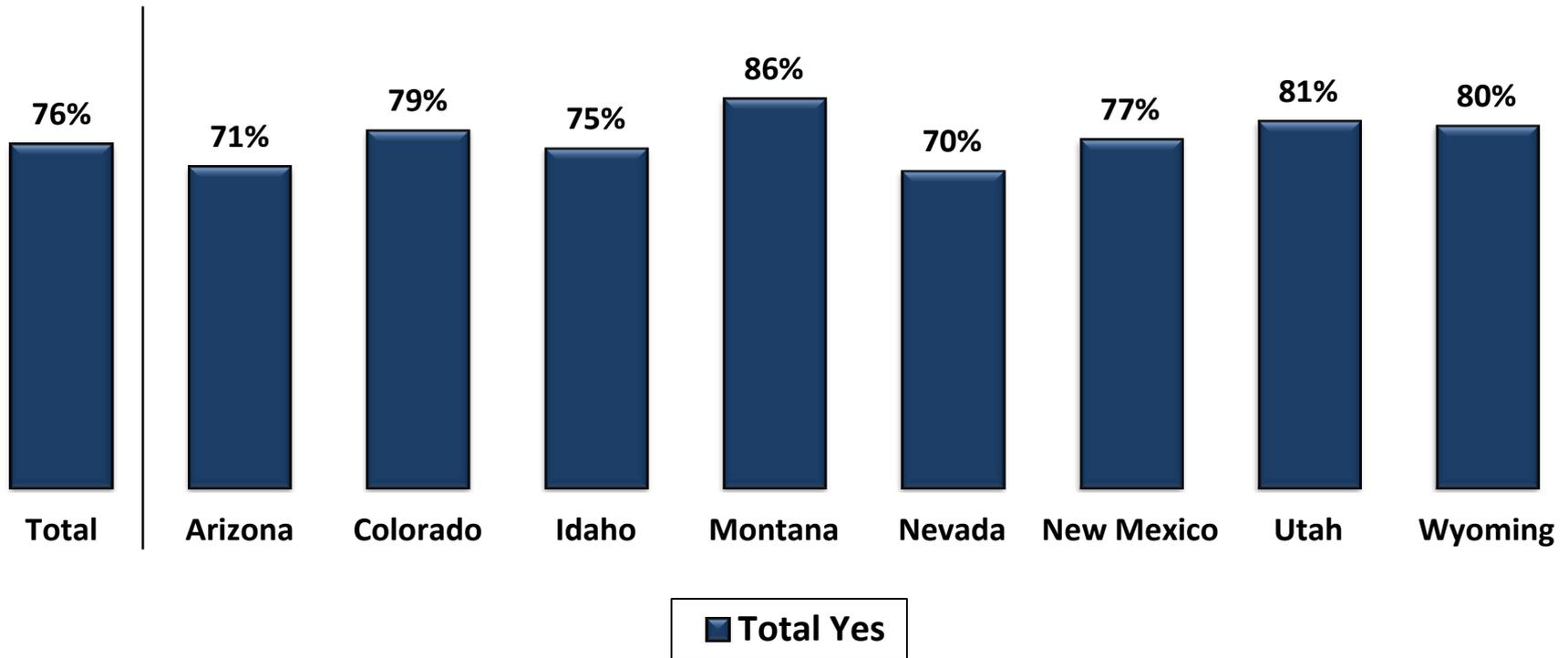
A smiling woman in a National Park Service uniform and hat stands in front of a sign that reads "76% Plan to Visit a National Park this Year". The sign also features the National Park Service logo and the text "NATIONAL PARK SERVICE" and "ELOWSTONE NATIONAL ALA".

Plan to Visit a National Park this Year

Do you plan to visit a national park sometime in 2018?

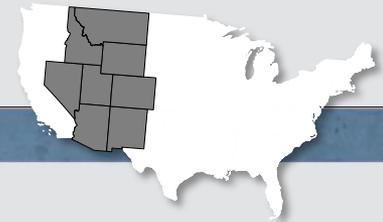
Seven-in-ten or more in each state say they plan to visit a National Park this year.

Yes, Plan to Visit a National Park in 2018 – By State



Do you plan to visit a national park sometime in 2018?

Economic Advantages of Public Lands



Seven-in-ten say that the outdoor recreation economy will be very important to the future of their state and the West.

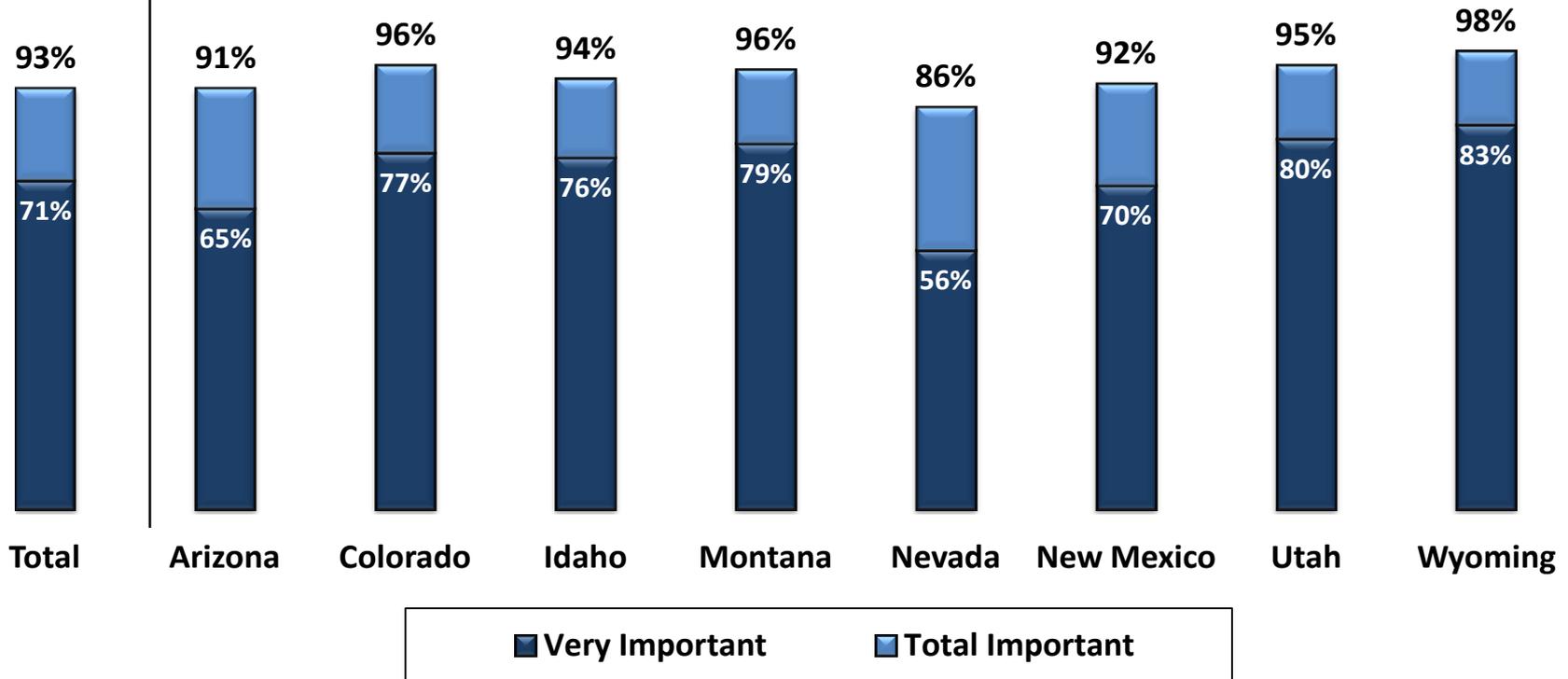
Economic Advantages of Outdoor Recreation

When you think about the economic future of (STATE) and the Western U.S., how important do you think the outdoor recreation economy will be - meaning people who come to hunt, fish, camp, see wildlife, as well as those who manufacture and sell equipment for those activities?

Very Important	71%
Somewhat Important	22%
Total Important	93%
Total Not Important	6%
A Little Important	4%
Not Important At All	2%

A majority of voters in every state view outdoor recreation as very important.

Importance of Outdoor Recreation to Economic Future of West – By State



When you think about the economic future of (STATE) and the Western U.S., how important do you think the outdoor recreation economy will be – meaning people who come to hunt, fish, camp, see wildlife, as well as those who manufacture and sell equipment for those activities?

Similarly, half of Westerners view the presence of public lands and the outdoor lifestyle as a big advantage for the Western economy.

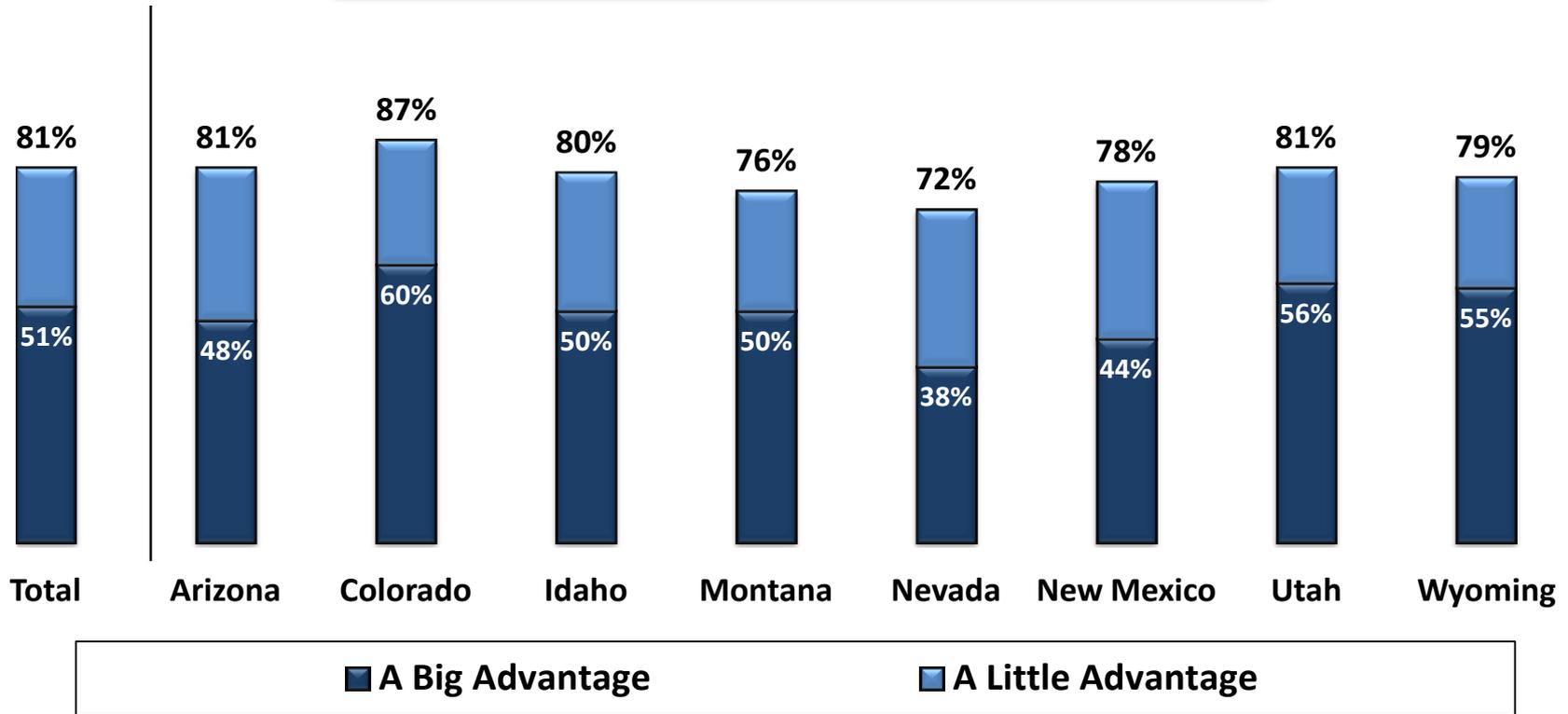
Economic Advantages Due to Public Lands

When you think about the economic future of (STATE) and the Western U.S. in attracting good jobs and innovative companies, would you say that due to the presence of public lands and our lifestyle of outdoor recreation, that the West has-

A big advantage over other parts of the country	51%
A little advantage over other parts of the country	30%
Total Advantage	81%
Total No Advantage	14%
No real advantage over other parts of the country	14%

Colorado, Utah and Wyoming are most likely to view public lands/outdoors as a big advantage.

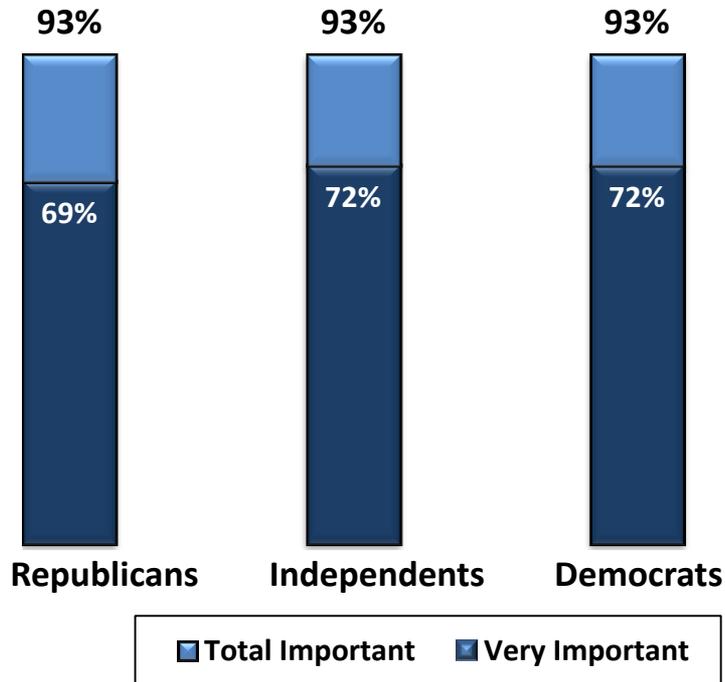
Economic Advantages Due to Public Lands – By State



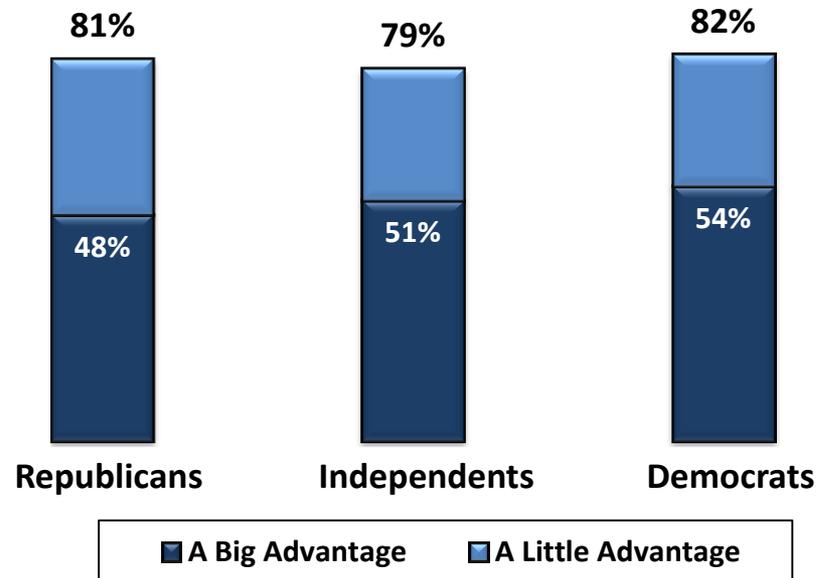
When you think about the economic future of (STATE) and the Western U.S. in attracting good jobs and innovative companies, would you say that due to the presence of public lands and our lifestyle of outdoor recreation, that the West has –

Voters from across the partisan spectrum view outdoor recreation as important to the economic future and advantageous for the West.

Importance of the outdoor recreation economy to the Western U.S.



Advantage of the presence of public lands to the economic future of the Western U.S.



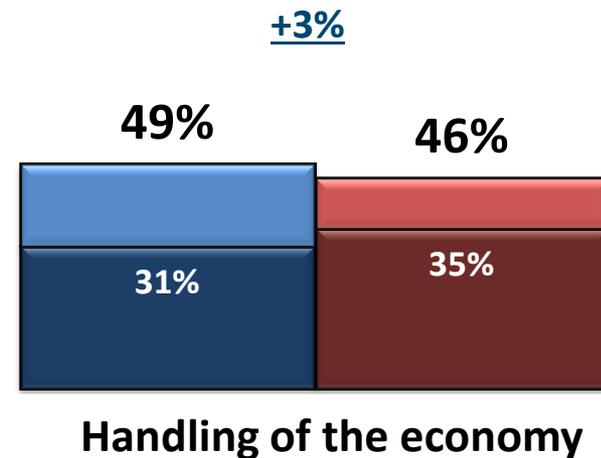
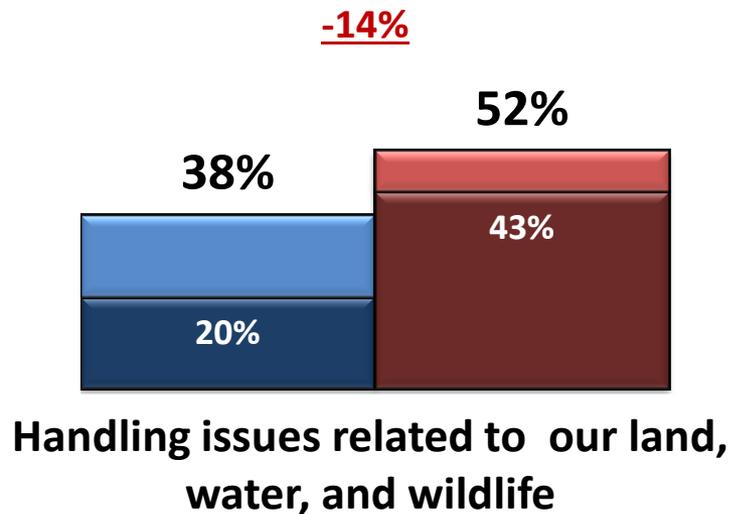


Conservation in a New Era

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Westerners tend to approve of the Administration's handling of economic issues, in contrast to its handling of conservation issues.

Approval of Administration's Management of Issues

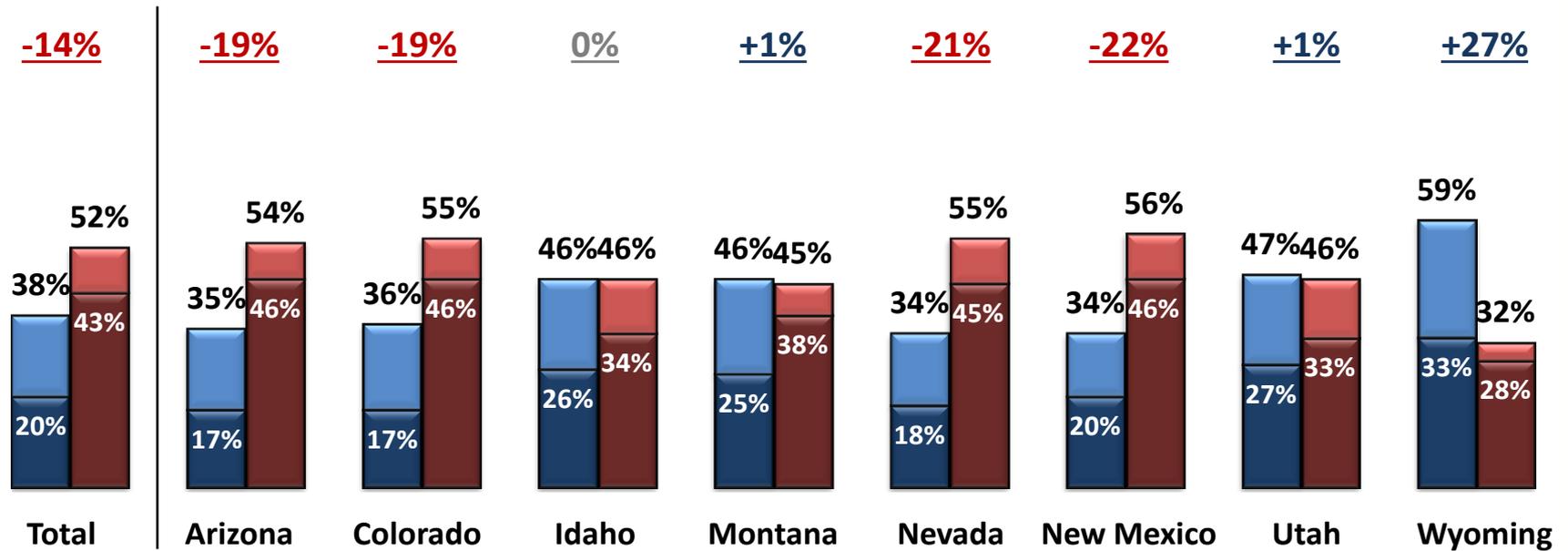


■ Strongly Approve ■ Total Approve ■ Strongly Disapprove ■ Total Disapprove

Do you generally approve or disapprove of the job President Trump and his administration are doing in...

Voters in seven of the eight states are divided to negative in their assessment on conservation issues.

Approval of Management of Conservation Issues – By State

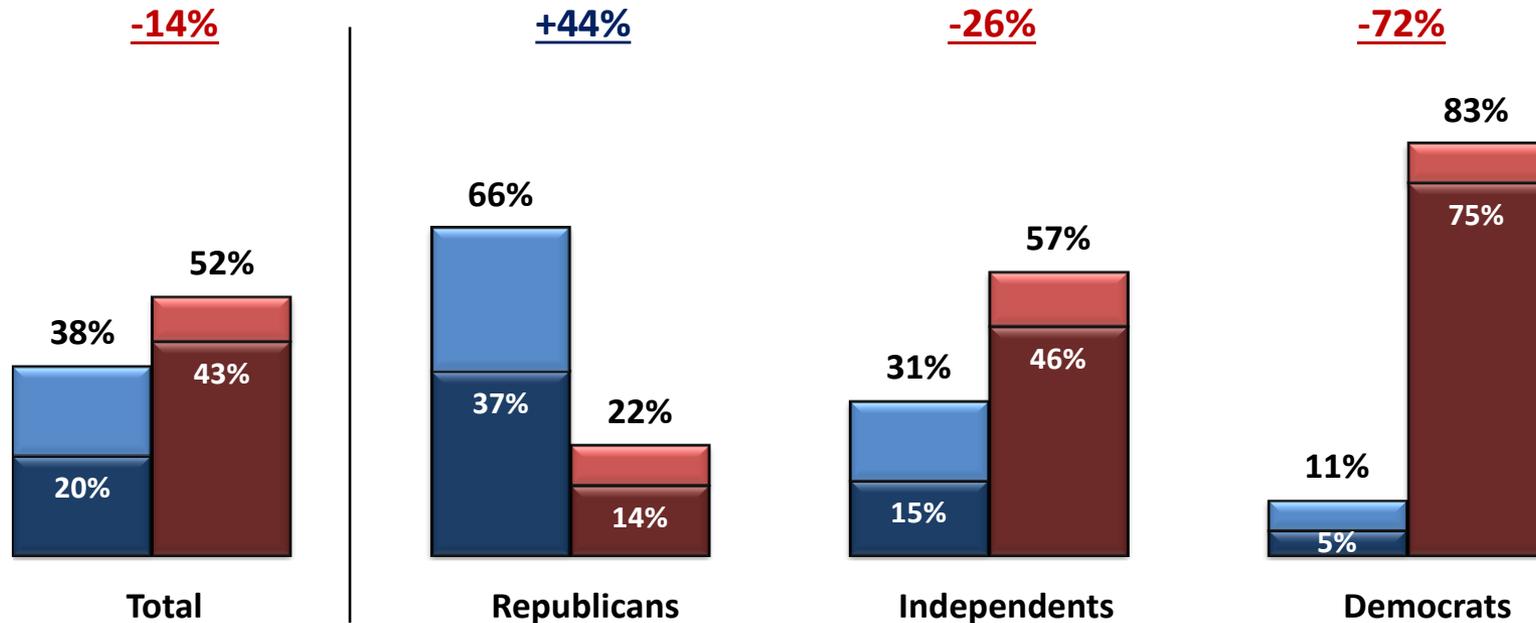


■ Strongly Approve
 ■ Total Approve
 ■ Strongly Disapprove
 ■ Total Disapprove

Do you generally approve or disapprove of the job President Trump and his administration are doing in handling issues related to our land, water and wildlife?

Predictably, though, there is a large partisan divide.

Approval of Management of Conservation Issues – By Party



■ Strongly Approve
 ■ Total Approve
 ■ Strongly Disapprove
 ■ Total Disapprove

Do you generally approve or disapprove of the job President Trump and his administration are doing in handling issues related to our land, water and wildlife?

By greater than a three-to-one margin, voters advocate for the Administration emphasizing conservation on national public lands.

Ensuring we protect sources of clean water, our air quality and wildlife habitat while providing opportunities to visit and recreate on our national public lands

64%

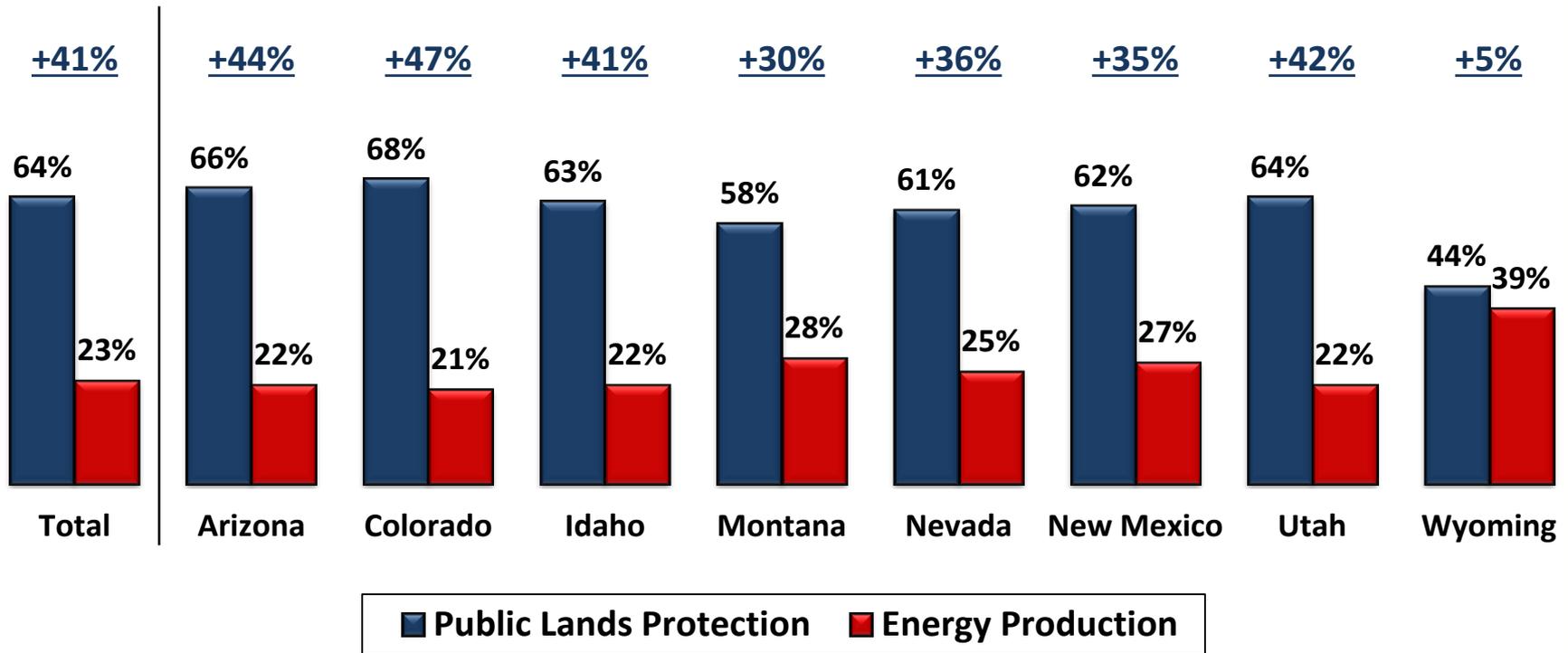
Ensuring we produce more domestic energy by increasing the amount of national public lands available for responsible oil and gas drilling and mining

23%

And in general, would you prefer the administration place more emphasis on...

In every Western state, voters advise placing a greater emphasis on protection over production.

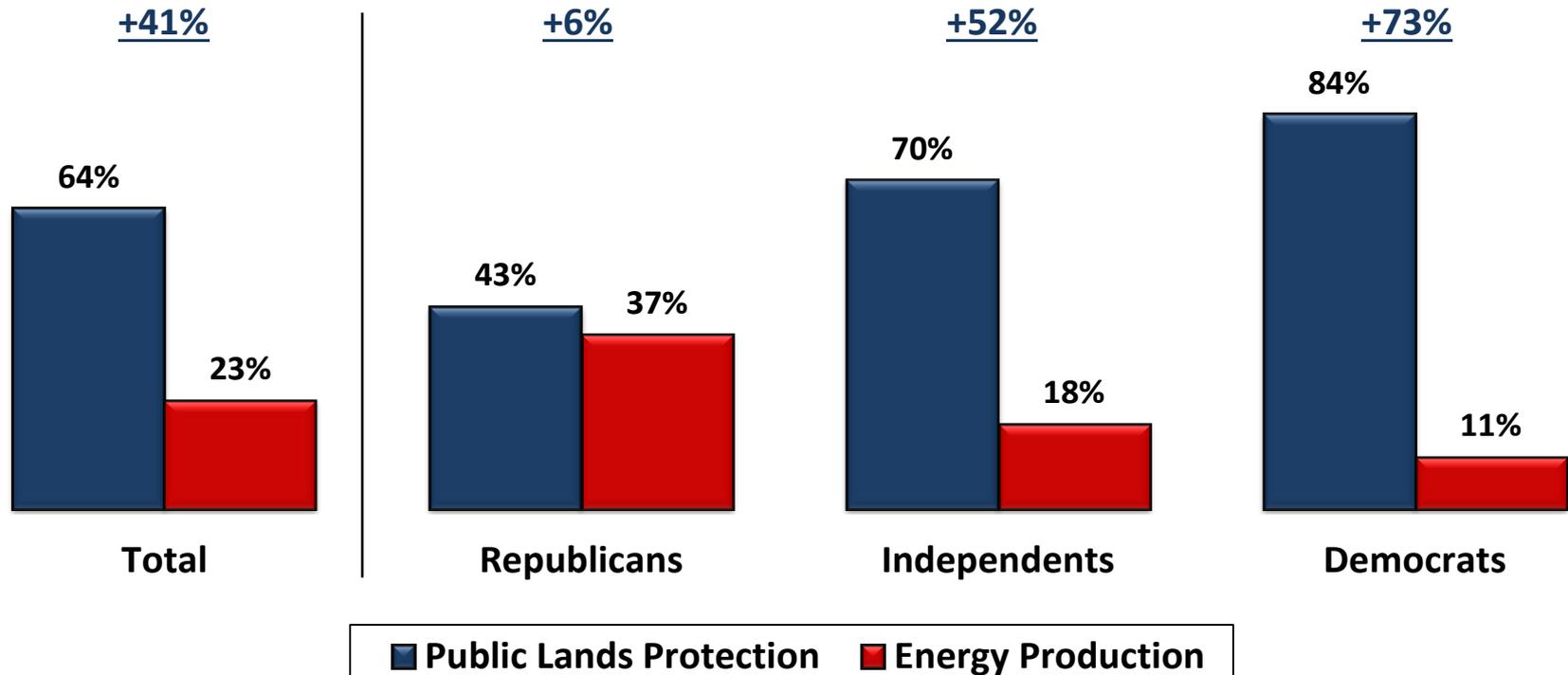
Preferred Emphasis for Public Lands – By State



And in general, would you prefer the administration place more emphasis on...

GOP voters tilt to protection; independents side with protection by nearly four-to-one margin.

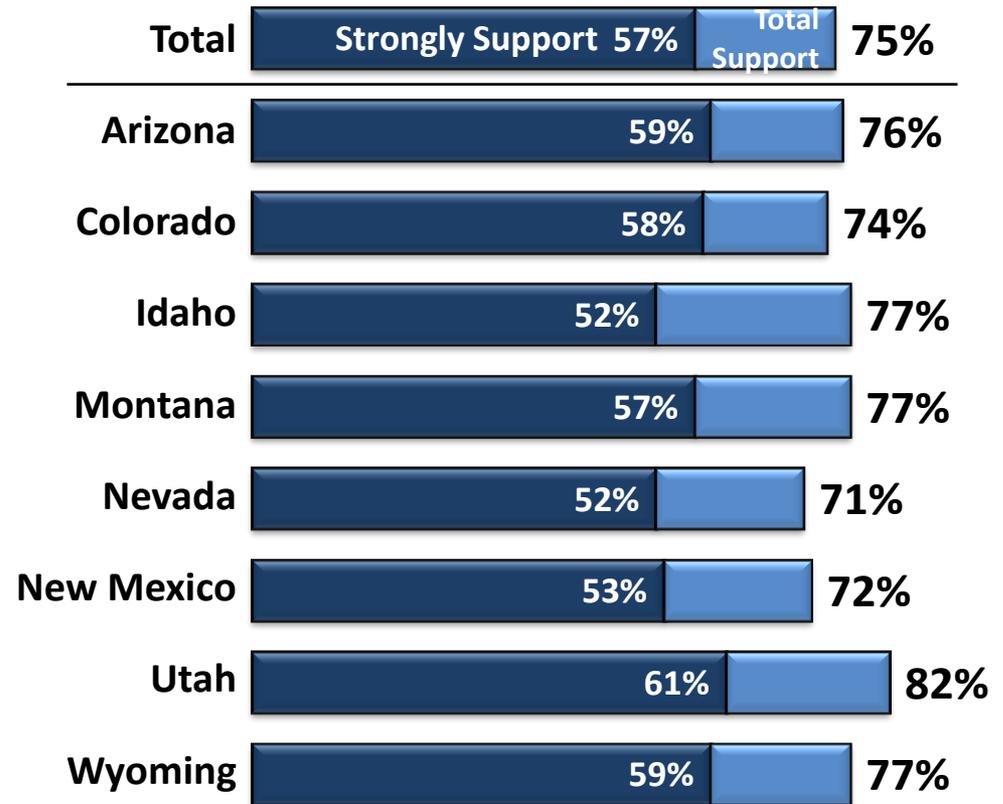
Preferred Emphasis for Public Lands – By Party



And in general, would you prefer the administration place more emphasis on...

More than seven-in-ten voters in every state – including energy rich Wyoming - support methane requirements.

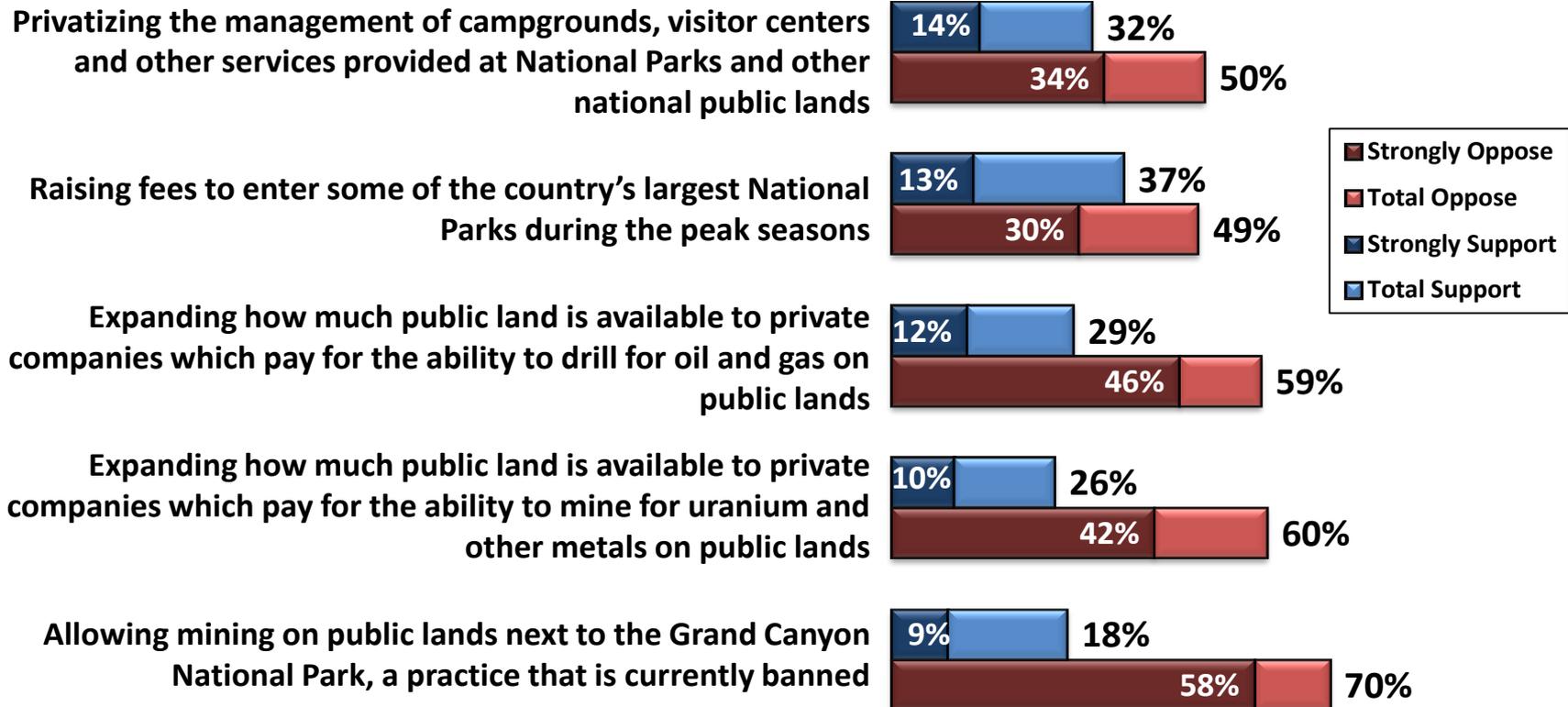
Requiring oil and gas producers who operate on national public lands to use updated equipment and technology to prevent leaks of methane gas during the extraction process and reduce the need to burn off excess natural gas into the air



For each of the following actions that have been taken or are being considered by officials in Washington, please tell me if that is something you support, oppose or don't feel strongly about it one way or the other.

Western voters tend to oppose a number of actions regarding public lands implemented or proposed last year.

Actions Ranked by % Strongly Support



For each of the following actions that have been taken or are being considered by officials in Washington, please tell me if that is something you support, oppose or don't feel strongly about it one way or the other.

Independents and Democrats tend to oppose these actions; GOP divided.

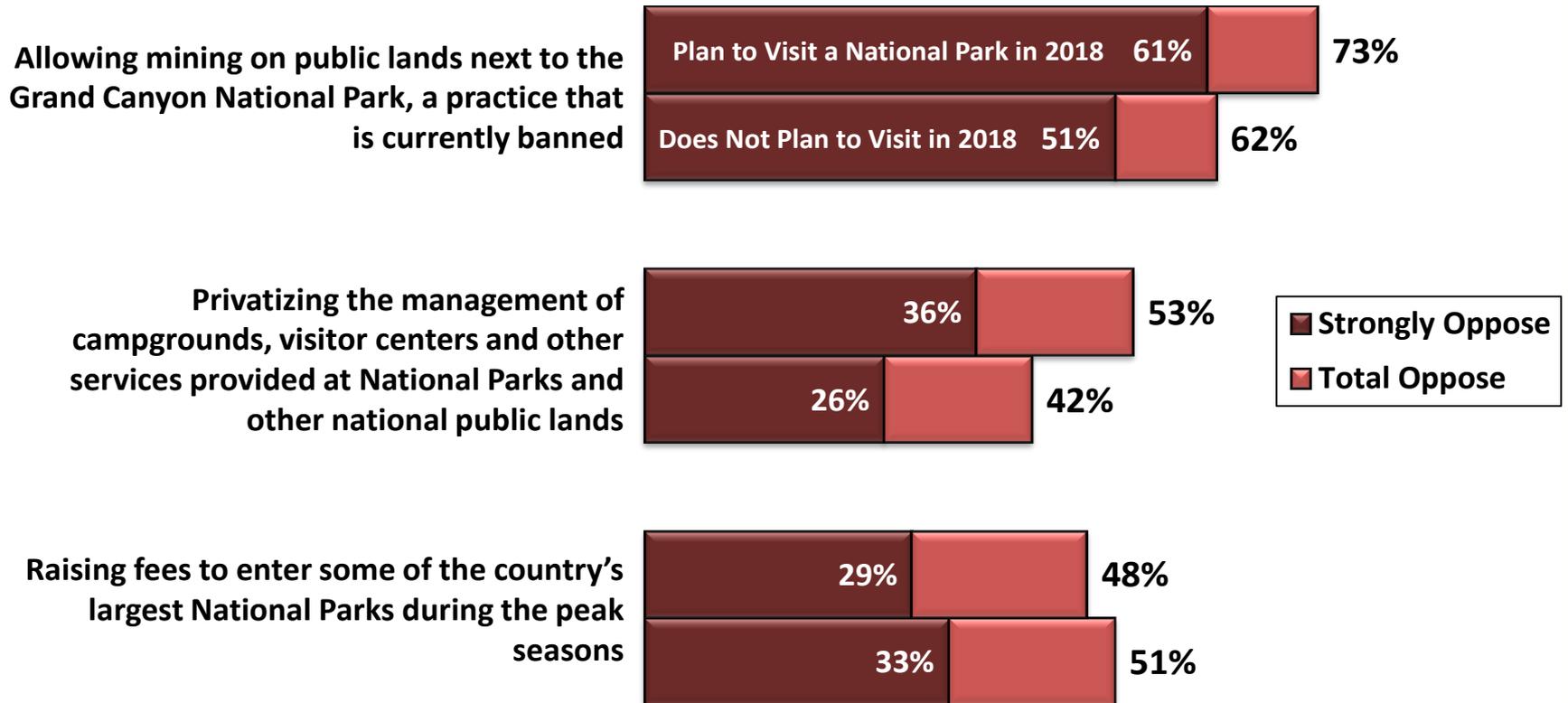


*Actions Ranked by %
Strongly Oppose*

	Total							
	Strongly Oppose	Total Oppose						
Allowing mining on public lands next to the Grand Canyon National Park, a practice that is currently banned	58%	70%	37%	52%	62%	76%	80%	87%
Expanding how much public land is available to private companies which pay for the ability to drill for oil and gas on public lands	46%	59%	21%	35%	50%	67%	71%	81%
Expanding how much public land is available to private companies which pay for the ability to mine for uranium and other metals on public lands	42%	60%	20%	41%	44%	63%	69%	80%
Privatizing the management of campgrounds, visitor centers and other services provided at National Parks and other national public lands	34%	50%	21%	36%	37%	54%	45%	64%
Raising fees to enter some of the country's largest National Parks during the peak seasons	30%	49%	29%	48%	29%	46%	32%	53%

For each of the following actions that have been taken or are being considered by officials in Washington, please tell me if that is something you support, oppose or don't feel strongly about it one way or the other.

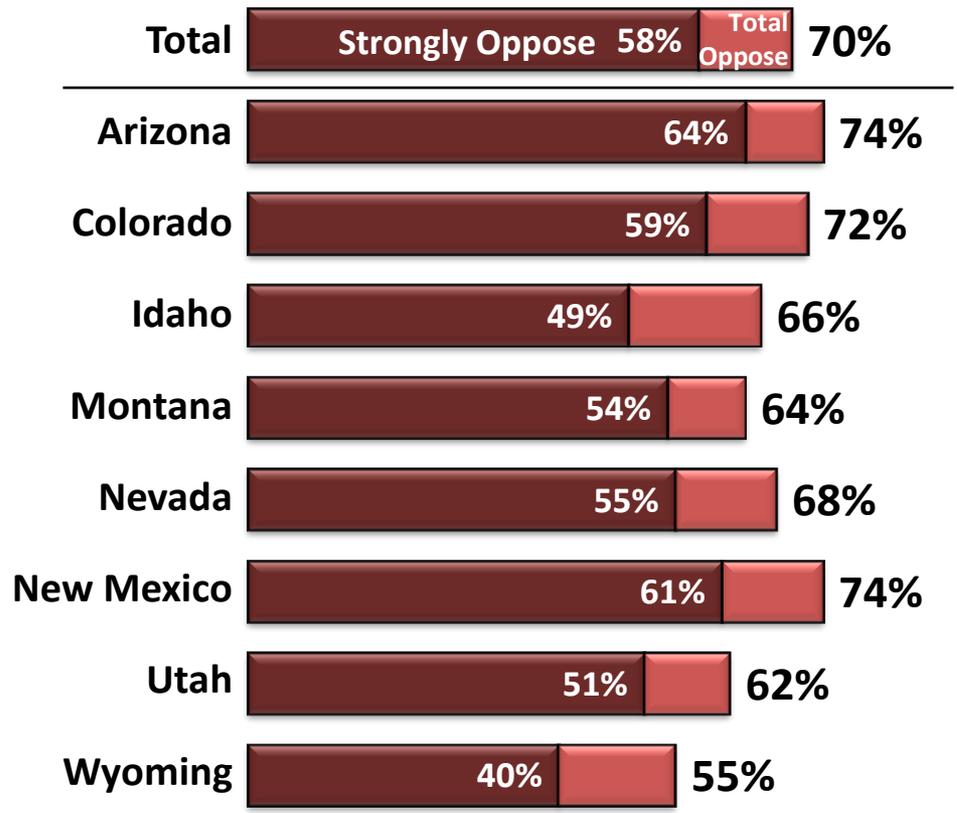
Those who plan to visit National Parks are more likely to oppose the actions, except for raising fees at the most popular parks.



For each of the following actions that have been taken or are being considered by officials in Washington, please tell me if that is something you support, oppose or don't feel strongly about it one way or the other.

Arizona is the most intensely opposed to mining outside the Grand Canyon N.P.

Allowing mining on public lands next to the Grand Canyon National Park, a practice that is currently banned



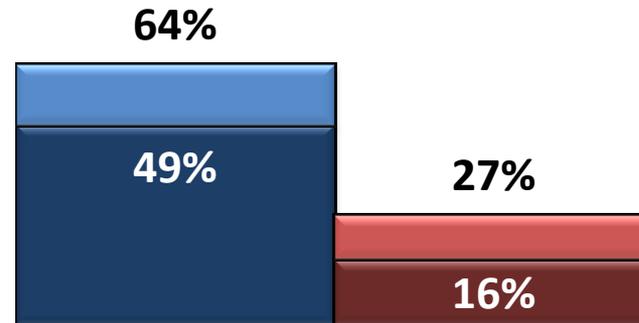
For each of the following actions that have been taken or are being considered by officials in Washington, please tell me if that is something you support, oppose or don't feel strongly about it one way or the other.

Two-thirds of voters say they want to keep current plans to protect sage grouse habitat.

Three years ago, the U.S. government, Western states and governors created plans to protect habitat for the threatened sage grouse and other wildlife. The Interior Department now says these plans should be changed to allow more oil and gas production and other activities. Opponents of changes say that the plans had public input and were created in collaboration with states to avoid wildlife like the sage grouse becoming endangered.

Approval of Sage Grouse and Wildlife Protection Guidelines

+37%

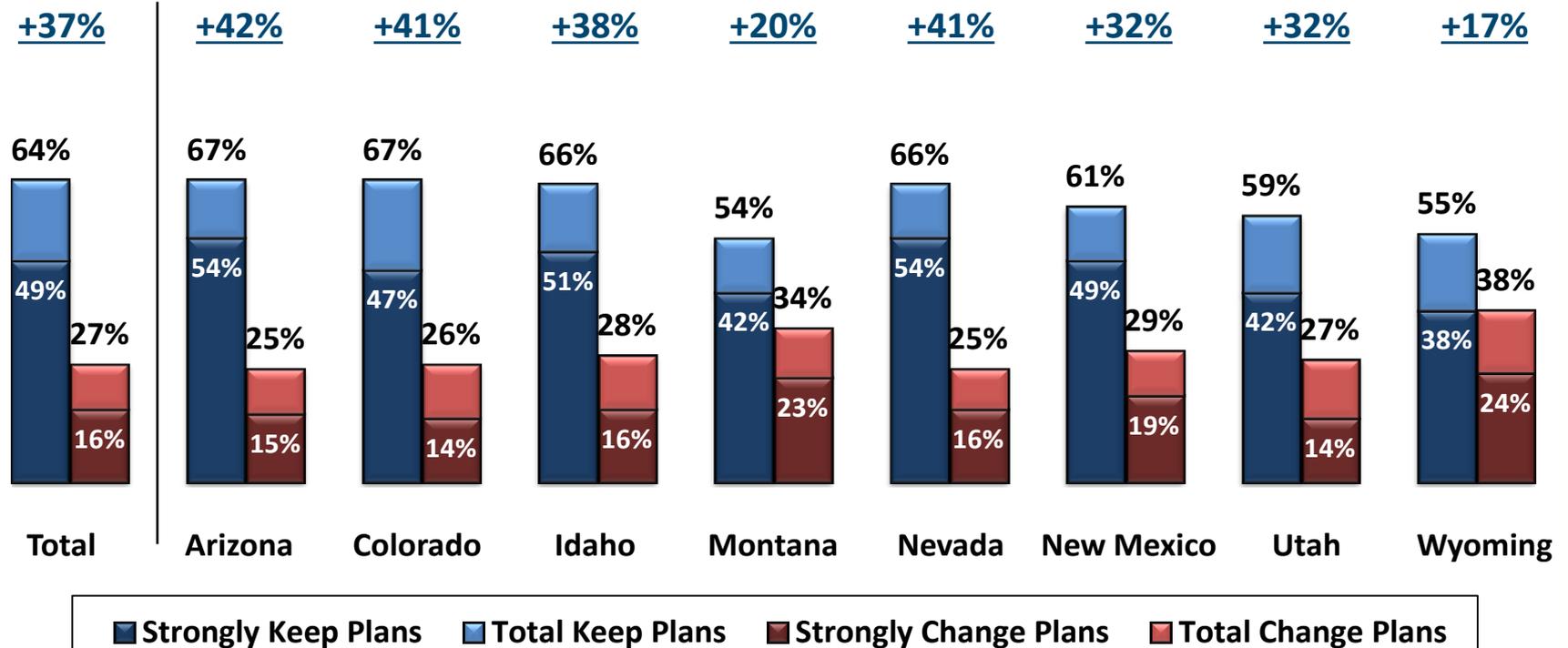


■ Strongly Keep Plans ■ Total Keep Plans
■ Strongly Change Plans ■ Total Change Plans

Would you prefer keeping these plans or changing them?

A majority in every Western state want to keep the current sage grouse plans.

Keep or Change Sage Grouse Protection Plans – By State



Would you prefer keeping these plans or changing them?

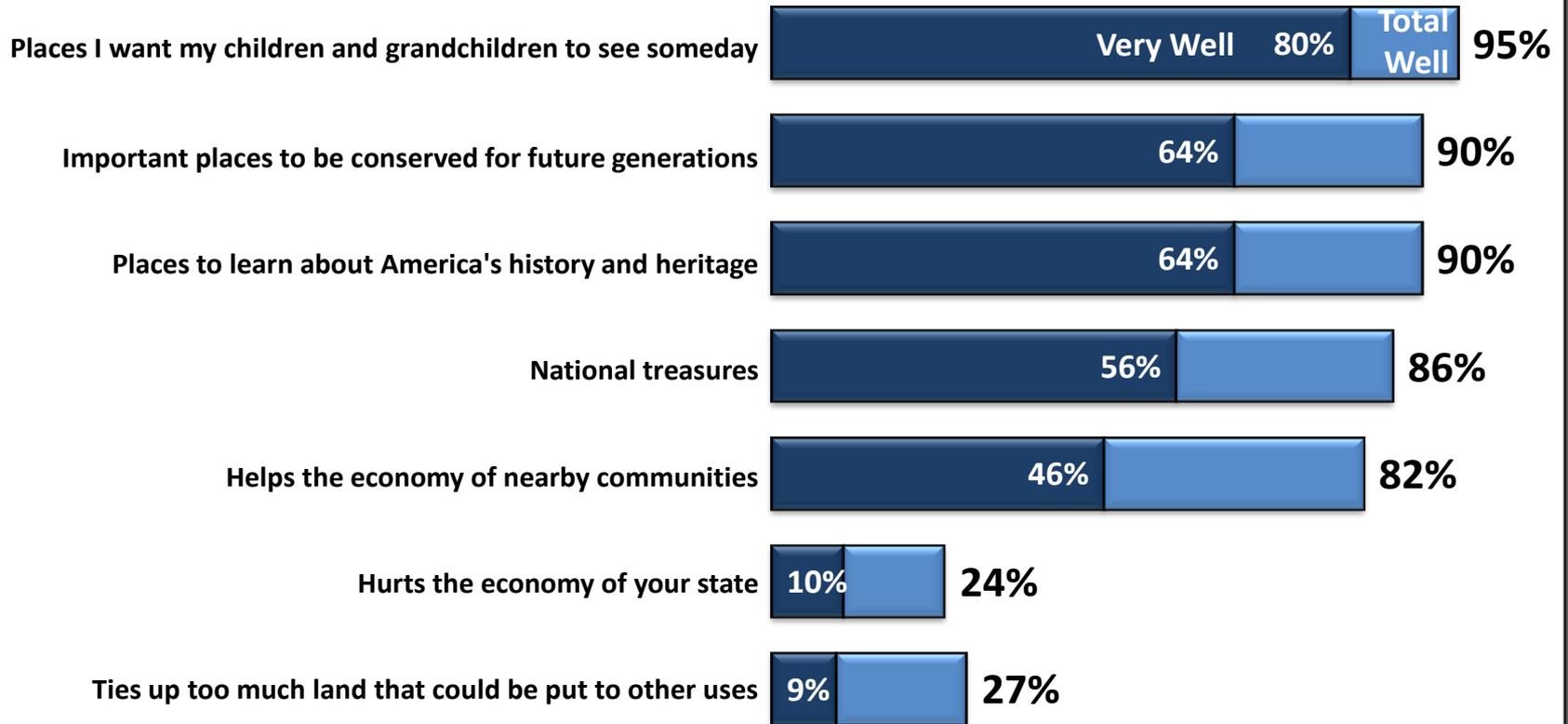


National Monuments

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Conservation in the West Poll

Westerners overwhelmingly attribute positive attributes to National Monuments – and reject negative ones.

Summary of National Monument Descriptions Ranked By % Very Well



I'm going to read you a list of words and phrases, and please tell me whether you think each one describes national monuments in the West. Does it describe them -- very well, somewhat well, not very well, or not at all?

Voters across the political spectrum ascribe positive attributes to National Monuments and reject negative ones.



Problems Ranked by % Total Very Well

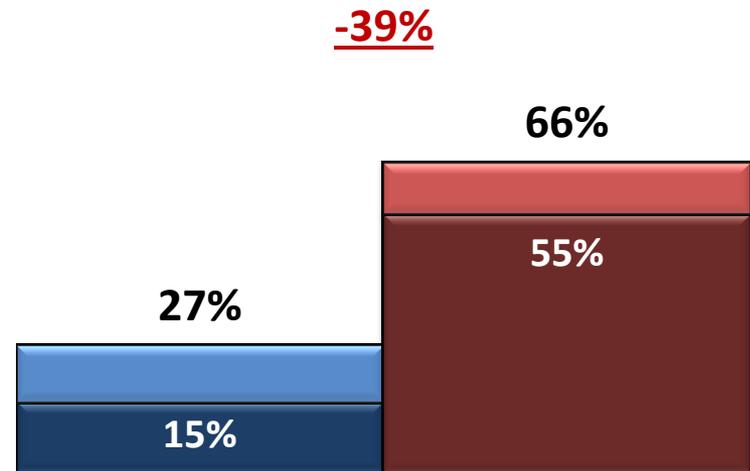
	Total			
Places I want my children and grandchildren to see someday	80%	76%	80%	86%
Important places to be conserved for future generations	64%	56%	67%	72%
Places to learn about America's history and heritage	64%	62%	63%	67%
National treasures	56%	46%	62%	63%
Helps the economy of nearby communities	46%	41%	47%	51%
Hurts the economy of your state	10%	13%	6%	10%
Ties up too much land that could be put to other uses	9%	14%	8%	4%

I'm going to read you a list of words and phrases, and please tell me whether you think each one describes national monuments in the West. Does it describe them -- very well, somewhat well, not very well, or not at all?

Two-thirds of Westerners say it is a bad idea to reduce the size of Bears Ears and Grand Staircase Escalante.

Thinking specifically about two national monuments in Utah – Bears Ears and Grand Staircase Escalante, which contain fossils, petroglyphs, cliff dwellings and wildlife habitat - President Trump announced in December that the administration would remove existing national monument protections and reduce the size of the lands conserved as national monuments by approximately two million acres.

Evaluation of UT National Monuments Reduction

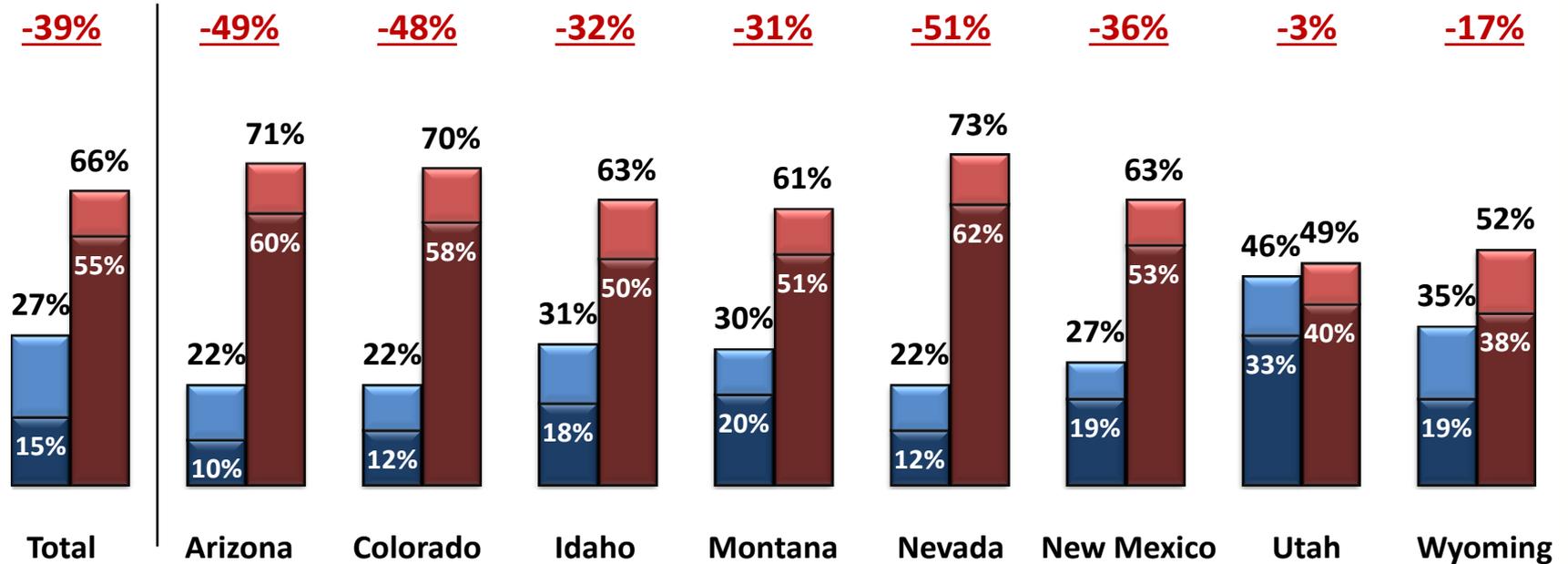


■ Very Good Idea ■ Total Good Idea
■ Very Bad Idea ■ Total Bad Idea

Would you say that it is - a good idea or a bad idea - to reduce the size of these national monuments?

Majority in seven of eight states say bad idea; Utah is divided.

Evaluation of National Monuments Reduction – By State

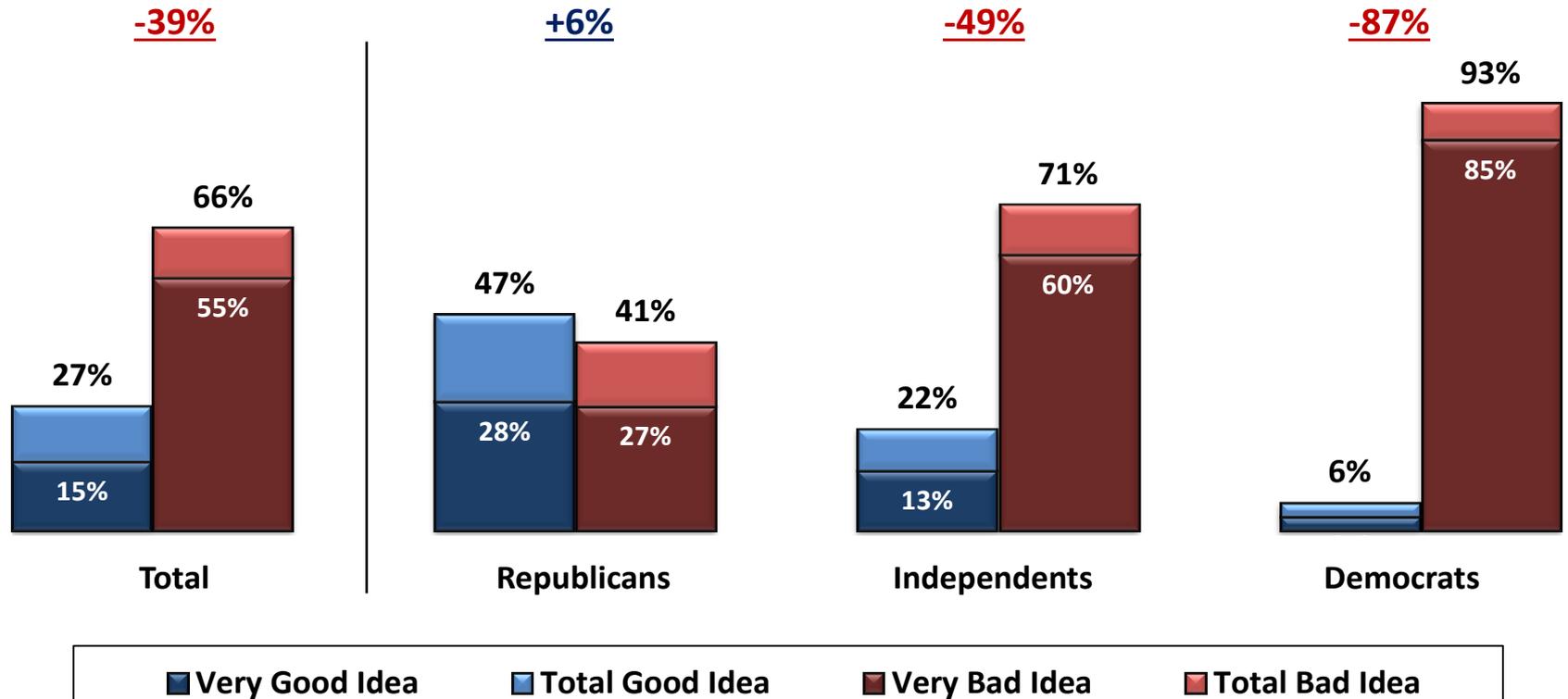


■ Very Good Idea
 ■ Total Good Idea
 ■ Very Bad Idea
 ■ Total Bad Idea

Would you say that it is - a good idea or a bad idea - to reduce the size of these national monuments?

There is a significant partisan distinction, with GOP voters divided and strong opposition among everyone else.

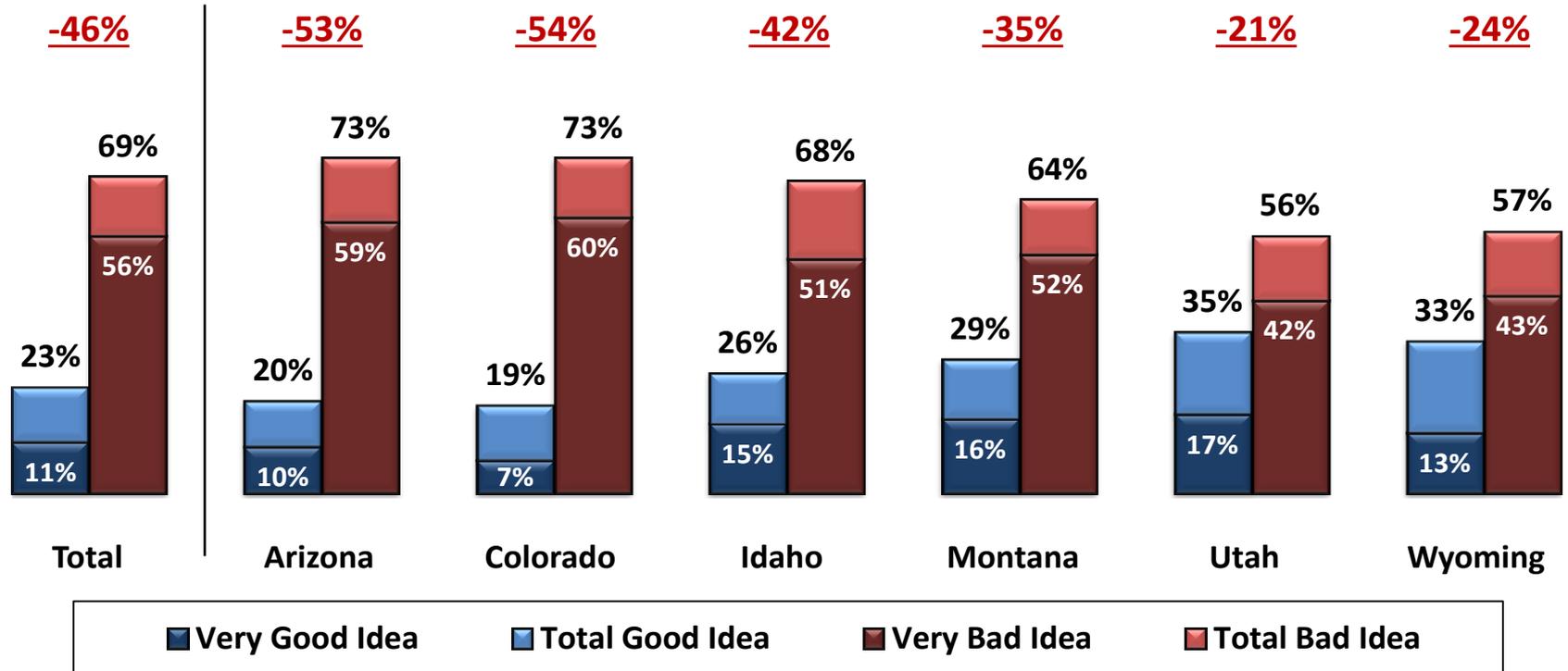
Evaluation of National Monuments Reduction – By Party



Would you say that it is - a good idea or a bad idea - to reduce the size of these national monuments?

Moving forward, majority of voters say it is a bad idea to reduce the size or change the status of other Monuments.

Evaluation of Additional Monuments Changes – By State

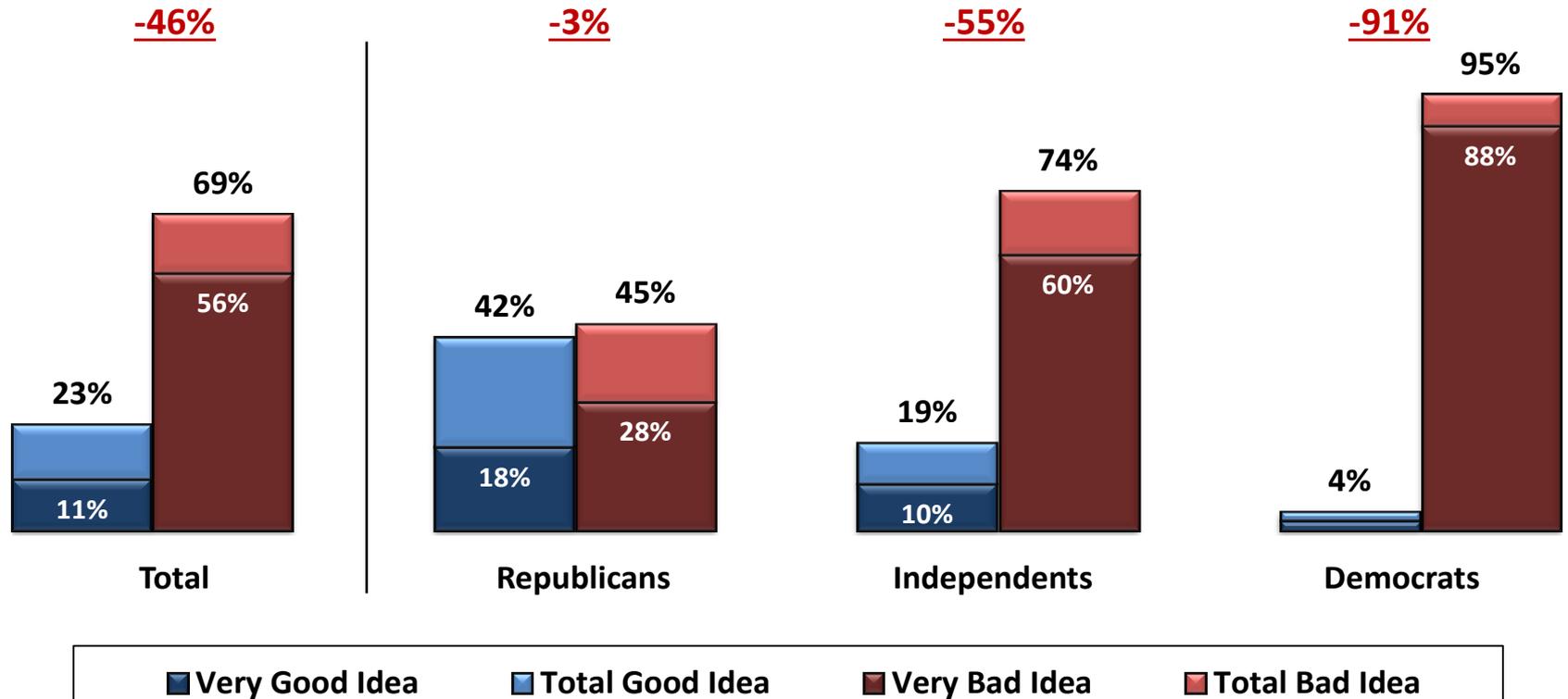


The administration has indicated that it may eliminate protections or reduce the size of other national monuments in the West as well. Would you say that it is - a good idea or a bad idea - to reduce the size or protections at other national monuments?

Note: Question not asked in Nevada or New Mexico

Independents and Democrats decidedly against; GOP divided over future changes.

Evaluation of Additional Monuments Changes – By Party

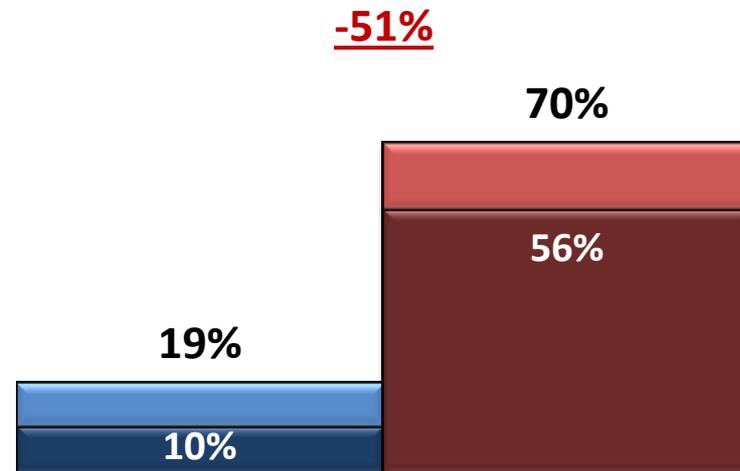


Would you say that it is - a good idea or a bad idea - to reduce the size of these national monuments?

By greater than a three-to-one margin, Nevadans say scaling back Gold Butte is a bad idea.

The administration has indicated that it may scale back or eliminate national monument protection for the newly established Gold Butte National Monument, just south of Lake Mead.

Evaluation of Gold Butte Protection
- Nevada Only -



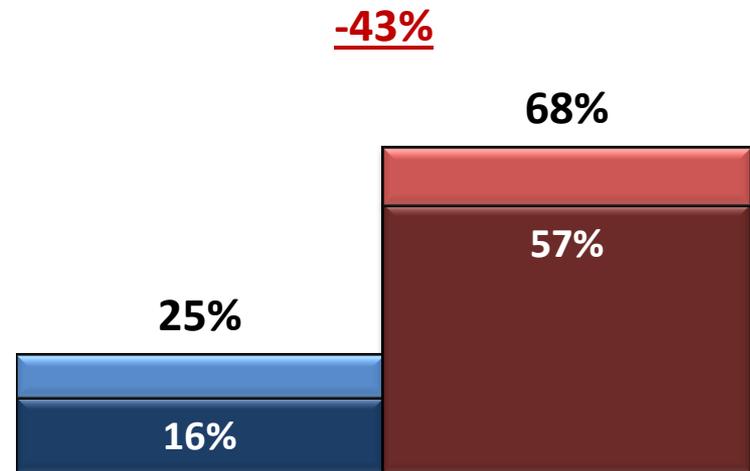
■ Very Good Idea ■ Total Good Idea
■ Very Bad Idea ■ Total Bad Idea

Do you think this is more of a good thing for the state, more of a bad thing for the state, or do you not have an opinion one way or the other?

More than two-thirds of NM voters say it would be a bad idea to change monuments in their state.

The administration has indicated that it may eliminate protections for national monument lands in New Mexico, including the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks and Rio Grande del Norte National Monuments.

Evaluation of Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks and Rio Grande del Norte National Monuments Protection
- New Mexico Only -



■ Very Good Idea ■ Total Good Idea
■ Very Bad Idea ■ Total Bad Idea

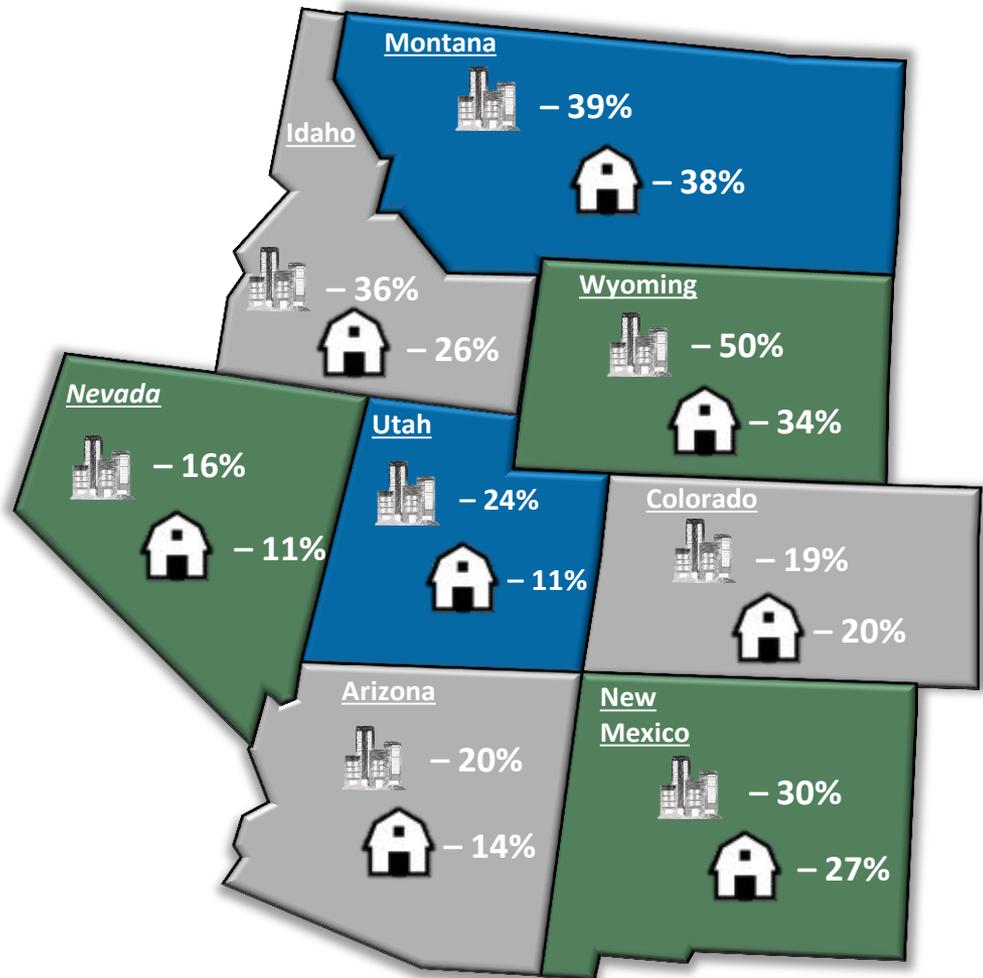
Do you think this is more of a good thing for the state, more of a bad thing for the state, or do you not have an opinion one way or the other?



Rural Voters

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A majority in half of these states say they live in a rural area or small town.



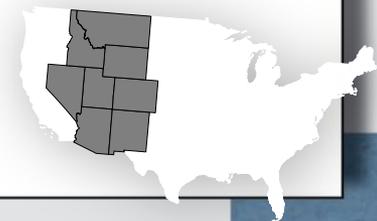
Area Description



Small Town – 23%



Rural Area – 19%



Most urban and suburban voters have rural roots.

68%

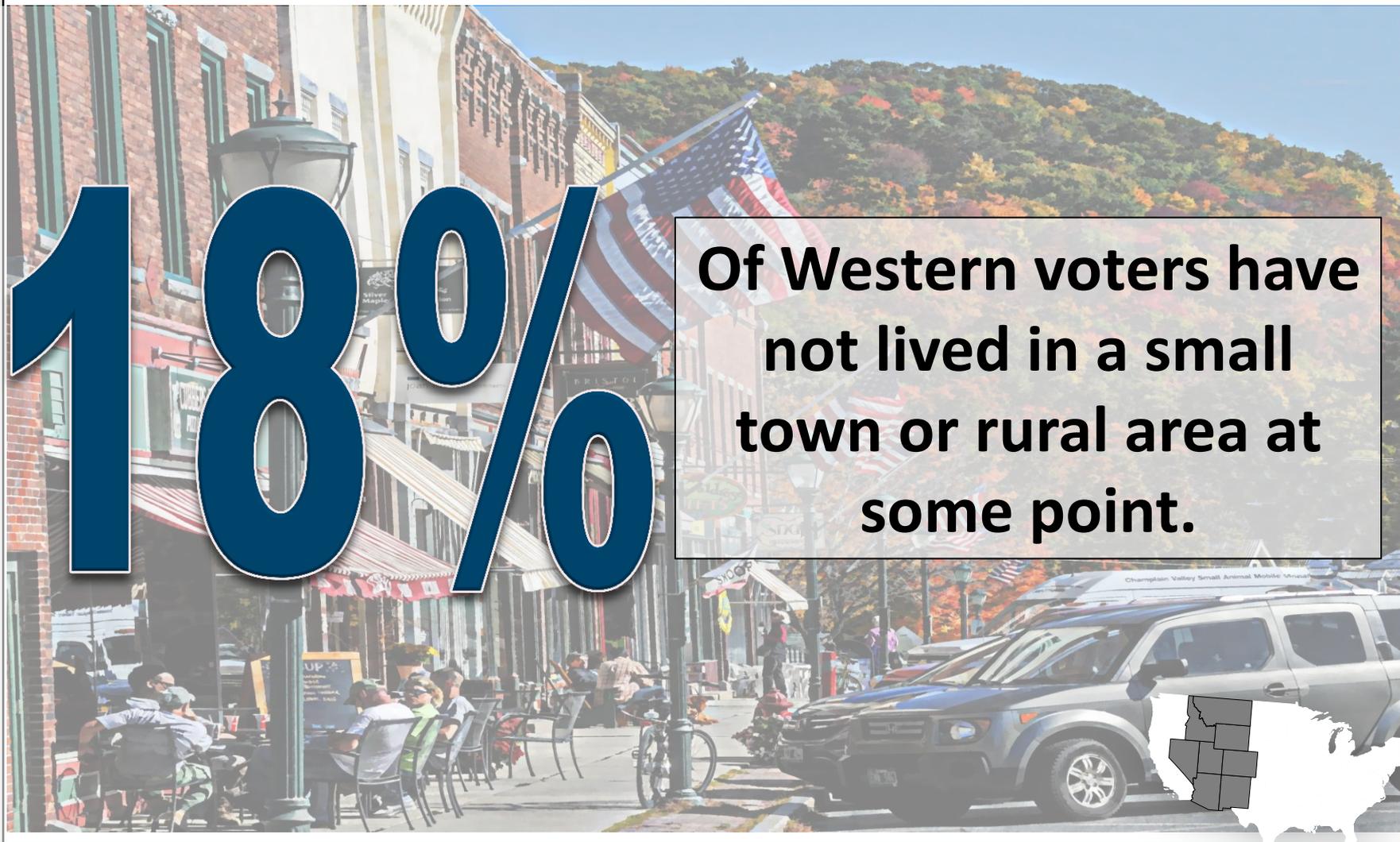
Of those living in a city or suburb now once lived in a small town or rural area.



Fewer than one-in-five have no rural connection.

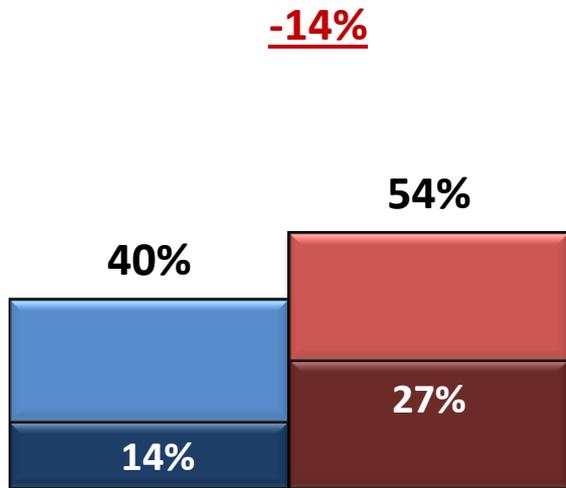
18%

Of Western voters have not lived in a small town or rural area at some point.

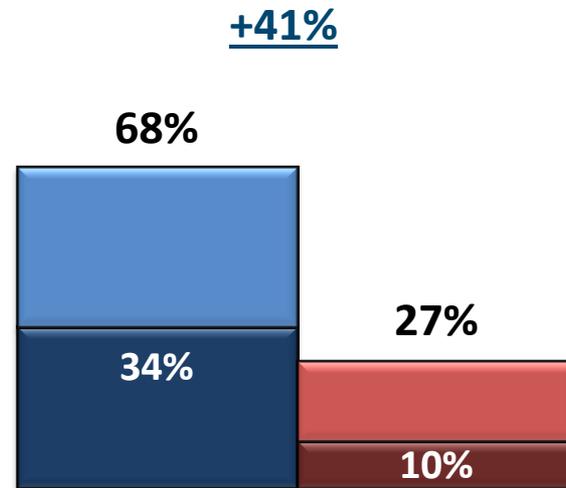


Far more Westerners feel they share the values of small town and rural residents than urban ones.

Values Shared with Big City Residents



Values Shared with Rural/Small Town Residents

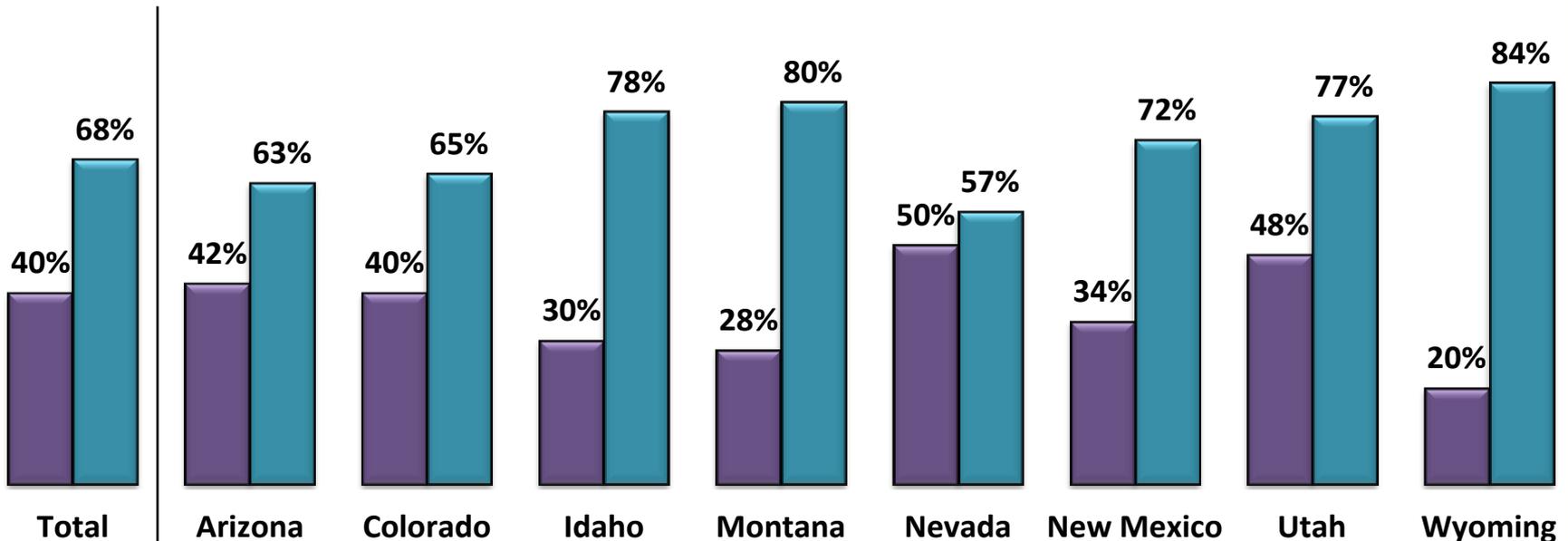


■ Very Similar
 ■ Total Similar
 ■ Very Different
 ■ Total Different

Thinking some more about people in the Western United States - do you think most people who live in big cities have values that are similar or different from yours?

The gap exists in every state – most pronounced in Montana and Wyoming.

Values Shared with City v. Rural Residents – By State

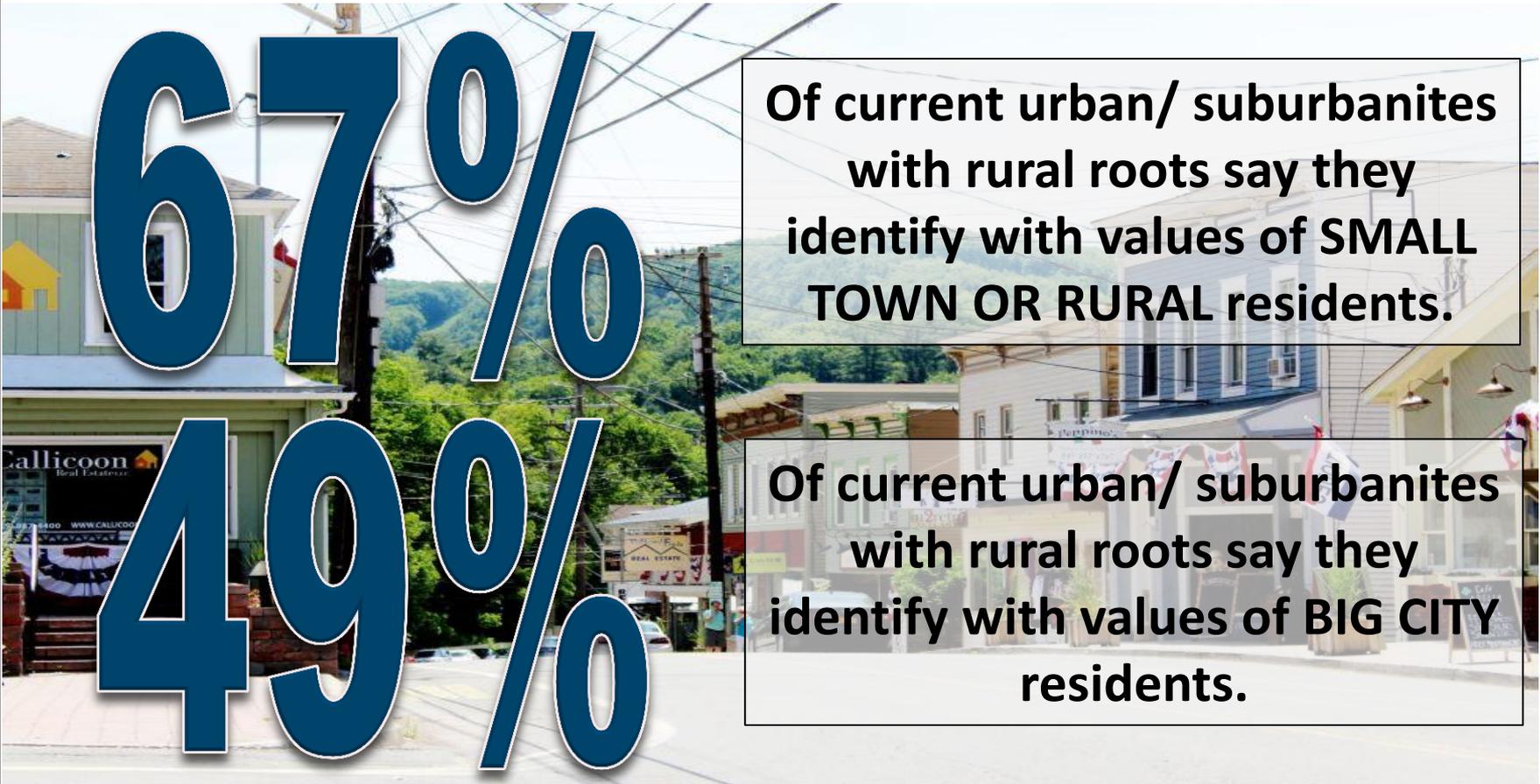


■ Similar values shared with big city residents

■ Similar values shared with rural/small town residents

And in general, would you prefer the administration place more emphasis on...

Among those urban and suburban voters who used to live in a small town or rural area, they are more apt to identify more closely with their roots.



67%
49%

Of current urban/ suburbanites with rural roots say they identify with values of SMALL TOWN OR RURAL residents.

Of current urban/ suburbanites with rural roots say they identify with values of BIG CITY residents.

Do you think most people who live in big cities have values that are similar or different from yours?

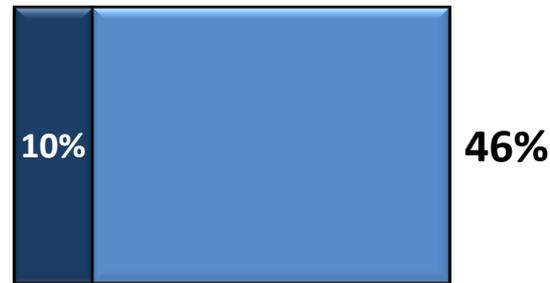
Majorities of rural voters tend to side with pro-conservation policies, even if their enthusiasm is more muted than voters overall.

	Total	Rural Voters
Oppose allowing mining on public lands by Grand Canyon	70%	64%
Choose solar or wind as representing future of energy in their state	67%	58%
Say bad idea to reduce size of Utah National monuments	66%	60%
Keep current sage grouse plans in place, rather than change	64%	56%
Oppose expanding how much public land is available for drilling	59%	52%

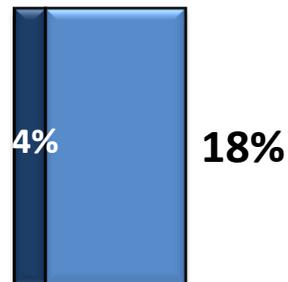
Westerners are more likely to view state officials as reflecting their values than those in DC.

Values Shared with Elected Officials

Elected officials in (STATE) generally reflect my values.



Elected officials in Washington, DC generally reflect my values.

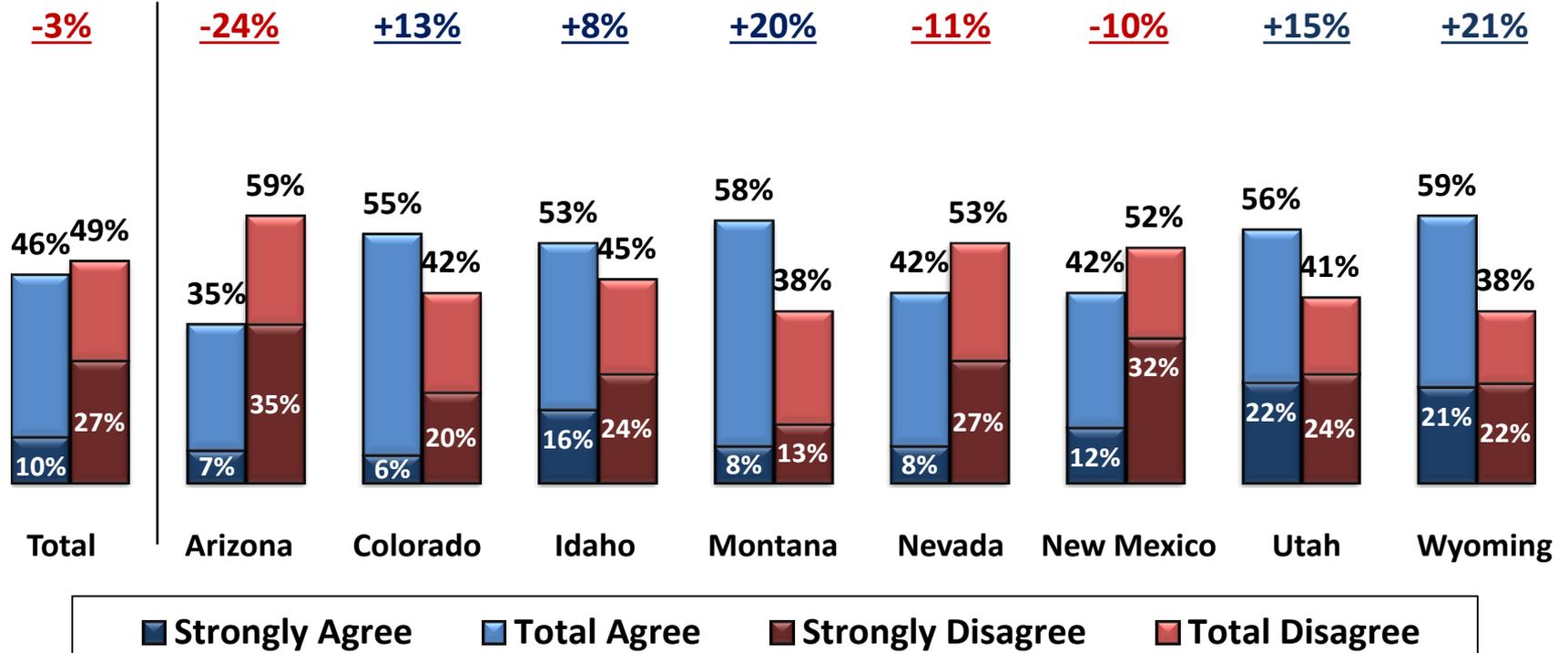


■ Strongly Agree
■ Total Agree

For each of the following, please tell me if you agree or disagree with that particular statement.

Voters in five of the eight states tend to see elected officials as reflecting their own values.

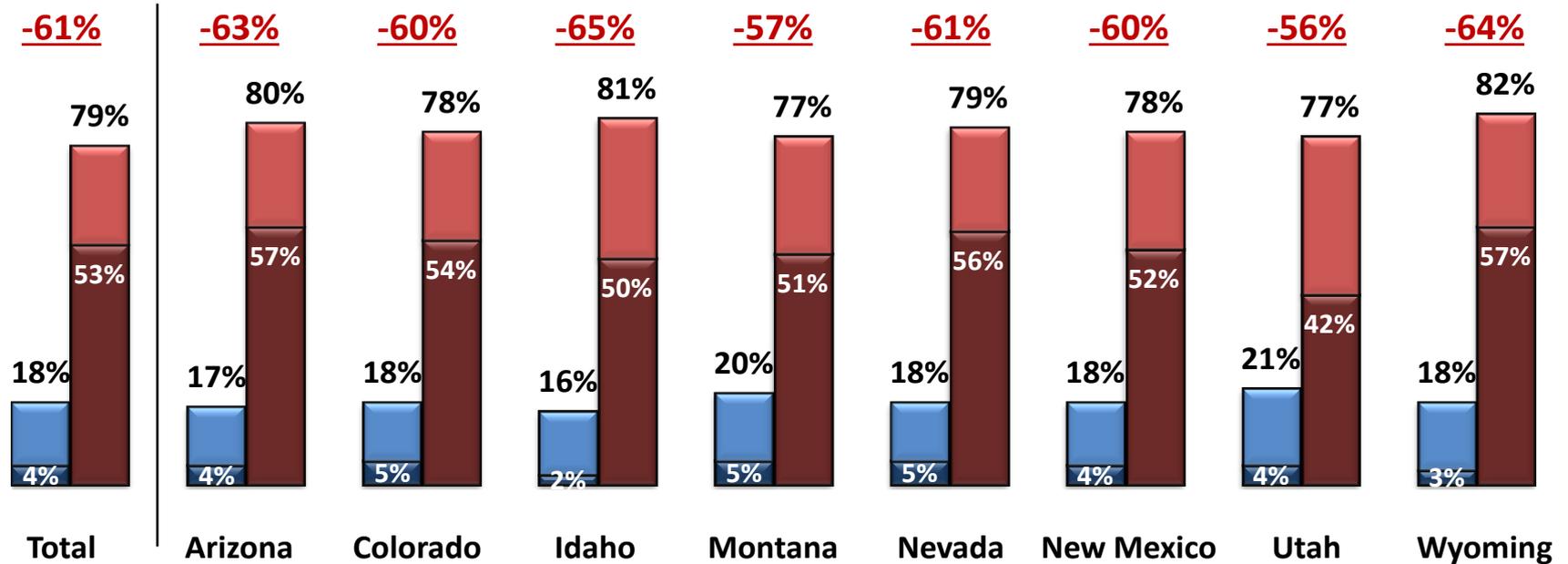
Values Shared with Elected State Officials – By State



Elected officials in (State) generally reflect my values.

However, they universally reject that elected officials in DC reflect their own values.

Values Shared with Elected DC Officials – By State



■ Strongly Approve
 ■ Total Approve
 ■ Strongly Disapprove
 ■ Total Disapprove

Elected officials in Washington, DC generally reflect my values

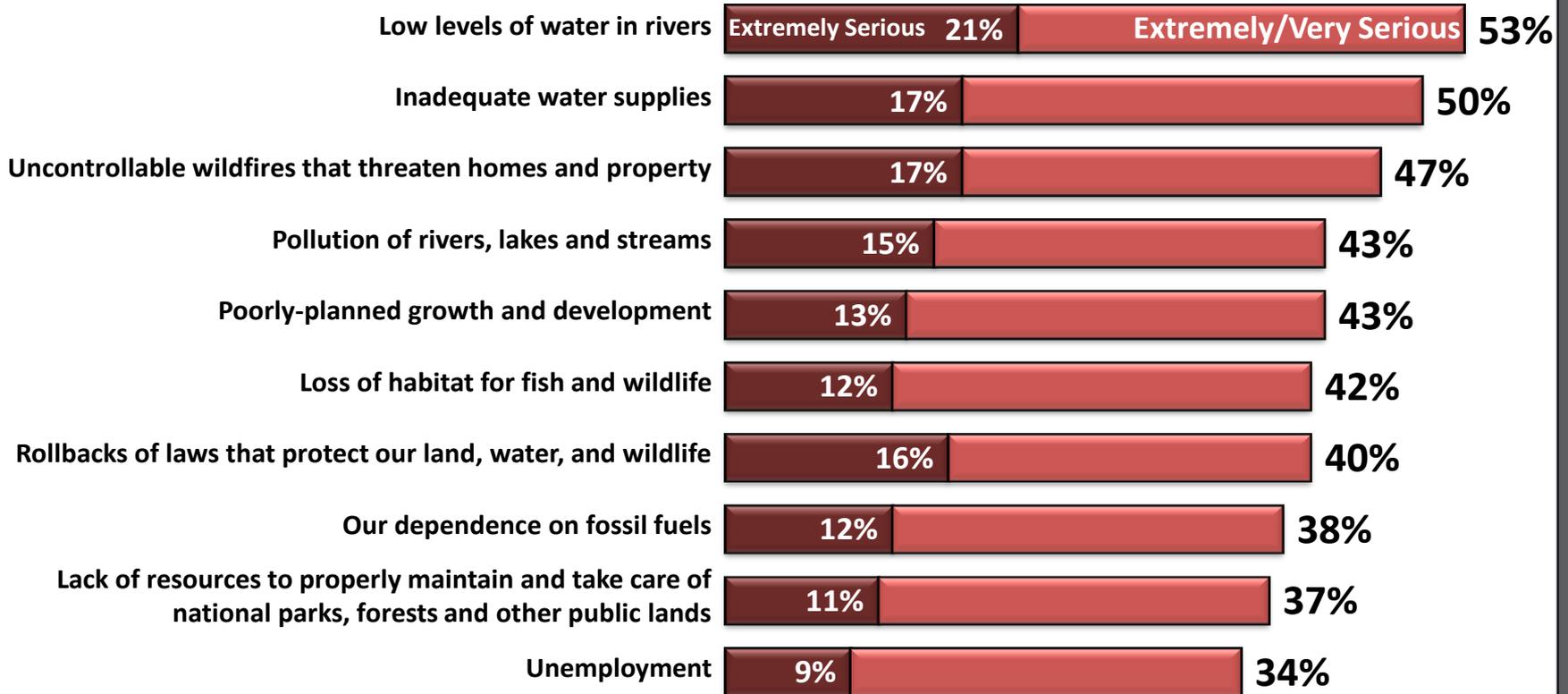


Water

**THE COLORADO COLLEGE
STATE OF THE ROCKIES PROJECT**
Conservation in the West Poll

Every conservation issue is now more likely to be seen as a very serious problem than the economy.

Problems Ranked by % Extremely/Very Serious



Next, I'm going to read you a list of issues some people say are problems in (STATE). For each one, please tell me if you think it is an extremely serious problem, a very serious problem, a somewhat serious problem, or not a problem in (STATE).

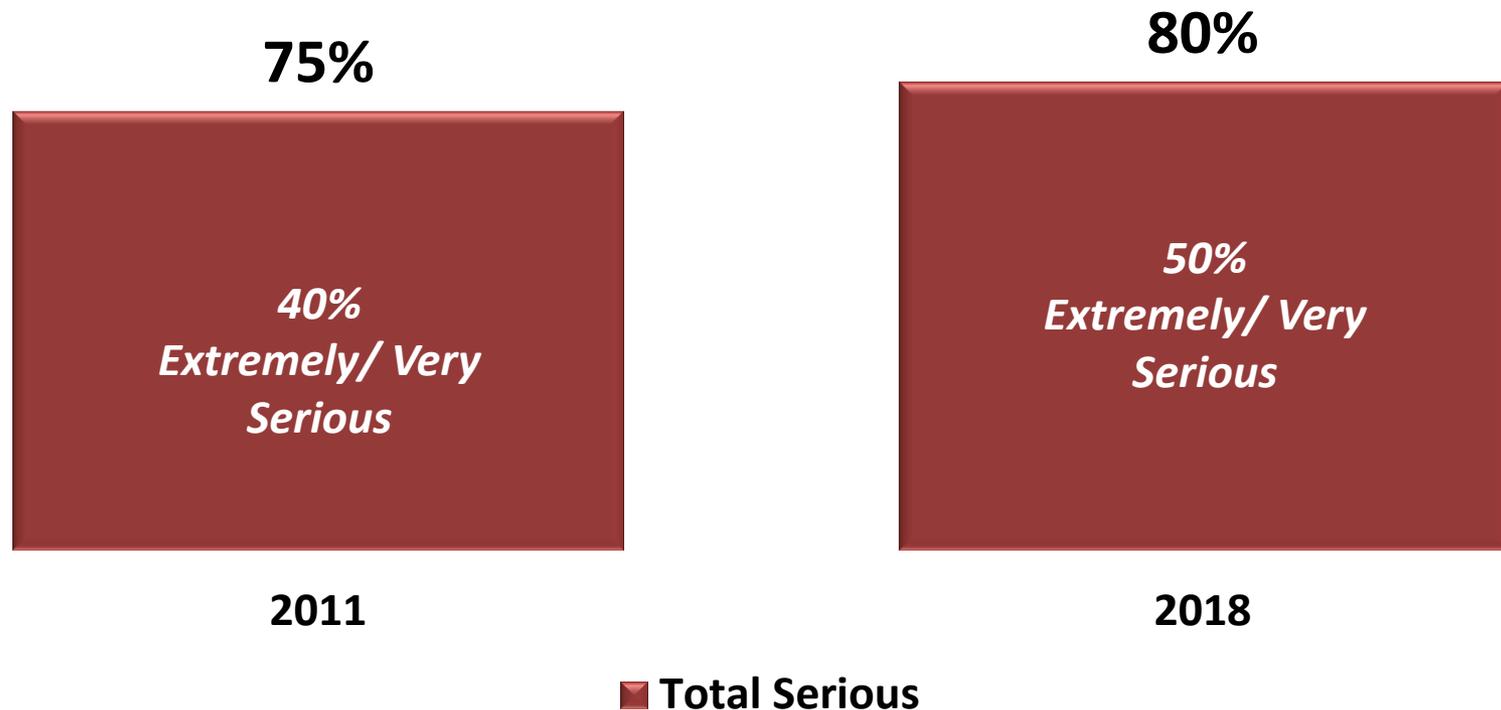
There are jumps in concern about conservation issues, especially fire.

<i>Problems Ranked by % 2016 Extremely/Very Serious</i>	2016	2017	2018
Low levels of water in rivers	51%	51%	53%
Unemployment	43%	37%	34%
Pollution of rivers, lakes and streams	38%	34%	43%
Poorly-planned growth and development	35%	33%	43%
Loss of habitat for fish and wildlife	33%	31%	42%
Uncontrollable wildfires that threaten homes and property	32%	N/A	47%
Lack of resources to properly maintain and take care of national parks, forests and other public lands	27%	24%	37%
Our dependence on fossil fuels	N/A	31%	38%

Next, I'm going to read you a list of issues some people say are problems in (STATE). For each one, please tell me if you think it is an extremely serious problem, a very serious problem, a somewhat serious problem, or not a problem in (STATE).

Inadequate water supplies is a greater concern today than seven years ago.

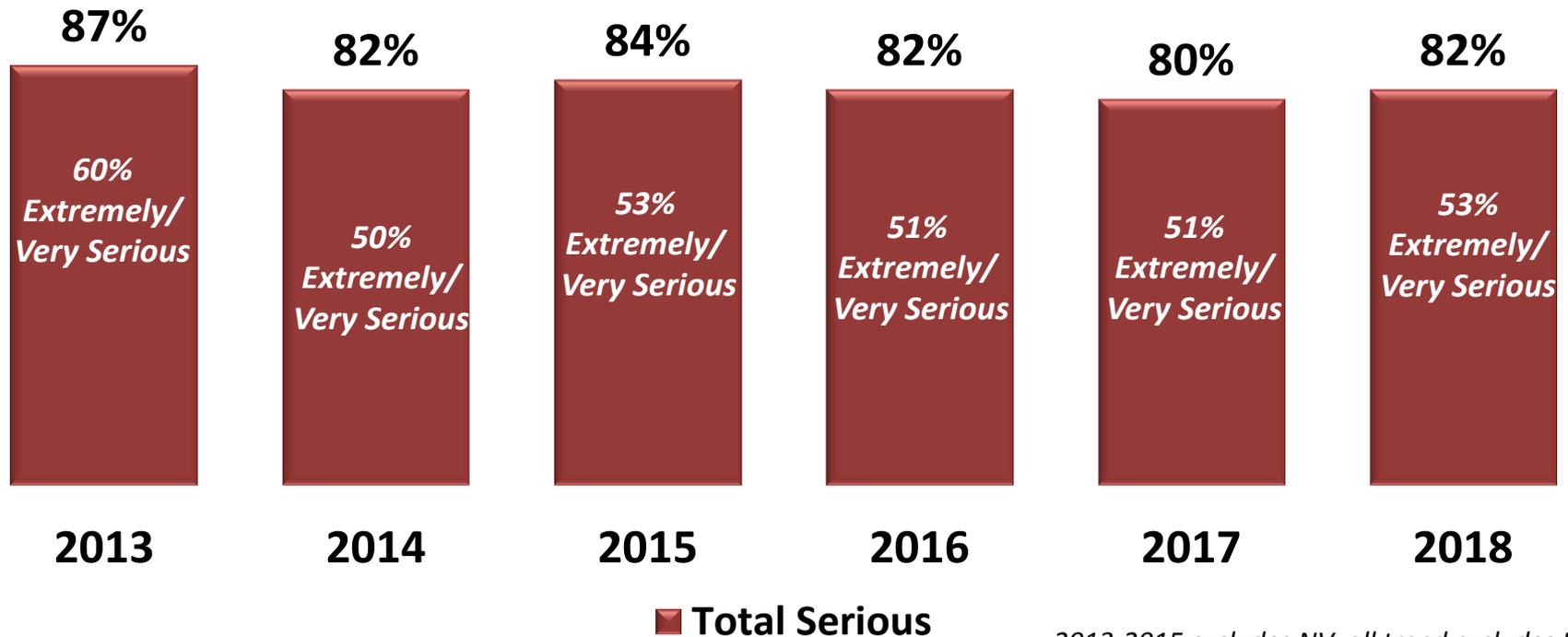
Inadequate Water Supplies Viewed as a Serious Problem – Trend



For each one, please tell me if you think it is an extremely serious problem, a very serious problem, a somewhat serious problem, or not a problem in (STATE).

At least four-in-five Westerners have viewed the condition of rivers as a serious problem facing their state for the last six years.

Low Levels of Water Viewed as a Serious Problem – Trend

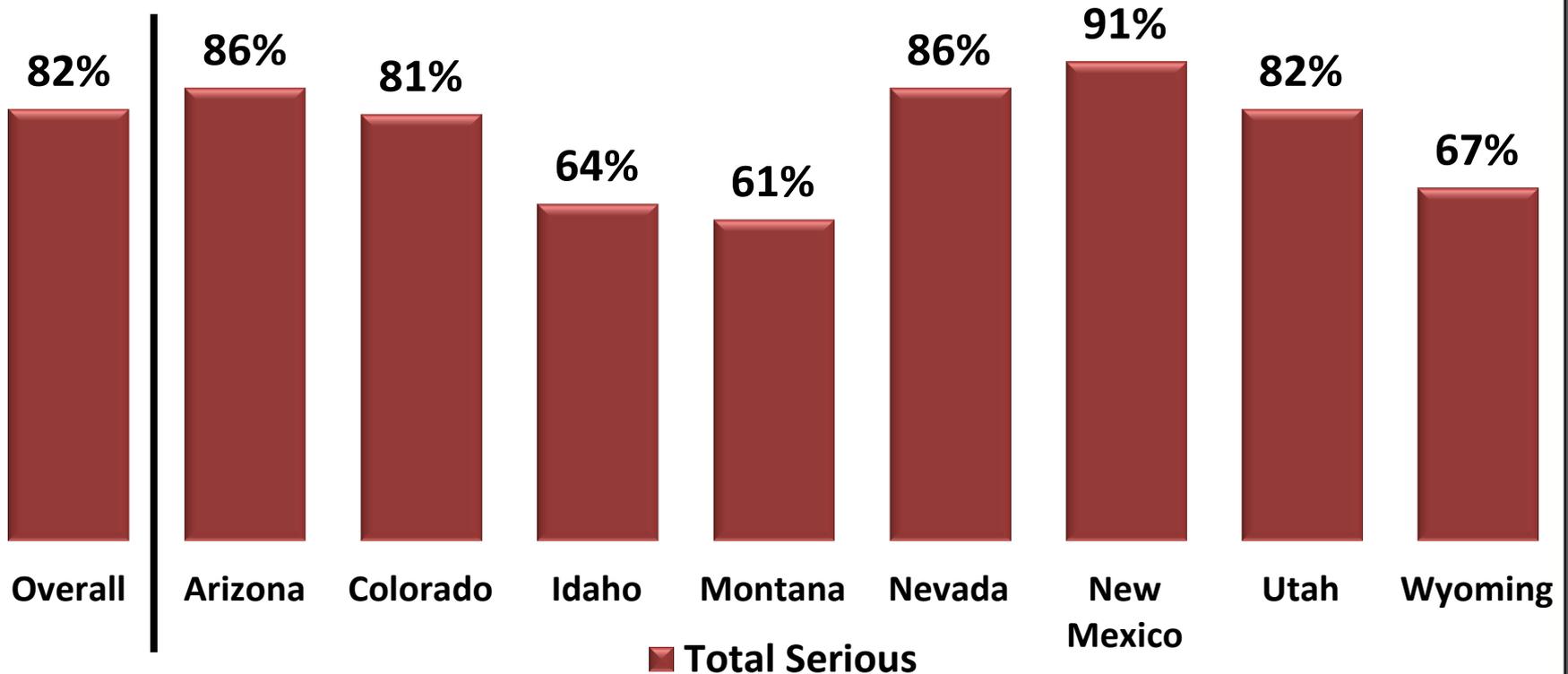


2013-2015 excludes NV; all trend excludes ID

For each one, please tell me if you think it is an extremely serious problem, a very serious problem, a somewhat serious problem, or not a problem in (STATE).

There are some geographic differences in level of concern regarding rivers this year.

Low Levels of Water Viewed as a Serious Problem – By State



For each one, please tell me if you think it is an extremely serious problem, a very serious problem, a somewhat serious problem, or not a problem in (STATE).

By a six-to-one margin, Westerners say they want an emphasis on conservation over diversions to cities.

2016

2018

Using our current water supply more wisely, by encouraging more water conservation, reducing use, and increasing recycling of water.

77% 78%

Diverting more water from rivers in less populated areas of the state to communities where more people live.

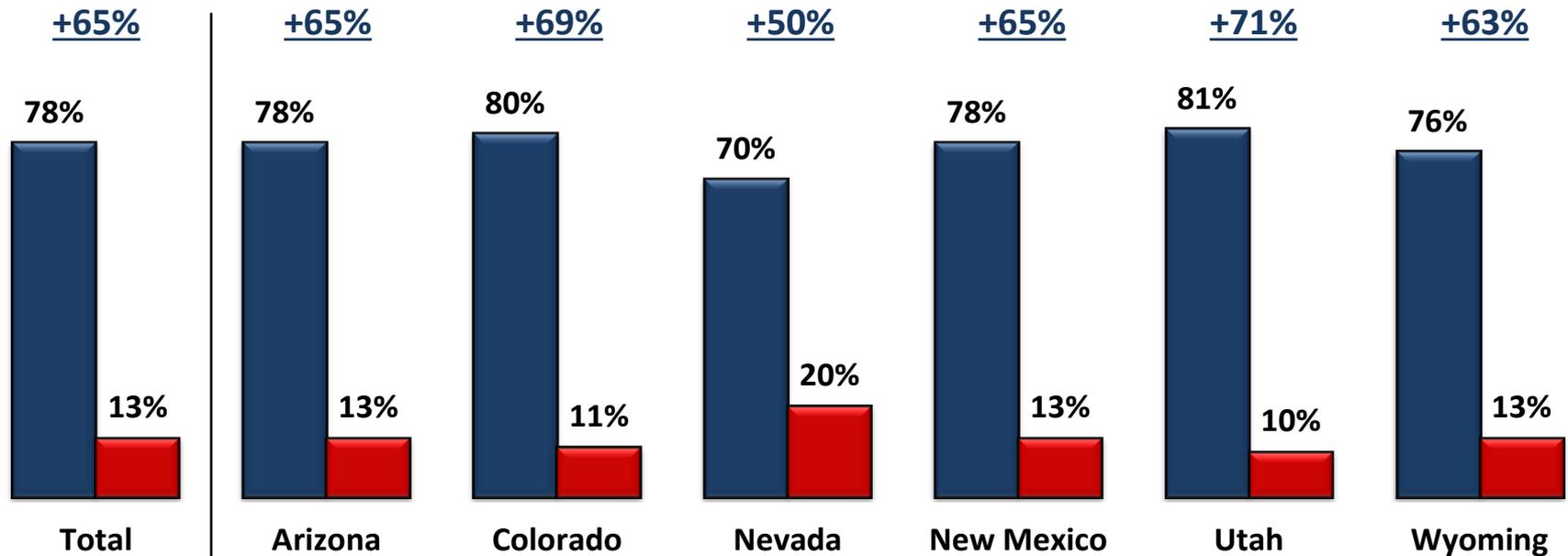
15% 13%

Note: Question not asked in Idaho or Montana

Many experts say that STATE will likely face water shortage situations in the future. They say that we face a choice in how we address that shortage. So, which one of the following would you prefer state water officials invest more time and resources in pursuing?

Emphasizing conservation and recycling of water is strongly preferred in every state where this is an issue.

Preferred Water Approach – By State



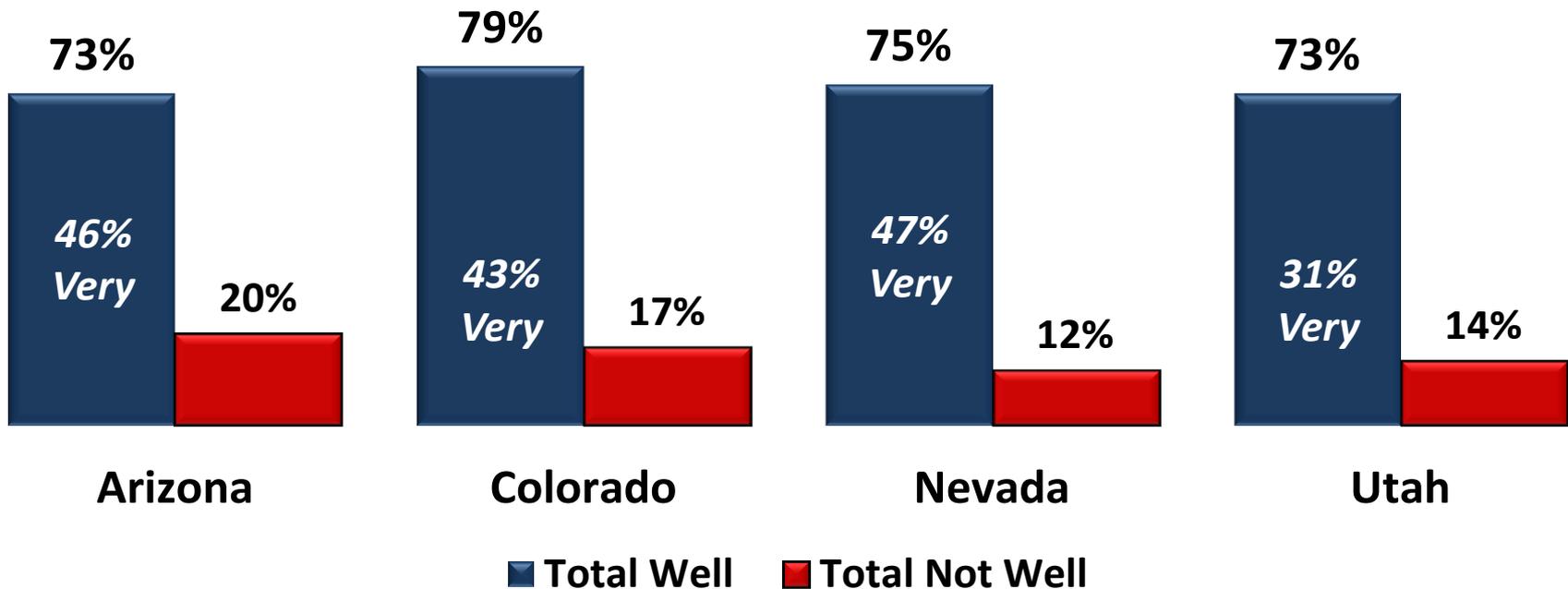
■ Using our current water supply more wisely ■ Diverting more water from rivers in less populated areas

Note: Question not asked in Idaho or Montana

So, which one of the following would you prefer state water officials invest more time and resources in pursuing?

Voters in states along the Colorado River view it as "at risk."

View of the Colorado River At Risk – By State



Note: Question only asked in these four states

Thinking specifically about the Colorado River and the rivers and streams which flow into it in (STATE) – I'm going to read you a list of words and phrases, and please tell me whether you think each one describes the Colorado River very well, somewhat well, not very well, or not at all? - AT RISK

They also view it as a national treasure and critical to their economy and recreation.

<i>Describes Colorado River Well Ranked by Average</i>	Arizona	Colorado	Nevada	Utah	Average
A National Treasure that Should Be Protected	94%	94%	89%	91%	92%
An Attraction for Tourism and Recreation	92%	96%	85%	95%	92%
Critical to State's Economy	88%	91%	84%	81%	86%

Thinking specifically about the Colorado River and the rivers and streams which flow into it in (STATE) – I'm going to read you a list of words and phrases, and please tell me whether you think each one describes the Colorado River very well, somewhat well, not very well, or not at all?

These views have not wavered in the last couple of years.

<i>Describes Colorado River Well Ranked by 2018 Average</i>	Arizona		Colorado		Nevada		Utah		Average	
	2016	2018	2016	2018	2016	2018	2016	2018	2016	2018
A National Treasure that Should Be Protected	93%	94%	93%	94%	87%	89%	87%	91%	90%	92%
An Attraction for Tourism and Recreation	88%	92%	90%	96%	82%	85%	92%	95%	88%	92%
Critical to State's Economy	89%	88%	89%	91%	78%	84%	85%	81%	85%	86%
At Risk	84%	73%	77%	79%	70%	75%	73%	73%	76%	75%

Thinking specifically about the Colorado River and the rivers and streams which flow into it in (STATE) – I'm going to read you a list of words and phrases, and please tell me whether you think each one describes the Colorado River very well, somewhat well, not very well, or not at all?

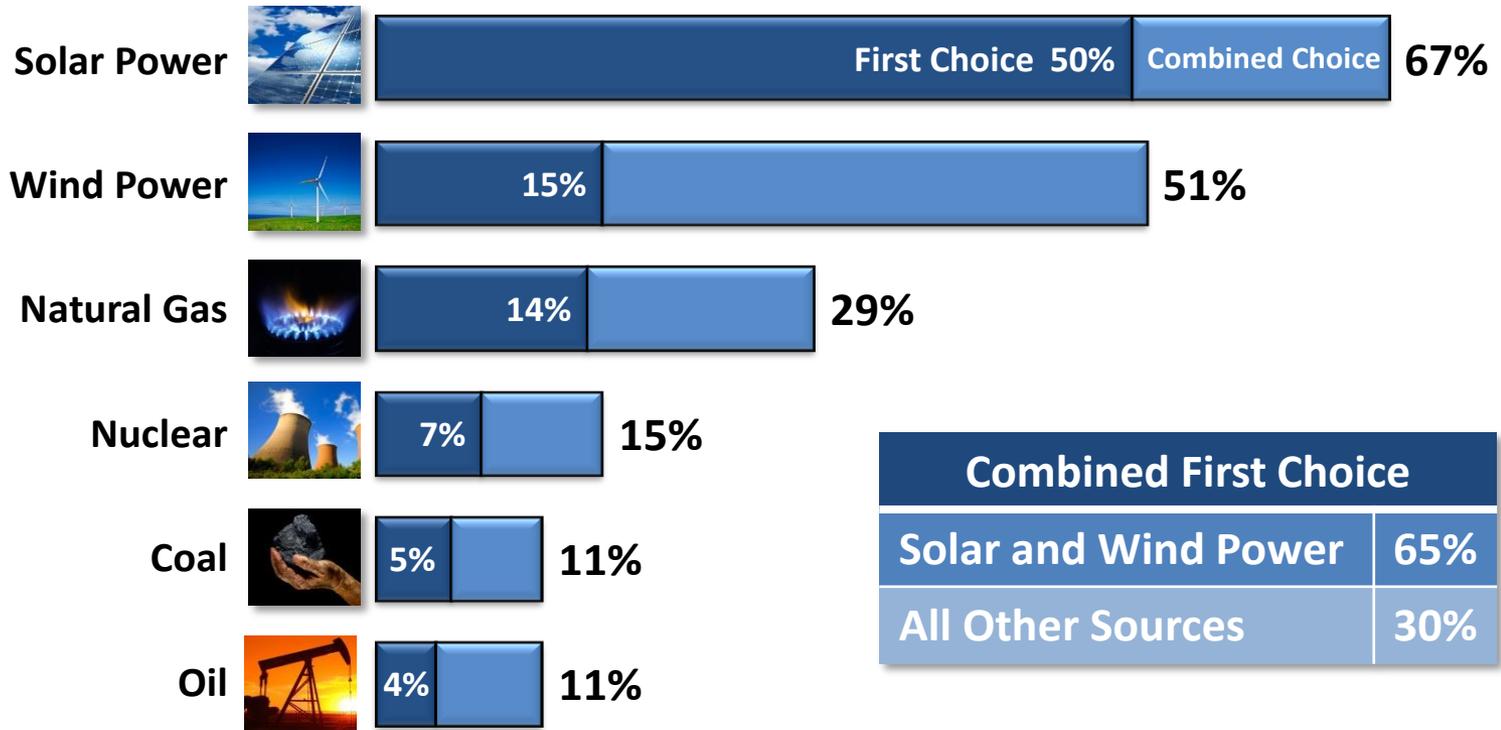


Energy

**THE COLORADO COLLEGE
STATE OF THE ROCKIES PROJECT
Conservation in the West Poll**

Western voters are most likely to say that solar and wind will help their state's economy.

Energy Sources Most Potential to Help State Economy

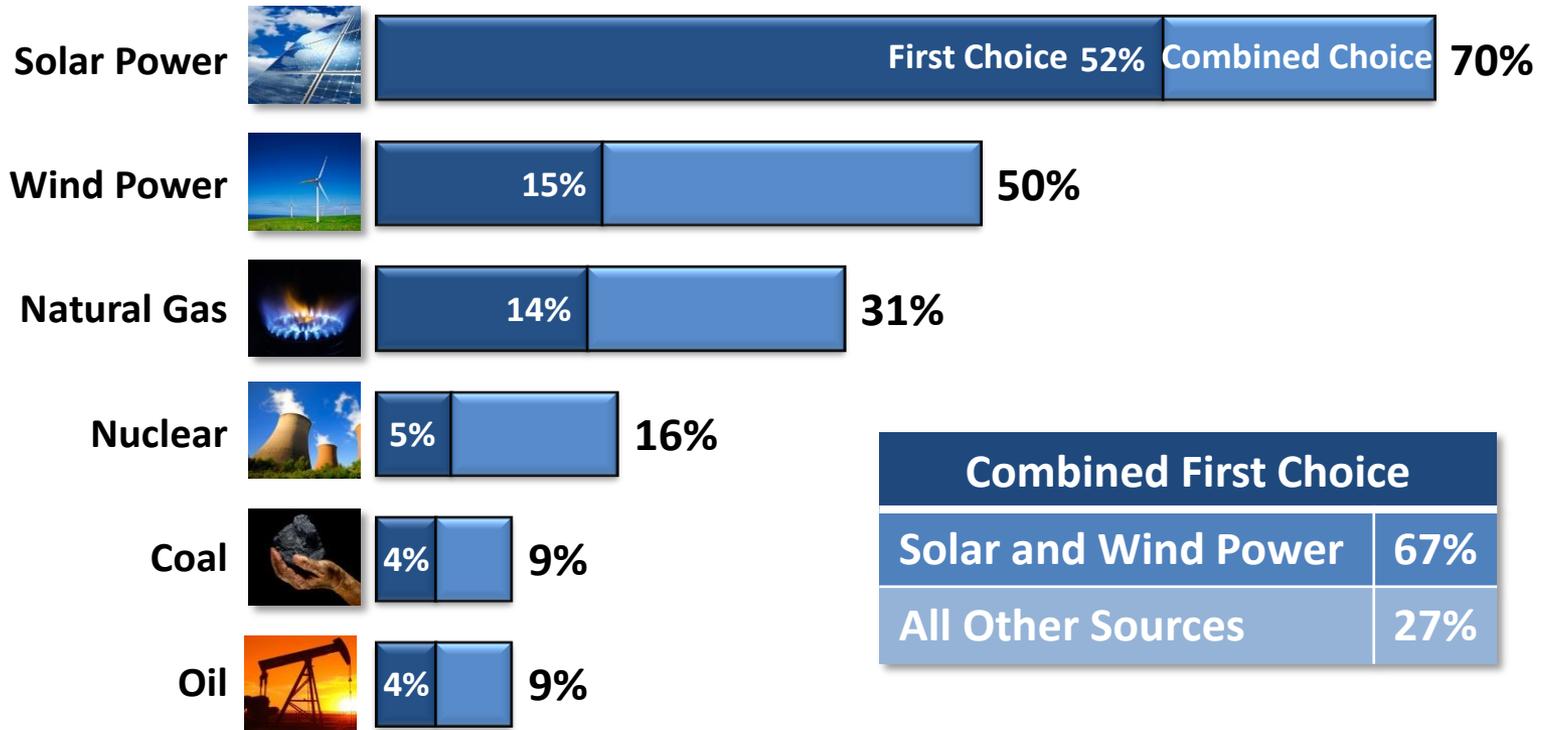


Note: Percentages add up to greater than 100% because respondents chose two energy sources

Which one or two of the following sources of energy would you say has the most potential to help (STATE)'s economy?

By more than a two-to-one margin, voters across the West also view renewables as the future over others.

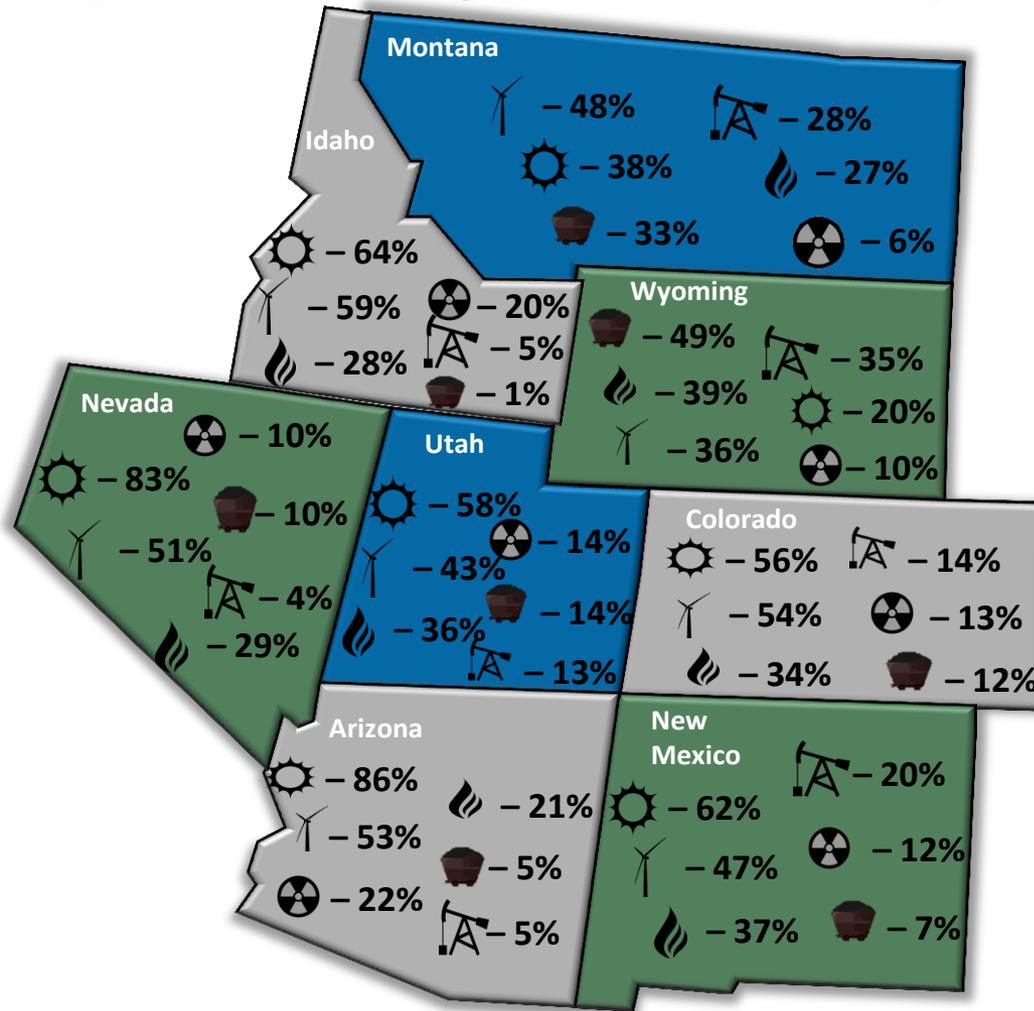
Energy Sources Best Represent “Future of Energy”



Note: Percentages add up to greater than 100% because respondents chose two energy sources

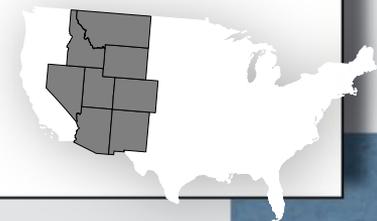
Which one or two of the following sources of energy would you say best represent the future of energy here in (STATE)?

Top Two Energy Sources Help Economy by State:



Western States Preferred Top 2 Energy Sources

- Solar Power – 67%
- Wind Power – 51%
- Natural Gas – 29%
- Nuclear – 15%
- Coal – 11%
- Oil – 11%



Note: Percentages add up to greater than 100% because respondents chose two energy sources



**PUBLIC OPINION
STRATEGIES**

Lori Weigel
Lori@pos.org
(303)324-7655



**FAIRBANK, MASLIN,
MAULLIN, METZ
& ASSOCIATES**

Dave Metz
Dave@FM3Research.com
(510)451-9521



COLORADO COLLEGE

**State of the
Rockies Project**

Walt Hecox
Walt.hecox@coloradocollege.edu
www.stateoftherockies.com