



Key Findings from a Statewide Survey of Wyoming Voters

October 2018

Lori Weigel



**PUBLIC OPINION
STRATEGIES**

#181147

Partners Involved



WYOMING STOCK GROWERS
"Guardian of Wyoming's Cow Country since 1872"



Methodology

- **A statewide survey of 600 registered voters throughout Wyoming conducted on both landline and cell phones.**
- **Survey conducted October 9-13, 2018.**
- **Statistically valid sample with margin of sampling error ± 4.0 at the 95% confidence interval for the total sample; margins of error for sub-groups will vary.**
- **Comparisons are made to similarly conducted surveys from 2007 and 2014.**

Two-thirds of the state's voters identify as either a hunter or an angler, far above national rates.

Hunters



Anglers



Wyoming

National

54%

19%

54%

23%

Wyoming residents also say that they engage in outdoor recreation at far higher rates than voters nationally.

	Wyoming	National
 Camping	60%	42%
 Hiking	58%	49%
 Bird watching and viewing wildlife	48%	30%
 Riding an off-road vehicle or snowmobile	34%	15%
 Boating	30%	30%
 Mountain biking	20%	12%



Conservation Issues in Mix of Wyoming Concerns

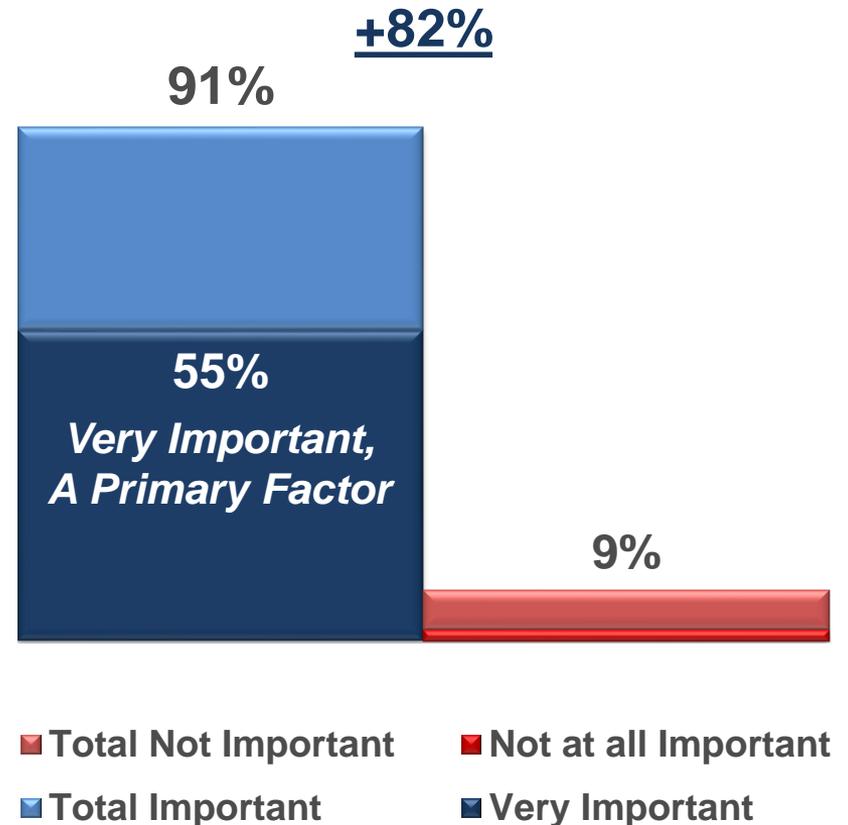


**PUBLIC OPINION
STRATEGIES**

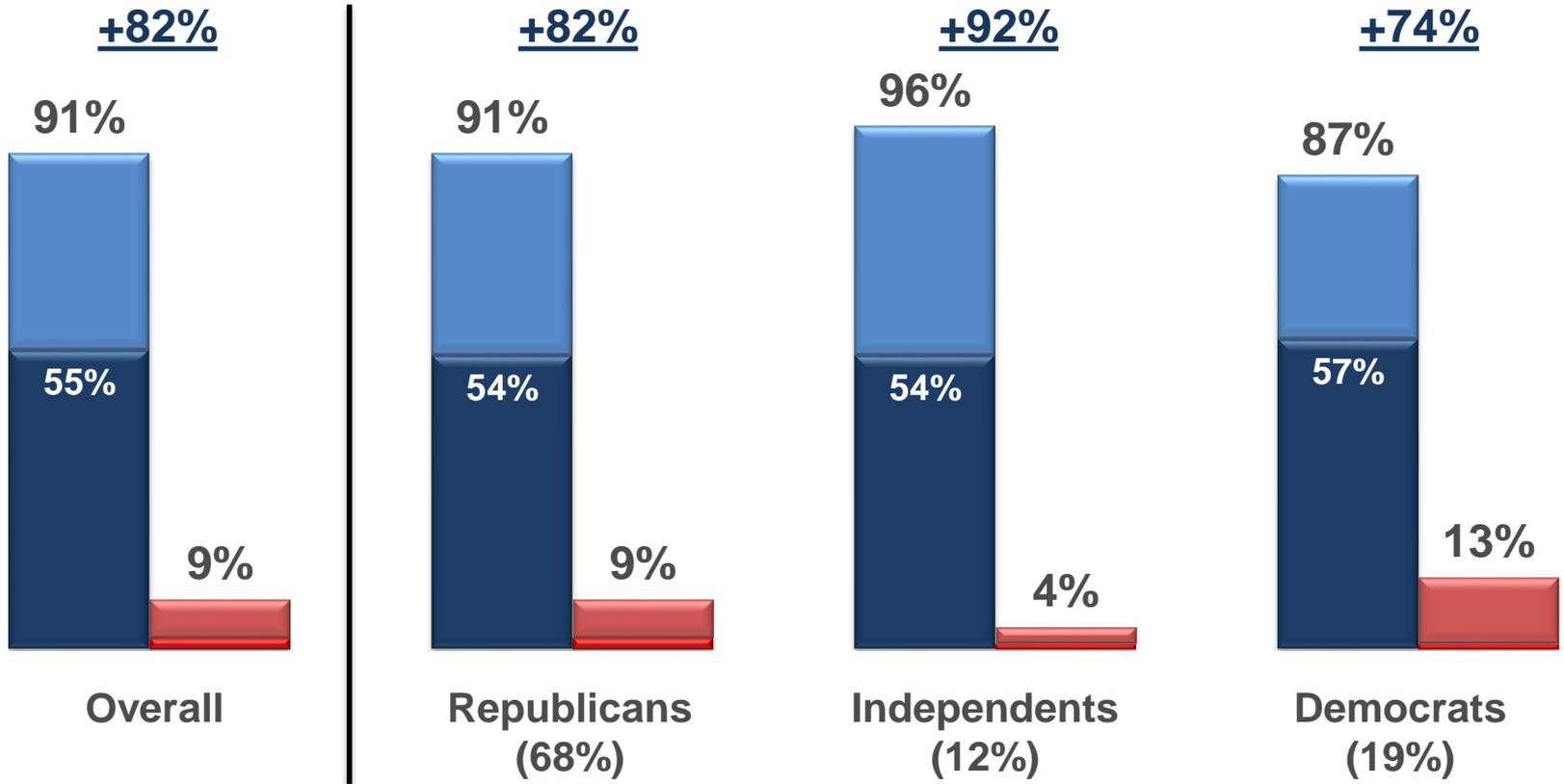
A majority say conservation issues are of primary importance; nine-in-ten say at least somewhat important.

Importance of Conservation Issues in Support for Elected Official

Compared to other issues like the economy, health care and education, how important are issues involving public lands, waters, and wildlife for you in deciding whether to support an elected public official?



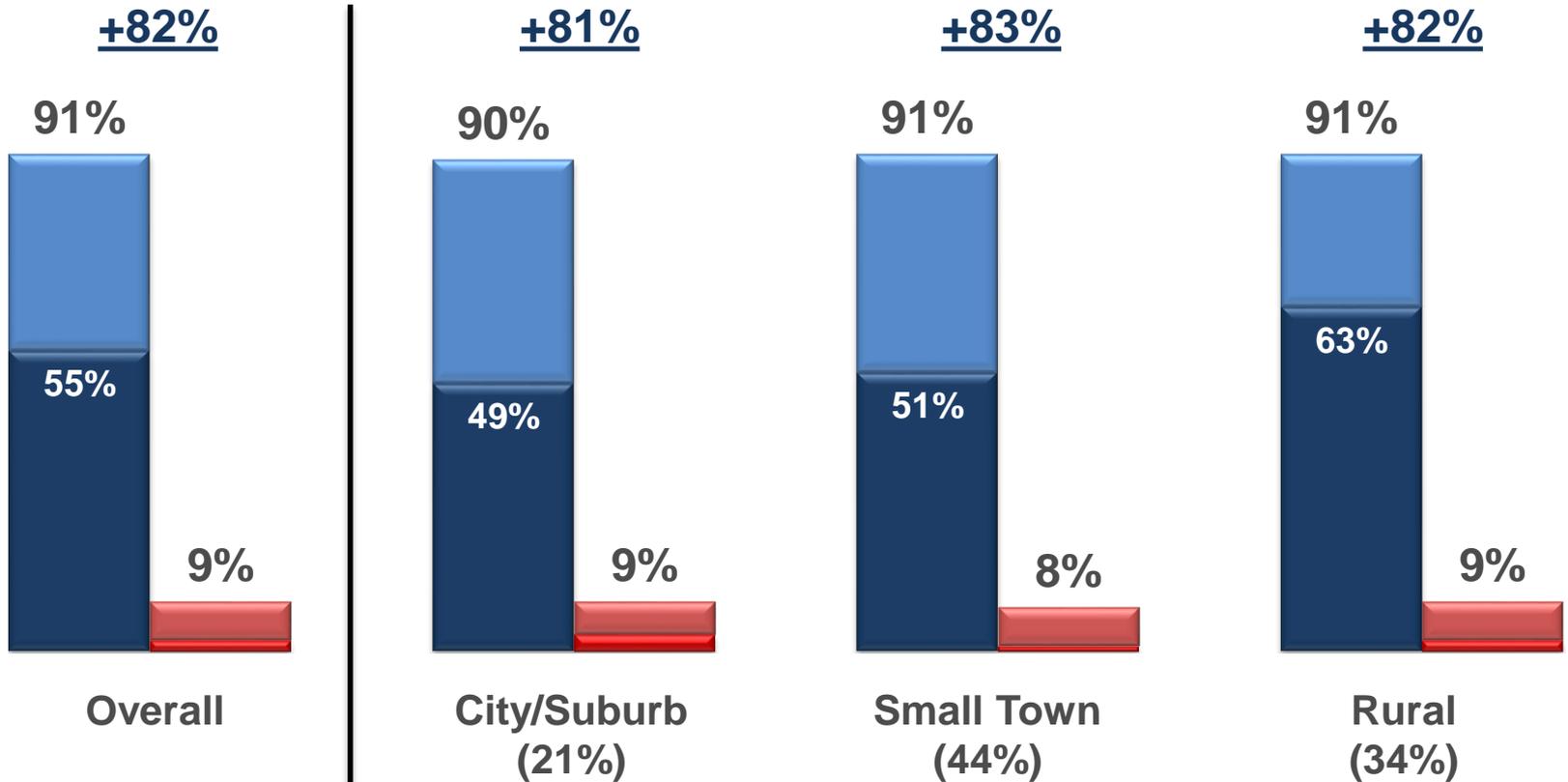
Voters across party lines view conservation issues as very important in their assessment of elected officials.



■ Very/Primary Importance ■ Total Importance ■ Not at all Important ■ Total Not Important

Compared to other issues like the economy, health care and education, how important are issues involving public lands, waters, and wildlife for you in deciding whether to support an elected public official?

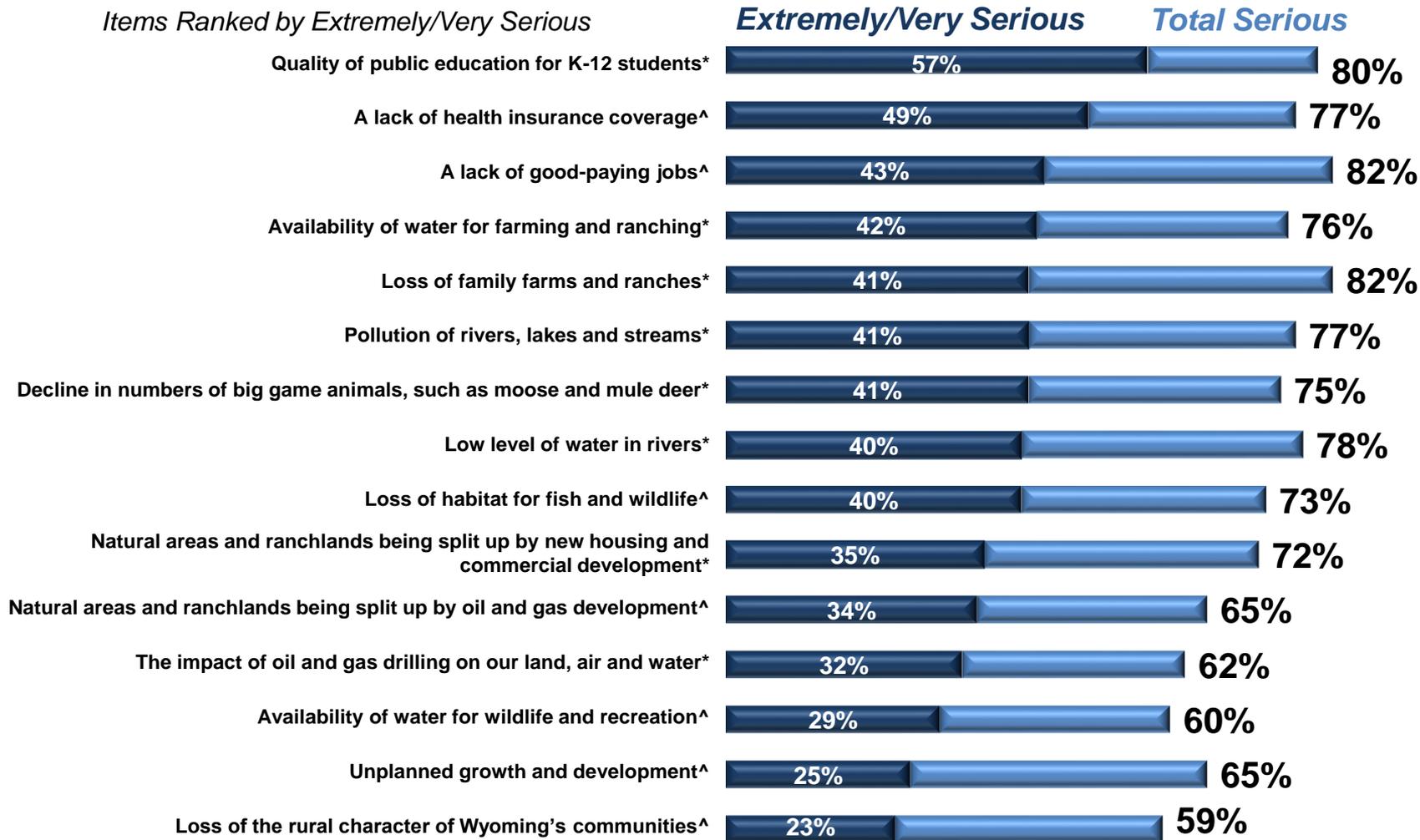
Rural voters are the most likely to say conservation issues are of primary importance to them.



■ Very/Primary Importance ■ Total Important ■ Not at all Important ■ Total Not Important

Compared to other issues like the economy, health care and education, how important are issues involving public lands, waters, and wildlife for you in deciding whether to support an elected public official?

Some conservation issues are on par with jobs.



Split sample: *Represents N=306 respondents ^Represents N=294 respondents

I'm going to read you a list of issues some people have told me are problems in Wyoming while others may not be. After I read 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 Wyoming.

Conservation concerns increased in last four years.

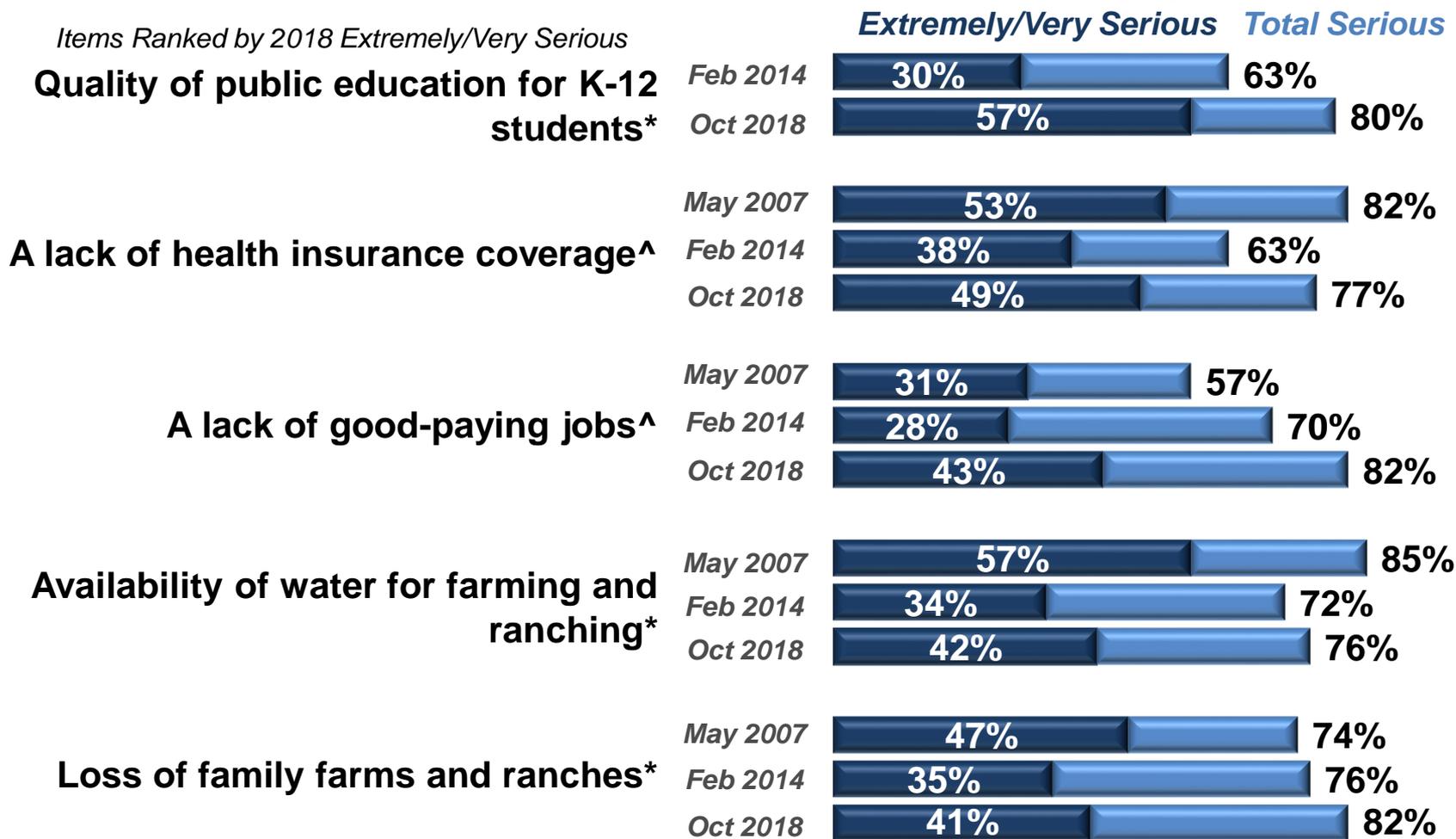
<i>Conservation Issues Ranked by Net Difference</i>	2014 %Extremely/Very Serious	2018 %Extremely/Very Serious	Net Difference
Pollution of rivers, lakes and streams*	18%	41%	+23%
Loss of habitat for fish and wildlife^	24%	40%	+16%
Availability of water for wildlife and recreation^	16%	29%	+13%
Decline in numbers of big game animals, such as moose and mule deer*	31%	41%	+10%
Natural areas and ranchlands being split up by oil and gas development^	24%	34%	+10%
The impact of oil and gas drilling on our land, air and water*	22%	32%	+10%
Availability of water for farming and ranching*	34%	42%	+8%
Natural areas and ranchlands being split up by new housing and commercial development*	27%	35%	+8%
Loss of family farms and ranches*	35%	41%	+6%

Split sample: *Represents N=306 respondents ^Represents N=294 respondents

I'm going to read you a list of issues some people have told me are problems in Wyoming while others may not be. After I read 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 Wyoming.

Concerns about threats to farms and ranchlands are on par with health care and the economy.

Items Ranked by 2018 Extremely/Very Serious



Split sample: *Represents N=306 respondents ^Represents N=294 respondents

I'm going to read you a list of issues some people have told me are problems in Wyoming while others may not be. After I read 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 Wyoming.

Concerns about water and wildlife have increased.

Items Ranked by 2018 Extremely/Very Serious

Extremely/Very Serious *Total Serious*

Pollution of rivers, lakes and streams*



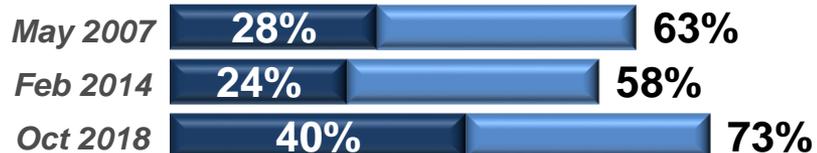
Decline in numbers of big game animals, such as moose and mule deer*



Low level of water in rivers*



Loss of habitat for fish and wildlife^



Natural areas and ranchlands being split up by new housing and commercial development^



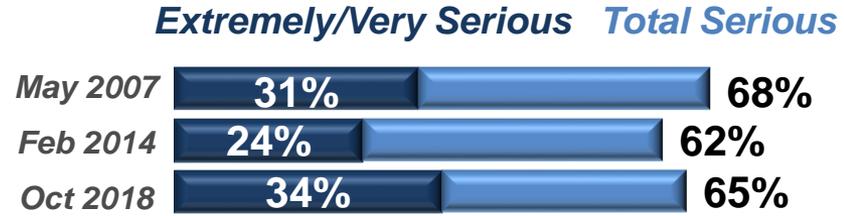
Split sample: *Represents N=306 respondents ^Represents N=294 respondents

I'm going to read you a list of issues some people have told me are problems in Wyoming while others may not be. After I read 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 Wyoming.

Impacts of development are in a lower tier of concerns.

Items Ranked by 2018 Extremely/Very Serious

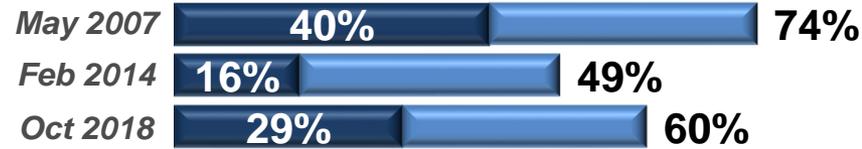
Natural areas and ranchlands being split up by oil and gas development[^]



The impact of oil and gas drilling on our land, air and water*



Availability of water for wildlife and recreation[^]



Unplanned growth and development[^]



Loss of the rural character of Wyoming's communities[^]



Split sample: *Represents N=306 respondents ^Represents N=294 respondents

I'm going to read you a list of issues some people have told me are problems in Wyoming while others may not be. After I read 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 Wyoming.

A scenic landscape featuring snow-capped mountains, a river, and autumn foliage. The mountains are rugged and covered in snow, with some peaks partially obscured by clouds. The river flows through the foreground, reflecting the sky and the surrounding landscape. The trees along the riverbank are in various stages of autumn, with some showing vibrant orange and yellow leaves. The overall scene is peaceful and majestic.

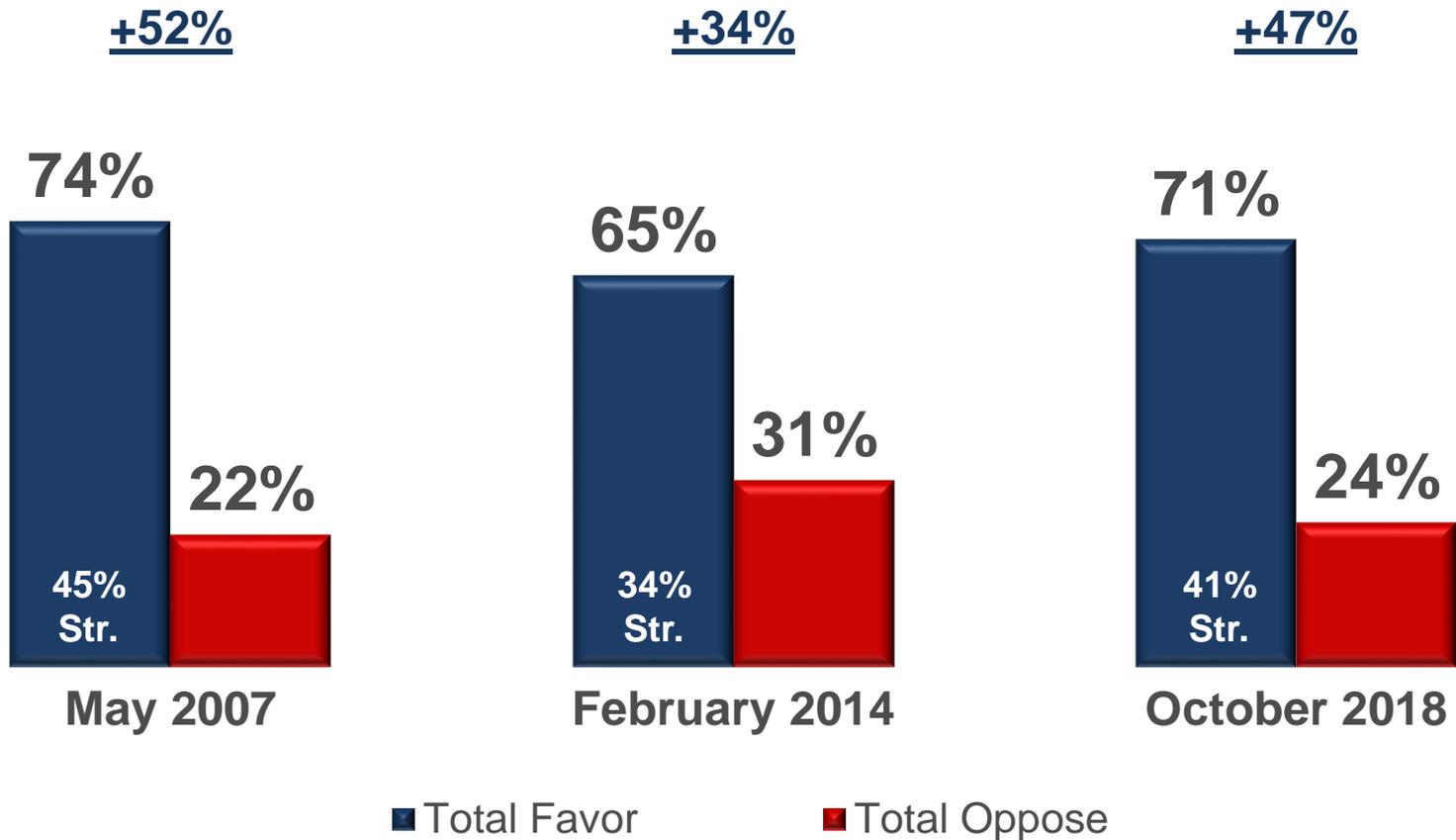
Significant Support for Conservation Funding



**PUBLIC OPINION
STRATEGIES**

Wyoming voters have consistently supported increased investments in conservation.

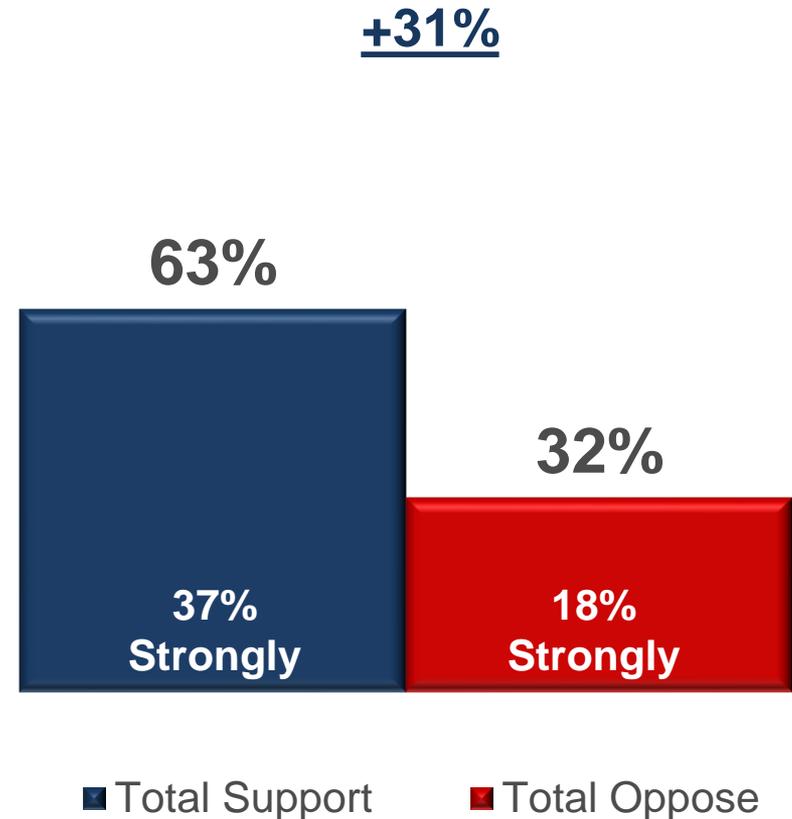
In general would you favor or oppose setting aside more state money to protect land, air, water, wildlife habitat and ranchlands in Wyoming?



More than three-in-five support full funding of the Trust.

State Legislature Funding Wyoming Wildlife and Natural Resource Trust

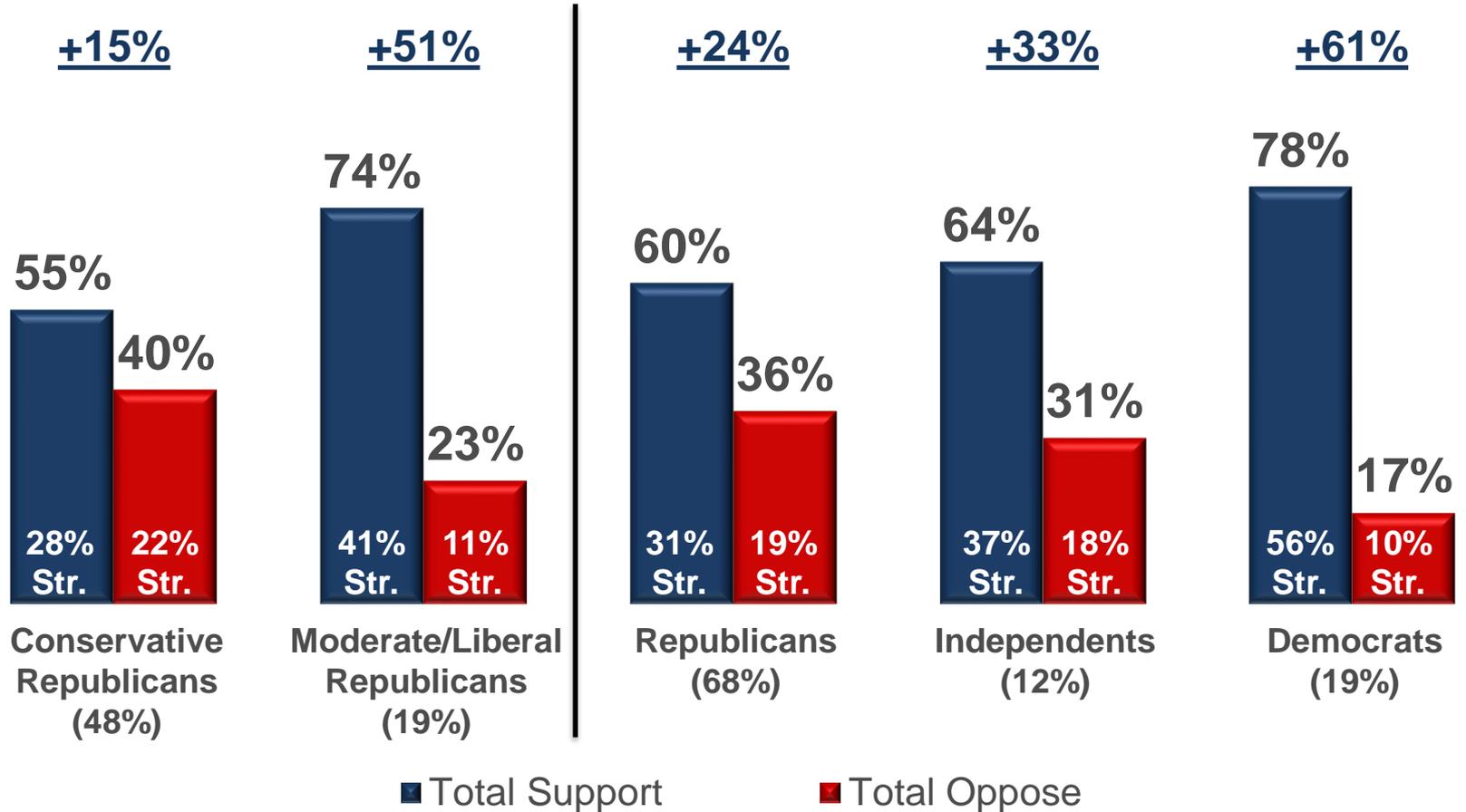
More specifically, the State Legislature has the authority to dedicate money into the Wyoming Wildlife and Natural Resource Trust, a fund which will earn interest to be used for conserving wildlife habitat, ranchlands and water. The Legislature has invested nearly one hundred five million dollars in the Wildlife and Natural Resource Trust, but fully funding the Trust would mean allocating up to 200 million dollars.



Knowing this, would you support or oppose the State Legislature fully funding the Wyoming Wildlife and Natural Resource Trust to preserve wildlife habitat, ranchlands and water in the state?

There is solid support for full funding across party and ideological lines.

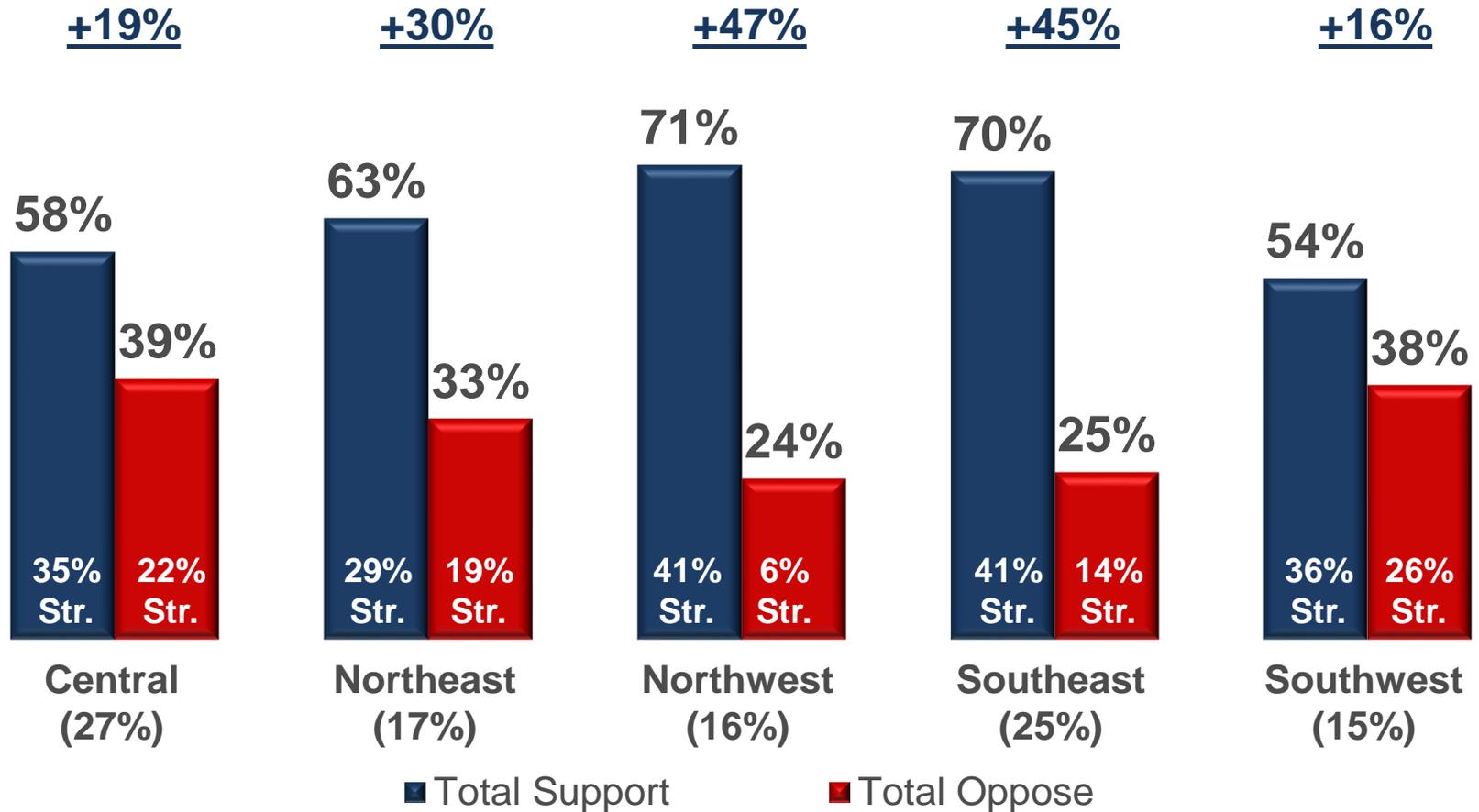
State Legislature Funding Wyoming Wildlife and Natural Resource Trust – by Party



Knowing this, would you support or oppose the State Legislature fully funding the Wyoming Wildlife and Natural Resource Trust to preserve wildlife habitat, ranchlands and water in the state?

A majority in every area of the state expresses support for funding up to the \$200 million level.

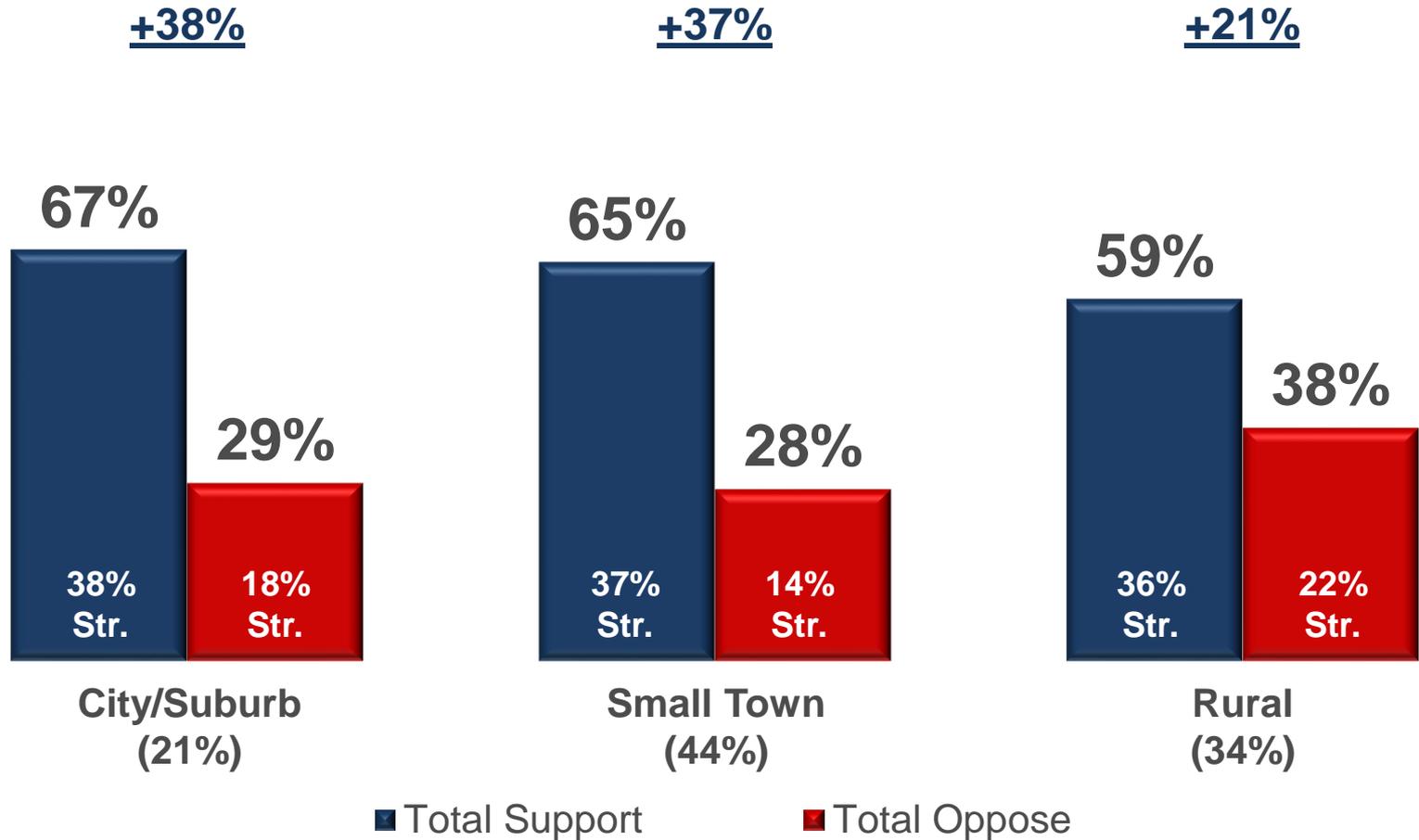
State Legislature Funding Wyoming Wildlife and Natural Resource Trust – by Region



Knowing this, would you support or oppose the State Legislature fully funding the Wyoming Wildlife and Natural Resource Trust to preserve wildlife habitat, ranchlands and water in the state?

There is solid support in every type of community.

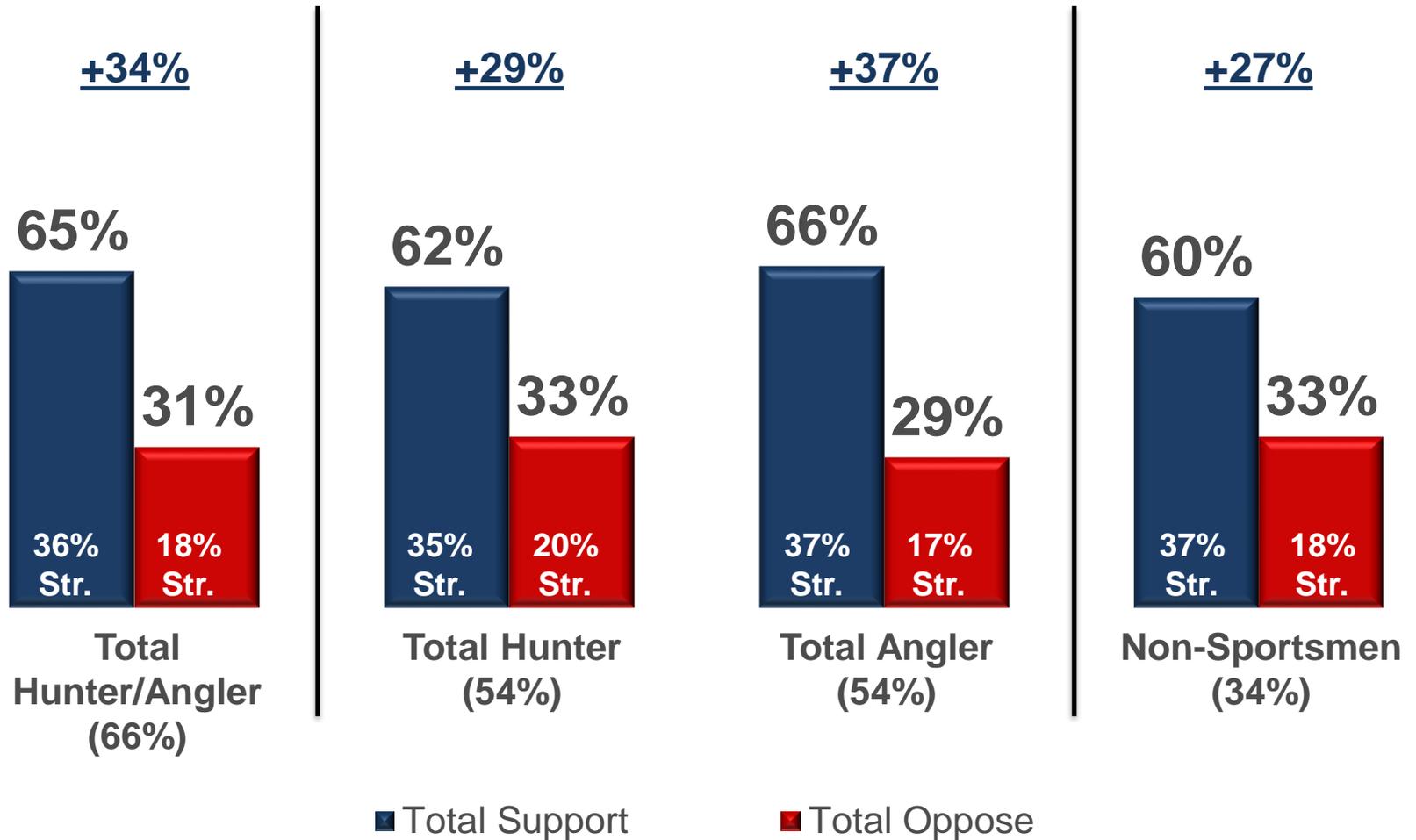
State Legislature Funding Wyoming Wildlife and Natural Resource Trust – by Geography



Knowing this, would you support or oppose the State Legislature fully funding the Wyoming Wildlife and Natural Resource Trust to preserve wildlife habitat, ranchlands and water in the state?

Sportsmen are more apt to support full funding.

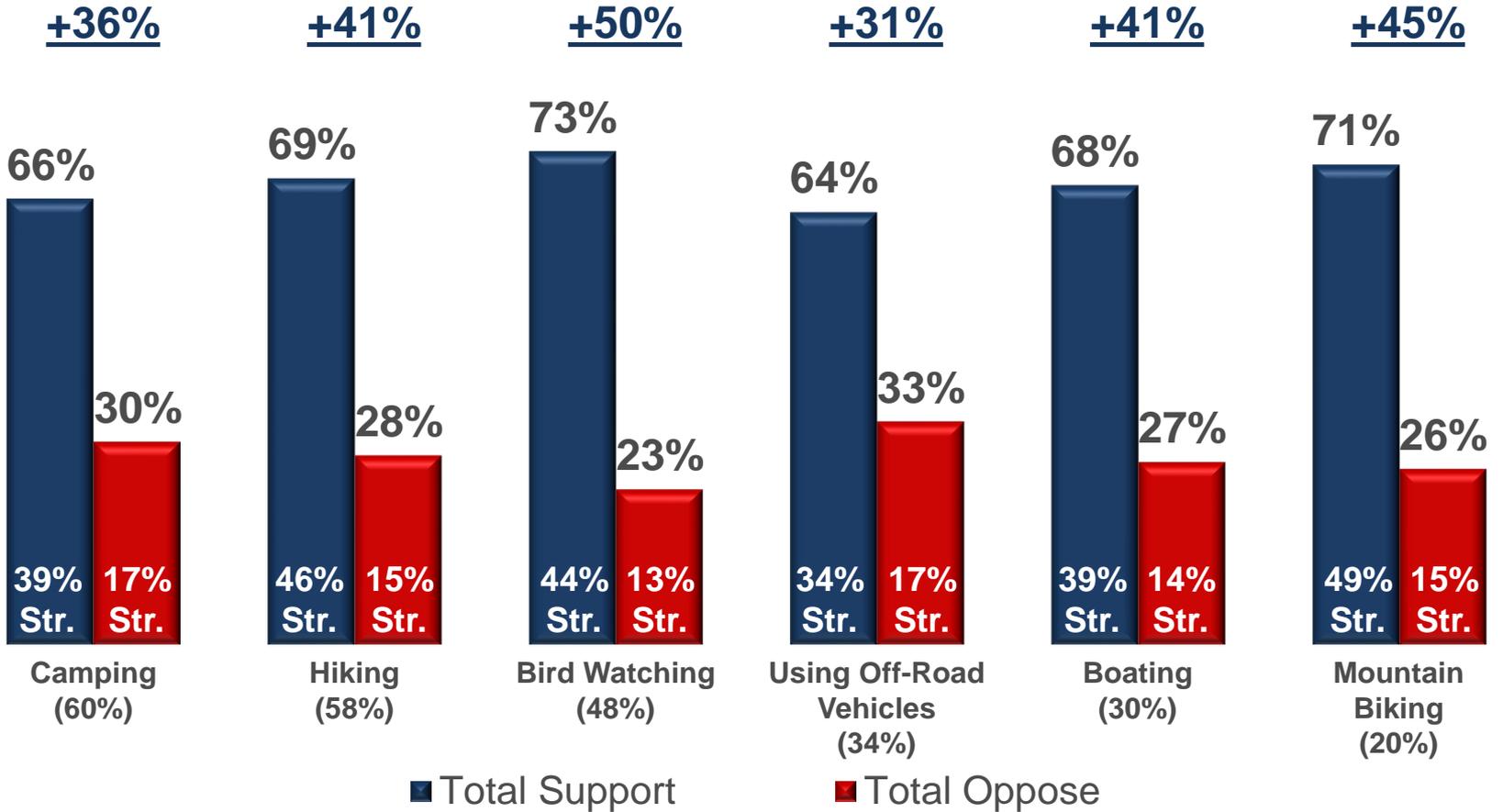
State Legislature Funding Wyoming Wildlife and Natural Resource Trust – by Sportsmen



Knowing this, would you support or oppose the State Legislature fully funding the Wyoming Wildlife and Natural Resource Trust to preserve wildlife habitat, ranchlands and water in the state?

There is solid support among outdoor recreationists.

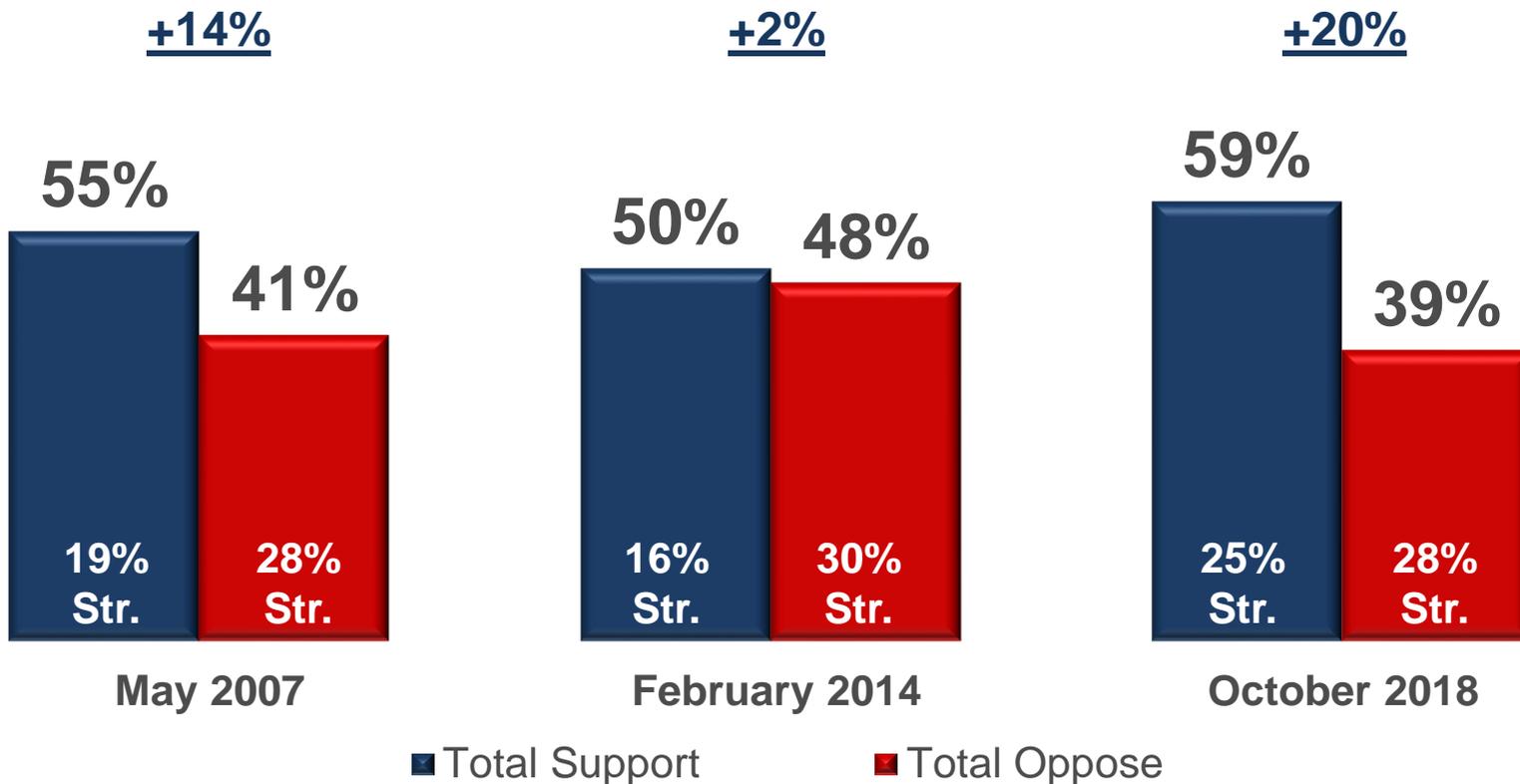
State Legislature Funding Wyoming Wildlife and Natural Resource Trust
– by Outdoor Activities



Knowing this, would you support or oppose the State Legislature fully funding the Wyoming Wildlife and Natural Resource Trust to preserve wildlife habitat, ranchlands and water in the state?

Moreover, this is the highest level of support for a tax increase to fund conservation in eleven years.

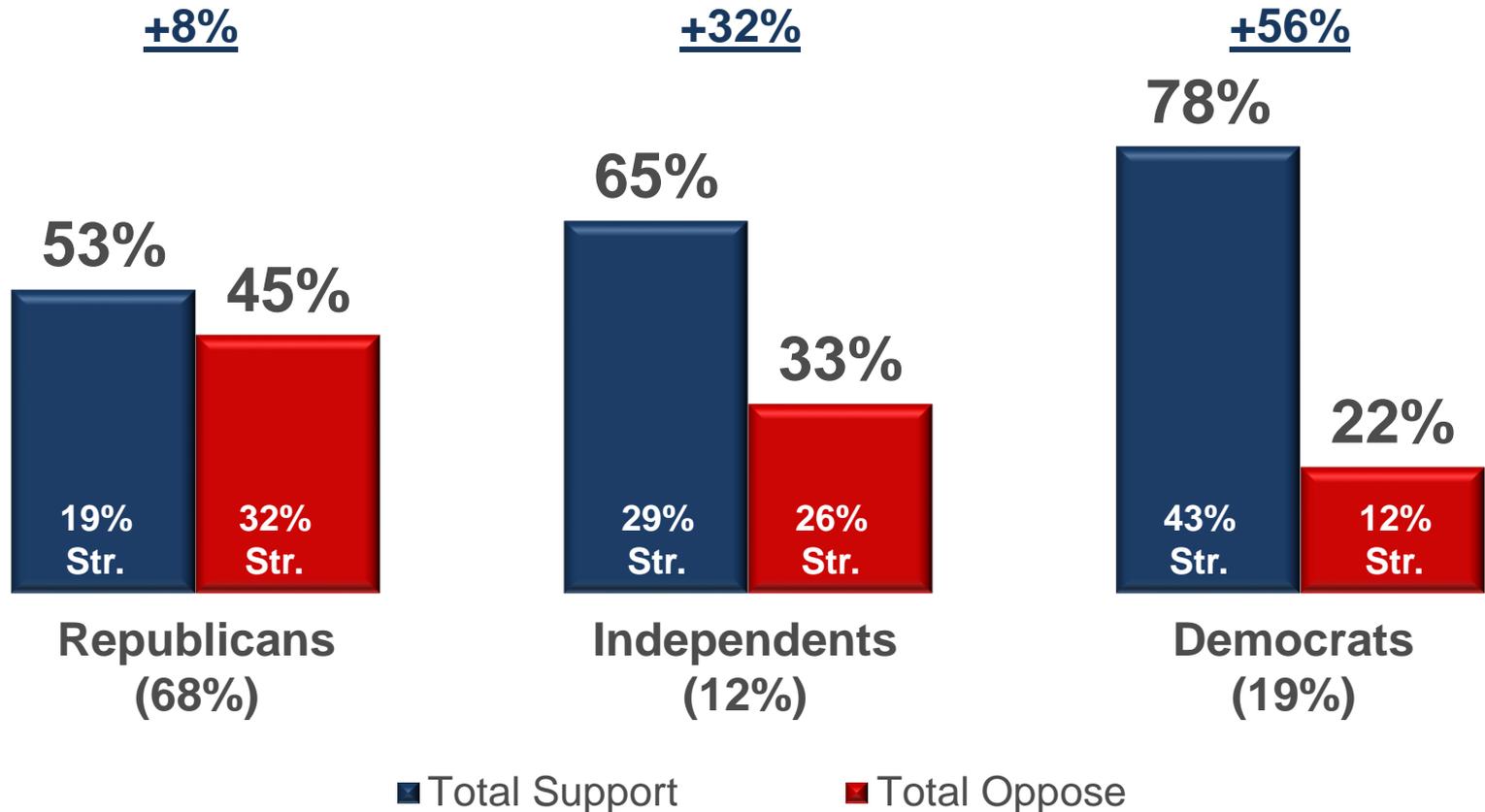
Increase in Local Taxes to Support Conservation



Would you support or oppose a small increase in local taxes in order to conserve water quality, wildlife habitat and ranchlands in your county or community?

Majority of voters across partisan spectrum indicate support for a tax increase to fund conservation.

Increase in Local Taxes to Support Conservation – by Party



Would you support or oppose a small increase in local taxes in order to conserve water quality, wildlife habitat and ranchlands in your county or community?

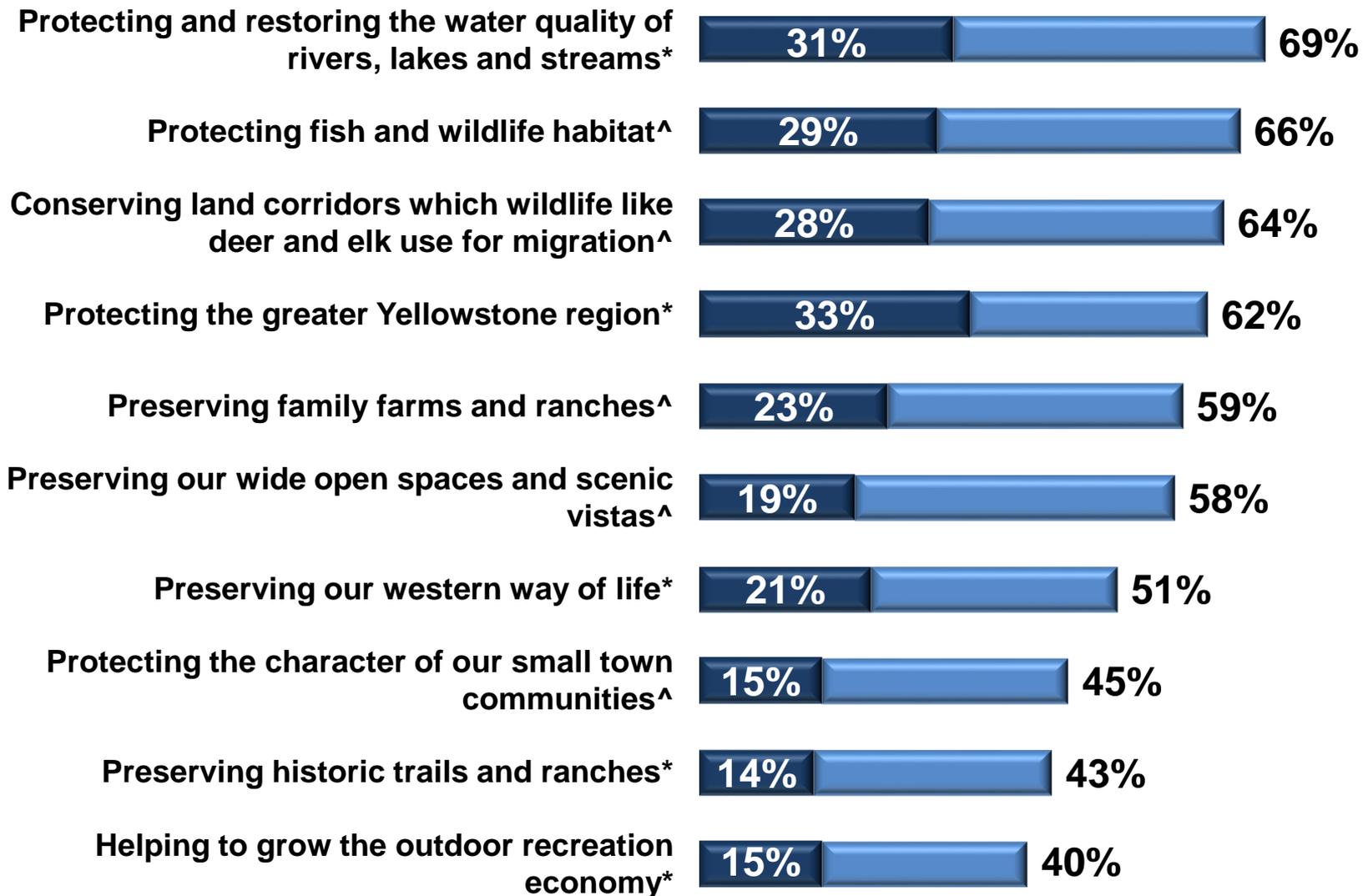
What We Did

- Respondents were read a list of projects that the state of Wyoming currently funds or might undertake in the future to improve the condition of land, air, water, and wildlife in the state.
- They rated each type of project as extremely important, very important, somewhat important or not important to them for the state to fund.

Wyoming voters prioritize water and wildlife most.

Items Ranked by Extremely/Very Important

Extremely Important Extremely/Very Important



Split sample: *Represents N=306 respondents ^Represents N=294 respondents

Priorities have been mostly consistent.

Items Ranked by 2018 Extremely/Very Important

Protecting and restoring the water quality of rivers, lakes and streams*

Extremely Important *Extremely/Very Important*



Protecting fish and wildlife habitat^



Conserving land corridors which wildlife like deer and elk use for migration^



Protecting the greater Yellowstone region*



Preserving family farms and ranches^



Split sample: *Represents N=306 respondents ^Represents N=294 respondents

Please tell me how important it would be to you that each project be funded.

Views and “way of life” elements have declined though.

Items Ranked by 2018 Extremely/Very Important

Extremely Important *Extremely/Very Important*

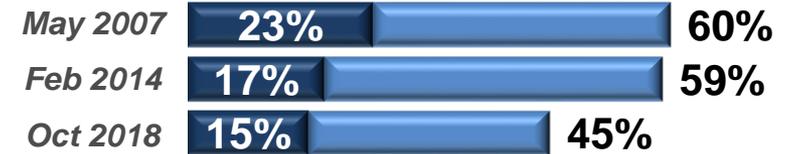
Preserving our wide open spaces and scenic vistas[^]



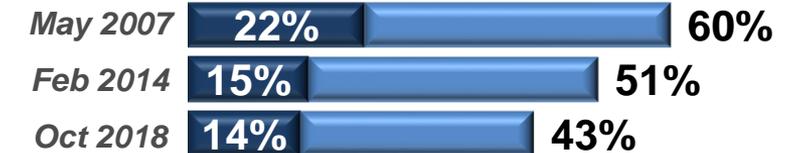
Preserving our western way of life*



Protecting the character of our small town communities[^]



Preserving historic trails and ranches*



Helping to grow the outdoor recreation economy*



Split sample: *Represents N=306 respondents ^Represents N=294 respondents

Please tell me how important it would be to you that each project be funded.



Public Lands

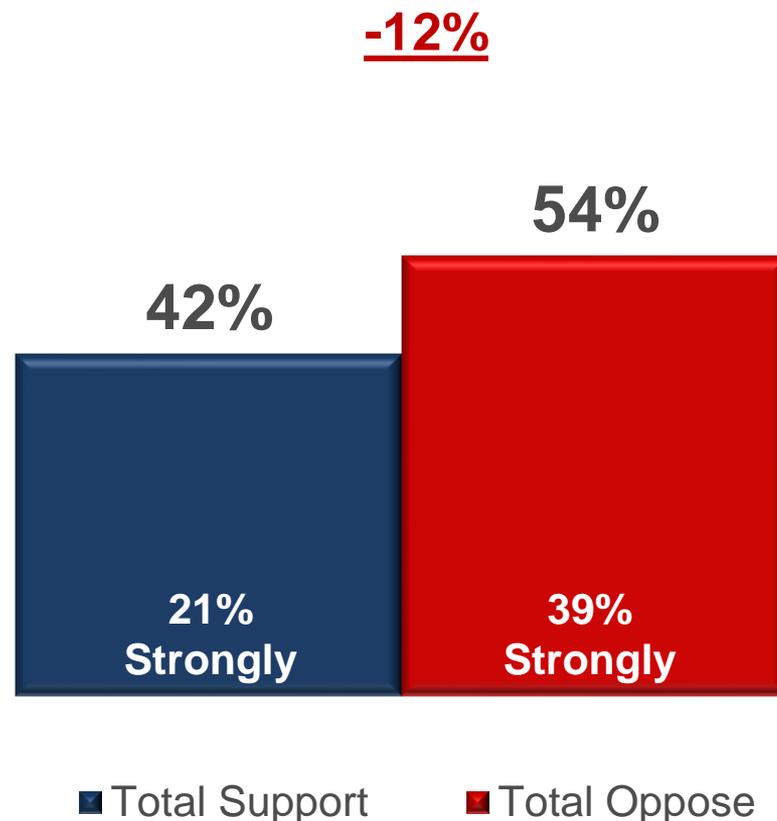


**PUBLIC OPINION
STRATEGIES**

A majority of Wyoming voters oppose states taking over national public lands.

State Government Having Authority Over National Public Lands

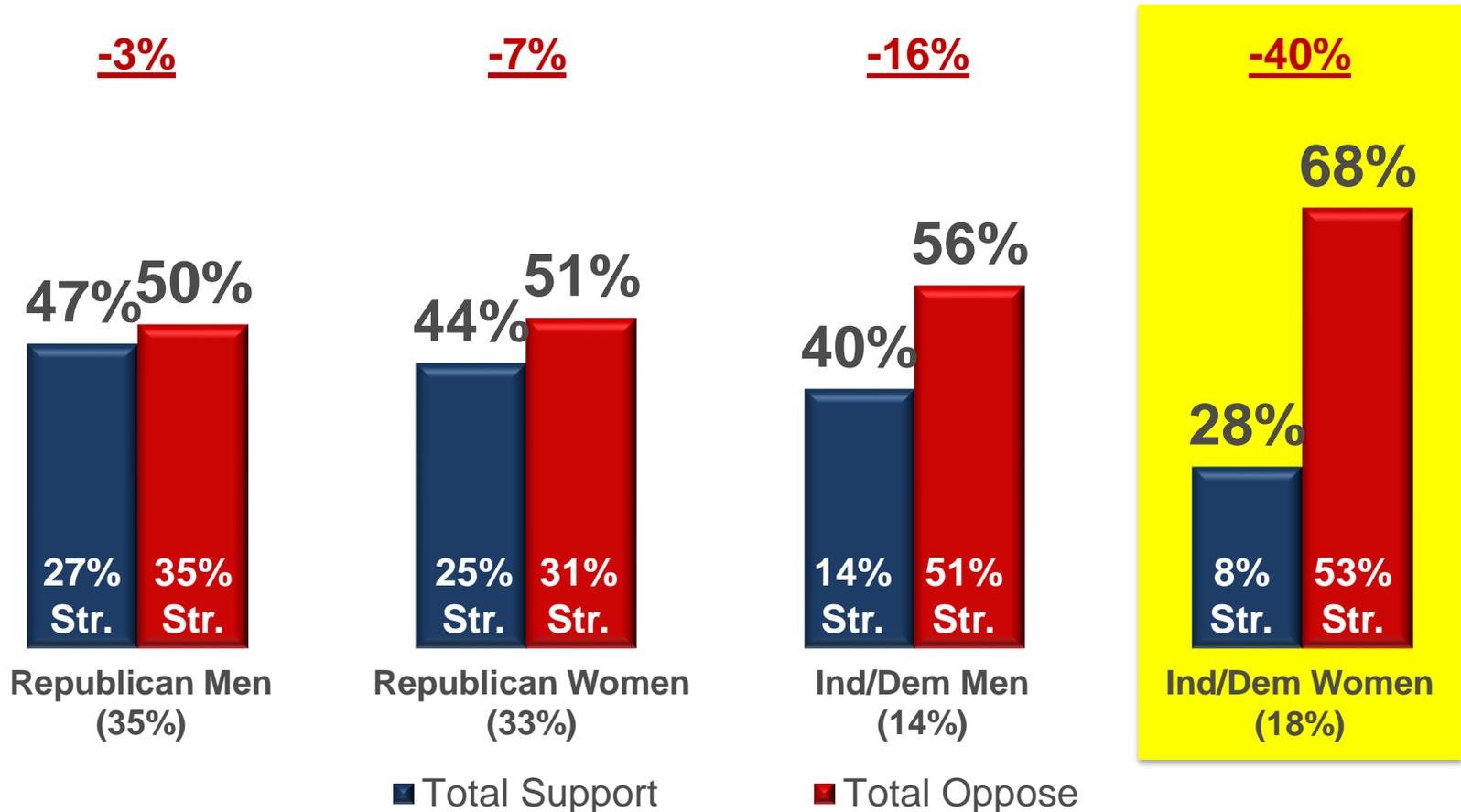
Some Members of Congress have proposed giving state governments authority over national public lands, such as National Forests, or Bureau of Management Lands in its borders. The state government would decide the future management of the lands, but state taxpayers would pay the costs, including the cost of maintenance and preventing and fighting wildfires.



Do you support or oppose this proposal?

Half or more across party lines oppose the idea, although Democratic and independent women more so.

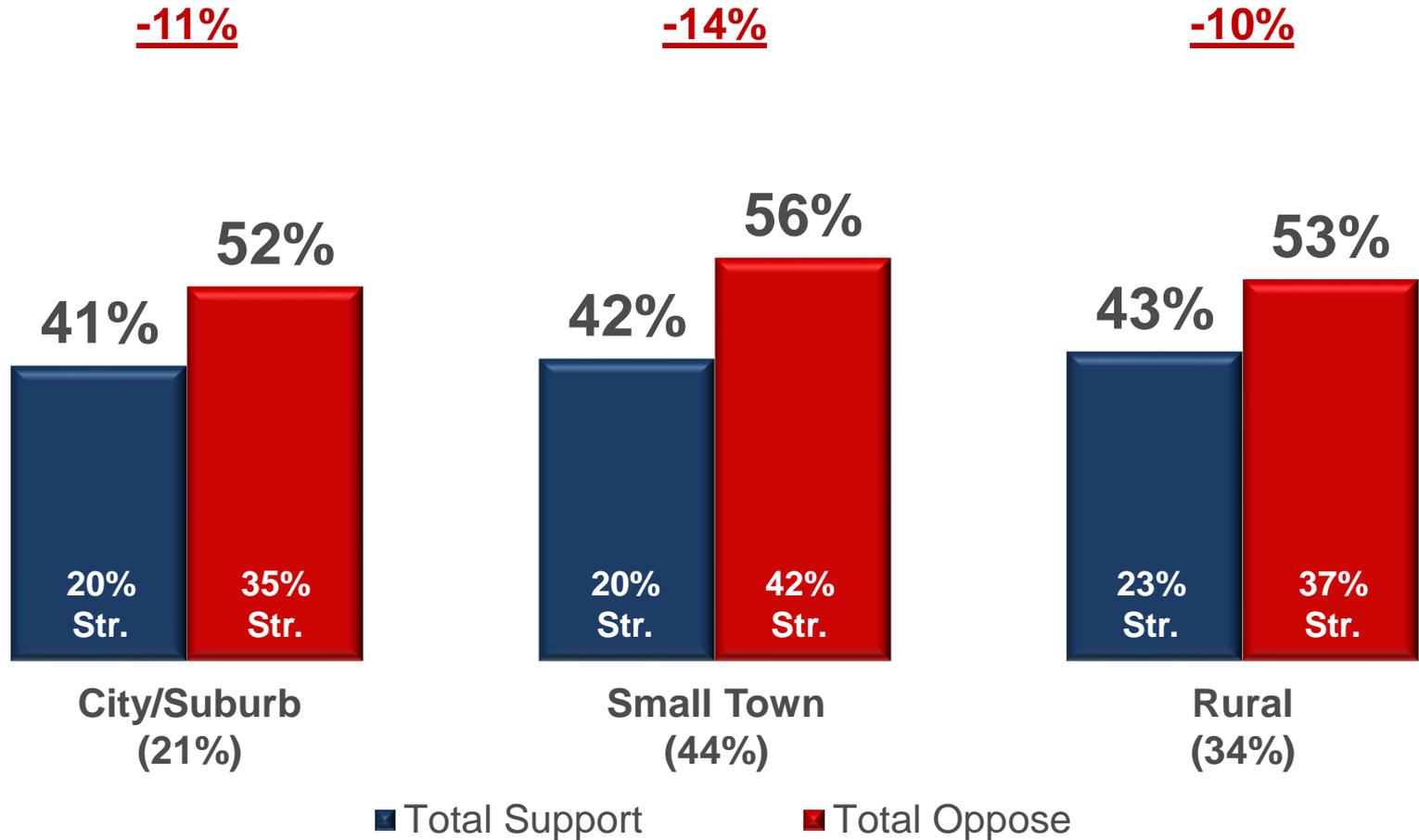
State Government Having Authority Over National Public Lands – by Party/Gender



Do you support or oppose this proposal?

Majorities in every type of community also oppose it.

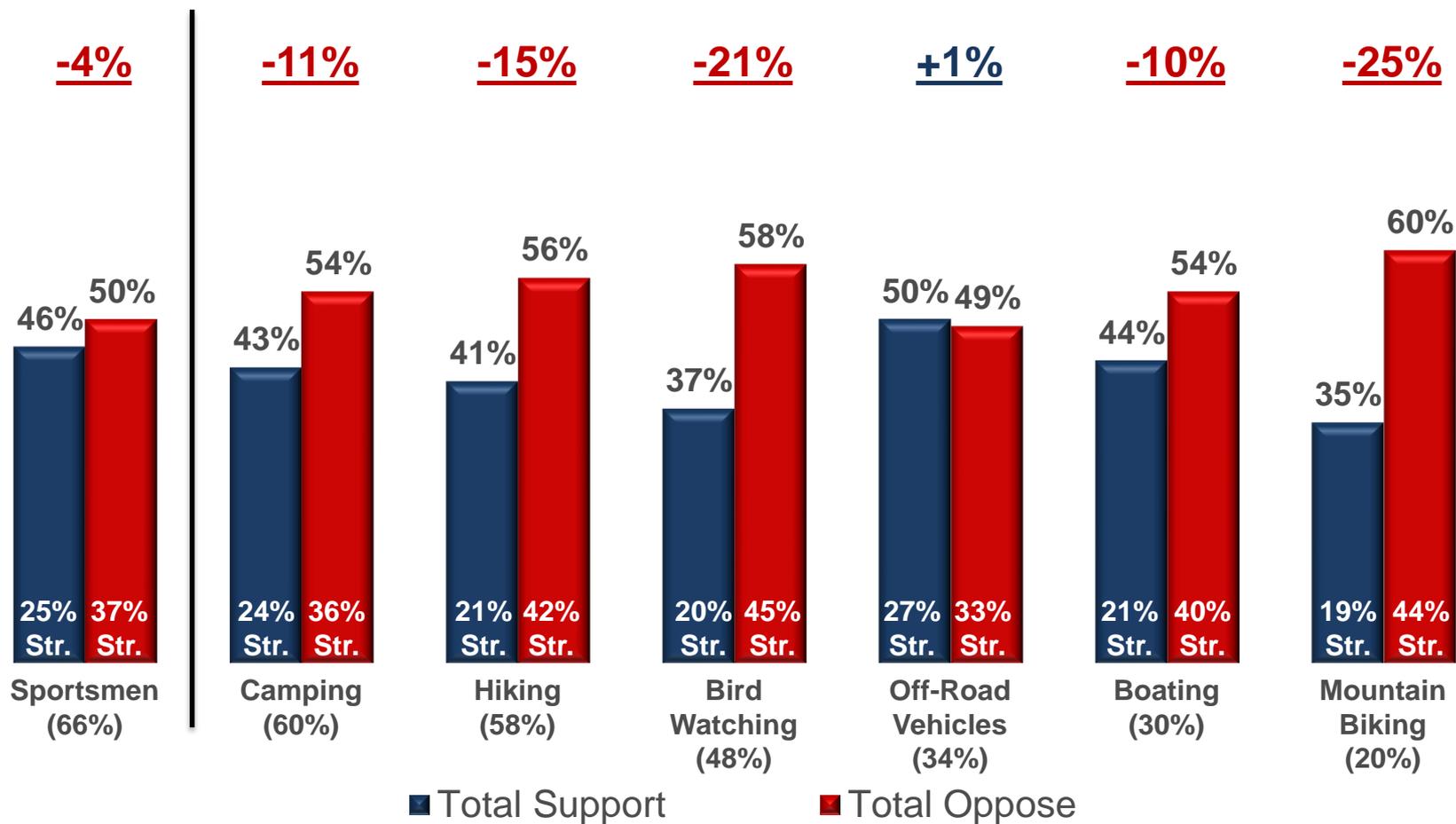
State Government Having Authority Over National Public Lands – by Geography



Do you support or oppose this proposal?

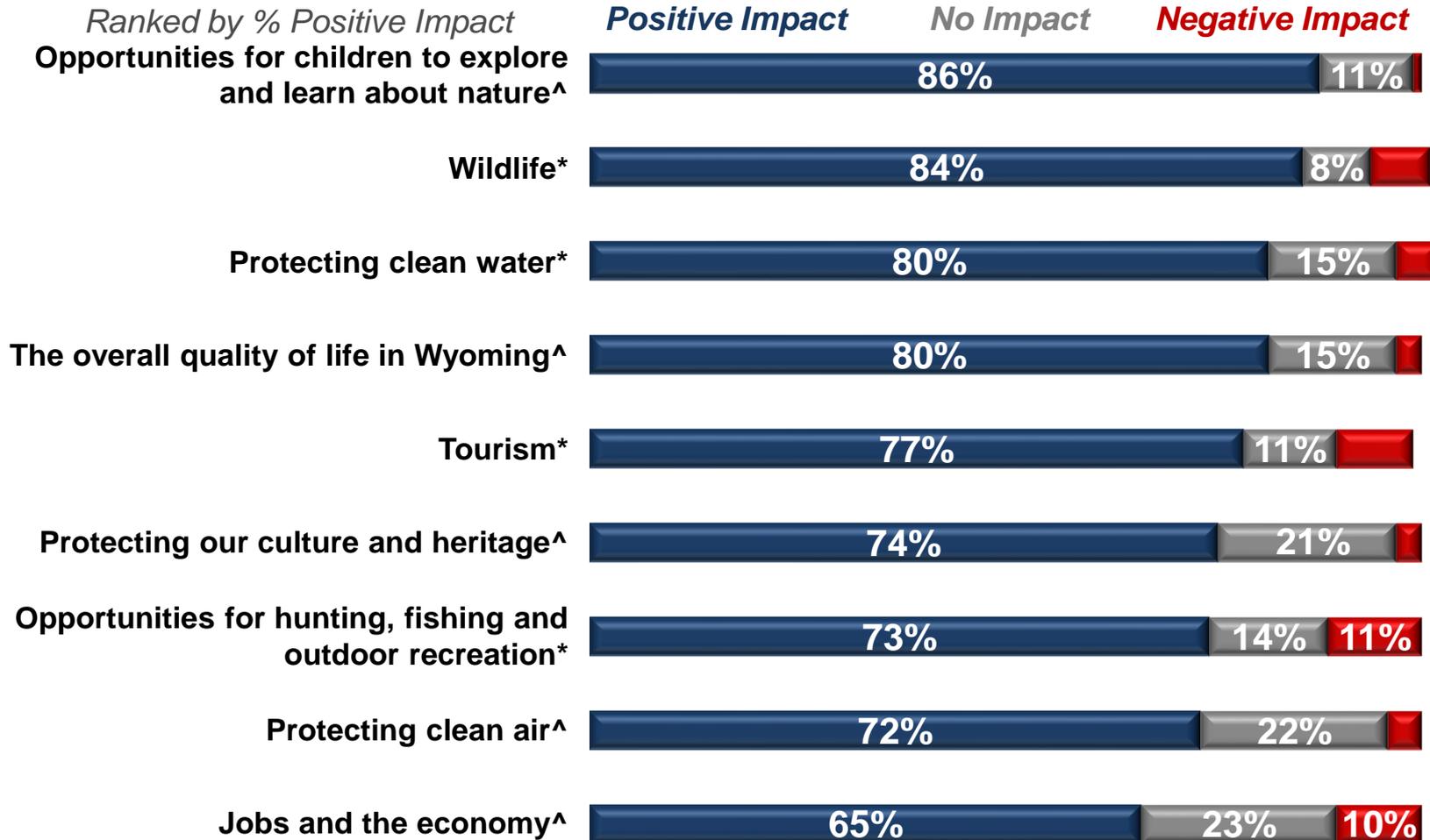
Sportsmen and most outdoor recreationists do too.

State Government Having Authority Over National Public Lands
– by Sportsmen & Outdoor Activities



Do you support or oppose this proposal?

Overwhelmingly, voters perceive positive impacts of national public lands.

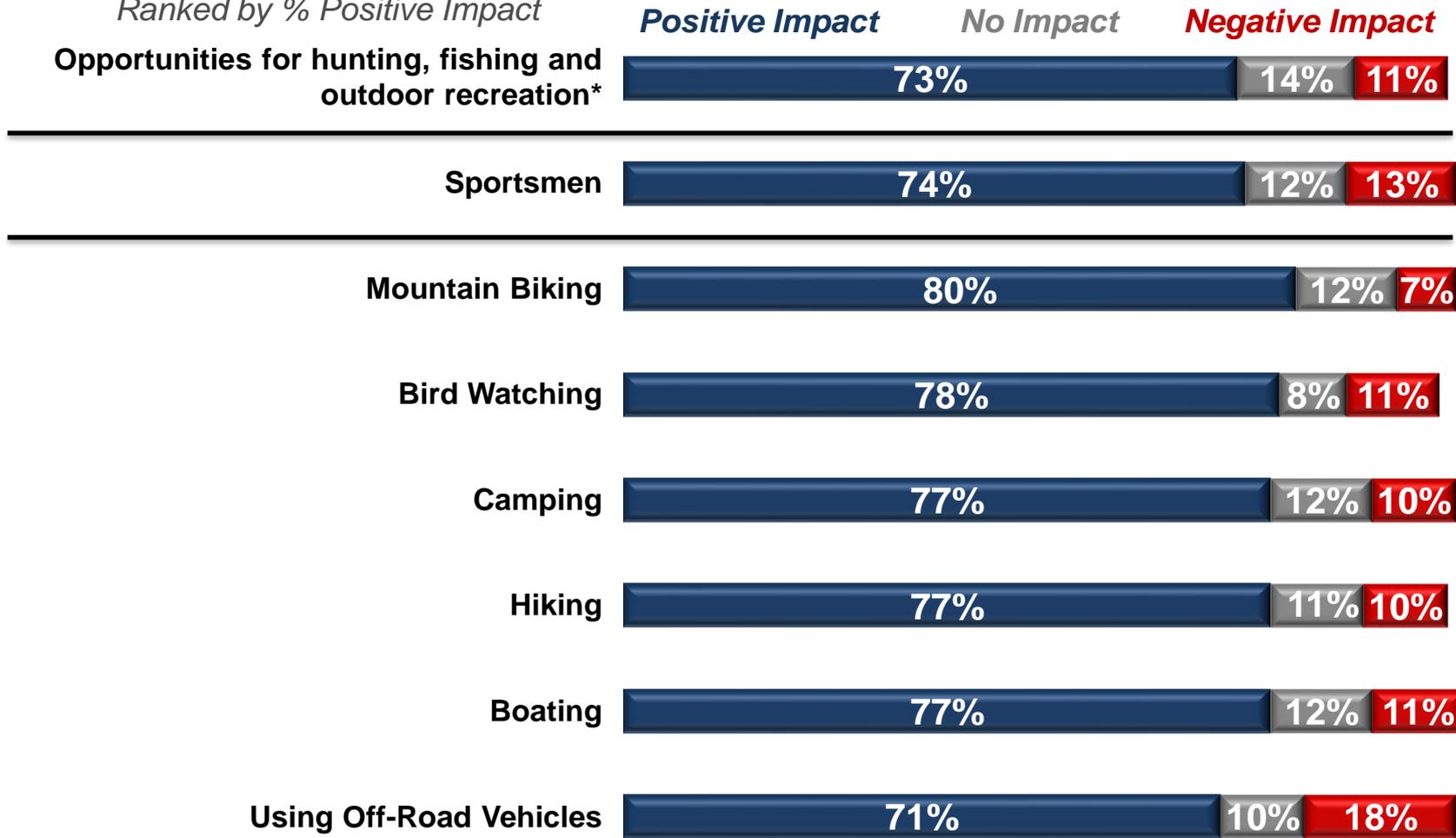


Split sample: ^{}Represents N=306 respondents [^]Represents N=294 respondents*

Generally speaking, do you believe enhancing and protecting national public lands, such as national forests, national monuments, and national wildlife refuges has a positive impact, a negative impact, or no real impact on each of the following...

Those who engage in all types of recreation believe that national public lands benefit outdoor recreation.

Ranked by % Positive Impact



*Split sample: *Represents N=306 respondents*

Generally speaking, do you believe enhancing and protecting national public lands, such as national forests, national monuments, and national wildlife refuges has a positive impact, a negative impact, or no real impact on each of the following...



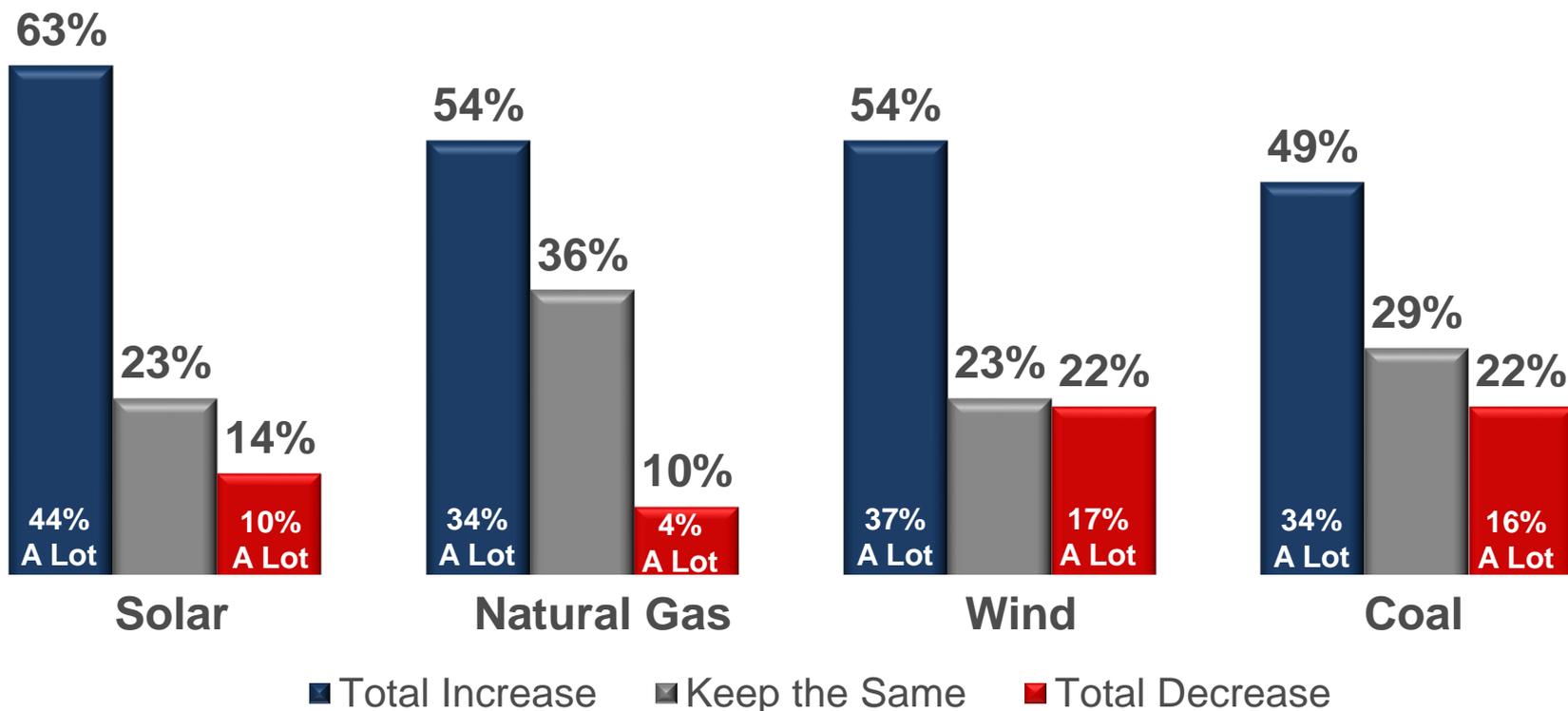
Energy Production



**PUBLIC OPINION
STRATEGIES**

Wyoming voters most want to increase solar energy production; least for coal.

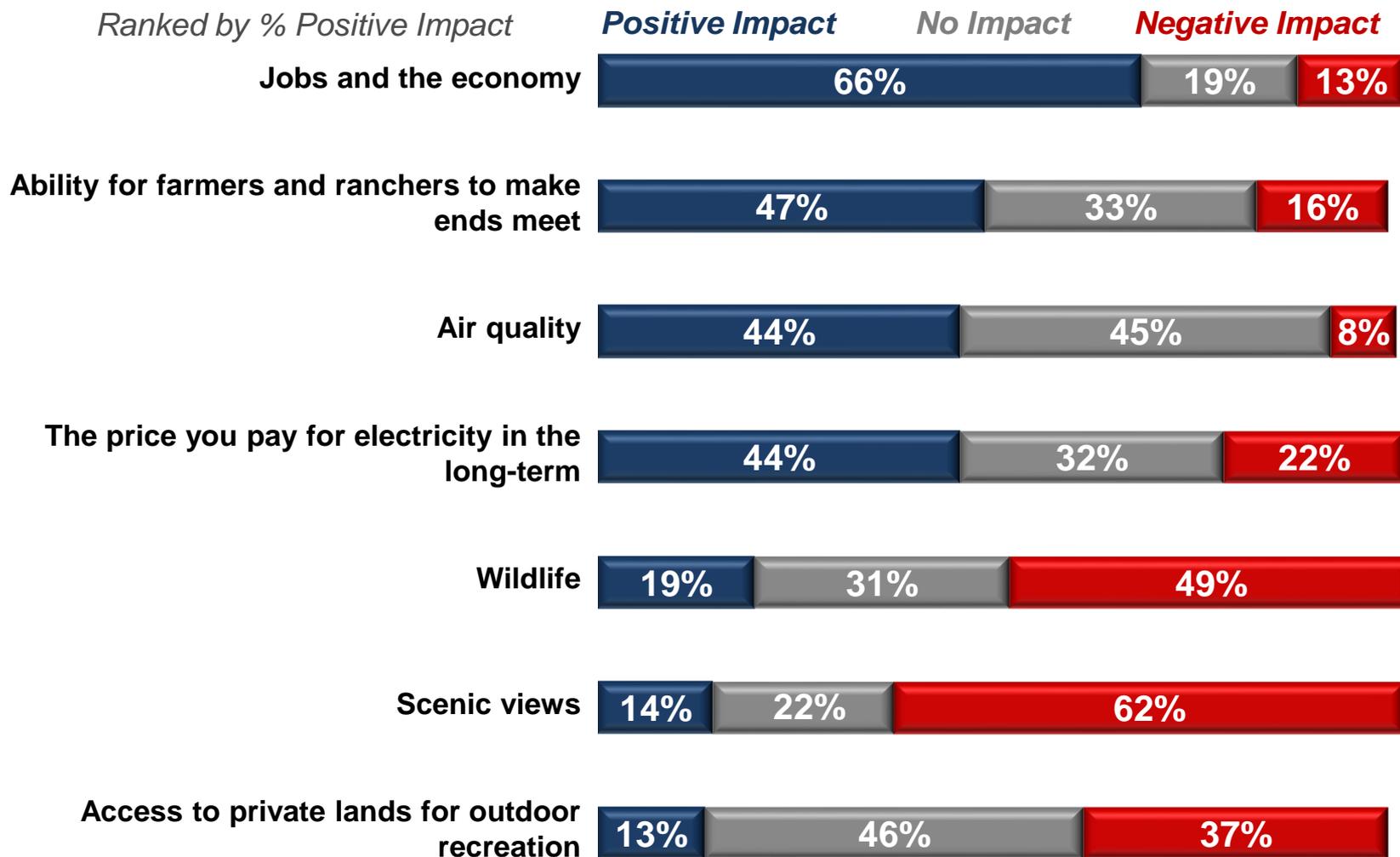
Production of Energy Source



Moving on, here is a list of specific items related to energy production in Wyoming. Please tell me if you would increase or decrease the production of that energy source, or would you keep it about the same?

Voters perceive economic, cost and air benefits; more apt to see views and effect on wildlife as drawbacks of wind development.

Ranked by % Positive Impact



Now, let's say in the next ten years, more wind energy is produced here in Wyoming. Do you think that would have a positive impact, a negative impact, or no real impact on each of the following:



Bottom Line



**PUBLIC OPINION
STRATEGIES**

The Bottom Line

- A majority of Wyoming voters say that issues involving public lands, water and wildlife are of primary importance in evaluating elected officials, even when compared to other issues like the economy and healthcare. In fact, a number of conservation-related issues are on par with economic concerns as serious problems facing the state.
- Voters are registering the highest support in eleven years for funding conservation even if it means a small increase in taxes to do so. There is solid majority support across party lines and throughout the state for fully funding the Wyoming Wildlife and Natural Resource Trust.
- Wyoming voters also perceive a host of benefits they derive from having national public lands in the state, and a majority reject a proposal for the state to take over authority and cost of those lands.
- Finally, voters here support increasing production of all energy sources in the state, in particular solar energy. Focusing on increasing wind production, they perceive benefits to the economy, air quality and costs for electricity, but downsides for wildlife and scenic views.



Questions?



**PUBLIC OPINION
STRATEGIES**

Partners Involved



WYOMING STOCK GROWERS
"Guardian of Wyoming's Cow Country since 1872"



A scenic landscape featuring snow-capped mountains, a river, and autumn foliage. The mountains are partially covered in snow and shrouded in mist. The river flows through the foreground, reflecting the sky and the surrounding trees. The trees are in various stages of autumn, with some showing vibrant yellow and orange leaves. The overall atmosphere is serene and majestic.

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



**PUBLIC OPINION
STRATEGIES**