

To: Interested Parties
From: GBA Strategies
Date: September 14, 2011

Latino Sustainability Institute and Project New America Latino Survey

In the face of the continuing public debate over land and water conservation issues in New Mexico, Hispanic voters come down solidly in favor of conservation policies. A new survey¹ in New Mexico of Hispanic voters conducted on behalf of the Latino Sustainability Institute and Project New America Latino reveals substantial concern about local environmental issues, as well as strong support for a variety of measures to conserve New Mexico's land, air, and water. In addition, the survey reveals that the majorities of Hispanic voters reject corporate arguments against common-sense conservation policies.

Key findings from the survey include:

- Hispanic voters have serious concerns about a wide range of conservation issues, particularly drought and water scarcity, forest fires, pollution of air and water, and the loss of natural wildlife habitats.
- Hispanic voters overwhelmingly favor continuing federal funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund.
- There is broad support among Hispanic voters for designating additional public lands as national monuments in New Mexico and protecting them from development.
- A strong majority of Hispanic voters supports limiting how much cattle grazing can be done on public lands in order to protect the land from overuse.
- Hispanic voters overwhelmingly support ending the nearly \$16 billion a year in federal tax breaks for oil and gas companies.

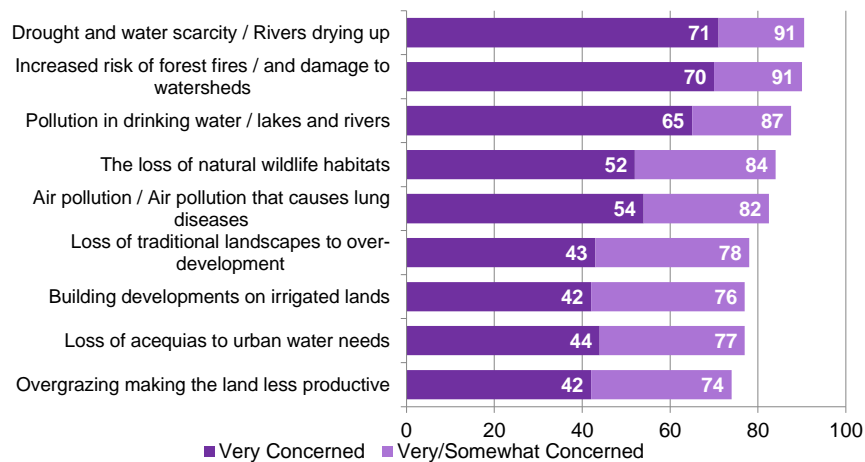
¹ GBA Strategies administered this survey of 600 Hispanic registered voters in New Mexico (500 statewide; 100 additional interviews in the 3rd Congressional District), August 28-30, 2011. The data was weighted to reflect the regional distribution of Hispanic registered voters. The margin of error is 4.4 percent.

Conservation Awareness

Hispanic voters in New Mexico are strongly concerned about a wide range of conservation issues. The survey examined Hispanic attitudes toward a variety of local problems—from drought, to pollution, to overdevelopment—and at least three quarters of Hispanic voters respond that they are very or somewhat concerned about each and every issue.

Topping the list of issues concerning to Hispanic voters are drought and forest fires. For each, 91 percent of Hispanics say they are very or somewhat concerned, while 71 percent and 70 percent say they are *very* concerned, respectively. There is also very high levels of concern about water pollution, with 65 percent saying they are very concerned about it (87 percent very/somewhat), and majorities are very concerned with air pollution and the loss of natural wild habitats.

Please tell me whether you are very concerned, somewhat concerned, a little concerned, or not at all concerned about that particular item.



Support for the Land and Water Conservation Fund

With such large numbers concerned with conservation issues, it is not surprising then that Hispanic voters overwhelmingly favor continuing to fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

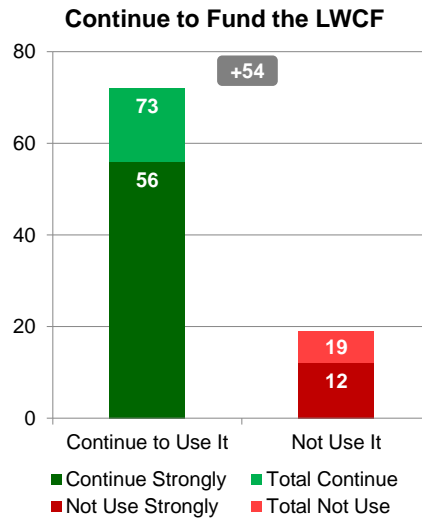
The Land and Water Conservation Fund helps preserve, develop, and ensure access to natural and outdoor recreation resources, and it is funded primarily by fees paid by oil and gas companies drilling offshore. Despite recent efforts in Congress to cut funding for the LWCF, Hispanic voters in New Mexico are strongly in favor of the program and want to see it continued.

By a margin of 73 –19 percent, Hispanics say that the money from the fees charged to oil and gas companies that drill offshore should continue to be used to conserve natural areas and clean water, and ensure access to outdoor recreation. Furthermore, 56 percent say they are *strongly* in favor, while only 12 percent strongly believe the money should not go to this program.

And despite the common perception that there is a huge partisan divide on spending and environmental programs, not only do 77 percent of Hispanic Democrats support continuing to fund the LWCF, but large majorities of Independents (74 percent) and Republicans (61 percent) support it, as well.

The Land and Water Conservation Fund is a federal program that was established in 1965 to help preserve, develop and ensure access to natural and outdoor recreation resources. This fund supports neighborhood parks, including pools, barbecues, recreation areas, and other open spaces. It also protects forests, rivers, lakes and wildlife habitat. The primary source of income to the fund is fees paid by oil and gas companies drilling offshore in waters owned by the American people.

Do you think that some of the money from fees charged to oil and gas companies that drill offshore should CONTINUE TO BE USED to conserve natural areas and clean water, and to ensure access to outdoor recreation, or would you NOT USE IT for those purposes?



Support for the Designating of Additional National Monuments

The survey also finds strong support among New Mexico Hispanic voters for national monuments. Federal law allows the President to designate new national monuments on public land already owned by the federal government. This allows public use of the land for recreational activities such as hunting and fishing, but prohibits new oil drilling, mining and other forms of development.

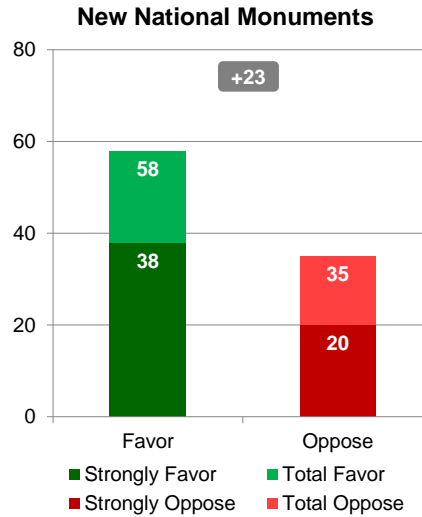
In addition to national monuments like White Sands, Bandelier, the Gila Cliff Dwellings, and El Morro, Hispanics would support the President setting aside additional public lands in New Mexico as national monuments by a margin of 58 – 35 percent.

Support for new national monuments is strong statewide. In the 1st Congressional District, 62 percent favor creating more national monuments while only 29 percent oppose. In the 2nd District, 50 percent favor while 44 percent oppose, and in the 3rd District support stands at 63 – 31 percent.

As you may know, National Monuments are similar to national parks. This designation provides protection from development to public lands, such as White Sands, Bandelier, Gila Cliff Dwellings, and El Morro. Federal law allows the President to designate new national monuments on public land already owned by the federal government.

This would allow continued public use for recreation, including hunting and fishing, but prohibit new oil drilling, mining and other forms of development.

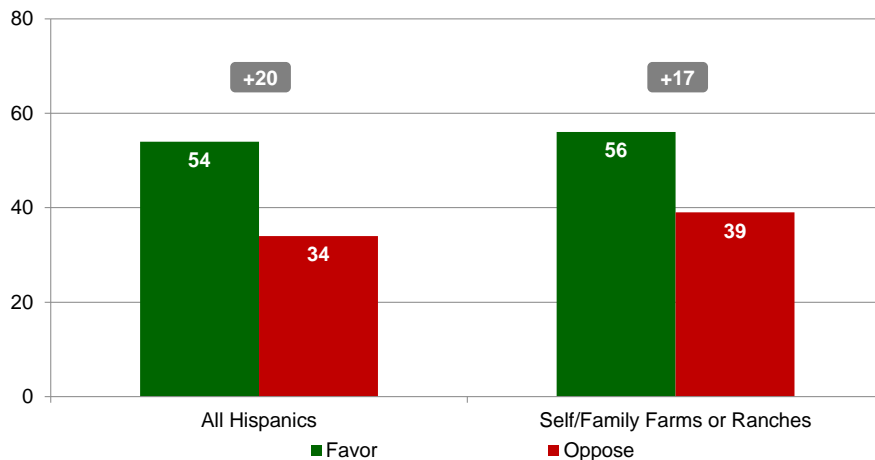
Do you favor or oppose the President designating additional public lands as National Monuments in New Mexico?



Support for Limits on Cattle Grazing on Public Lands

By a 20-point margin, 54 – 34 percent, Hispanic voters in New Mexico favor regulations that place limits on how much cattle grazing can be done on public lands in order to protect the land from overuse. And in a particularly interesting finding, the survey shows similar levels of support for grazing limits among those closest to this issue. Hispanics who say they are involved in farming or ranching, or have family who are (31 percent of Hispanic voters), come down in favor of limits, 56 – 39 percent, giving lie to the common perception that this group uniformly opposes regulation of grazing on public lands. Those closest to the issue in their day to day lives appreciate the long-term danger that overgrazing poses to their livelihoods, leading to support for conservation efforts. Furthermore, after hearing both sides of the issue, support for regulations that limit grazing on public lands grows to 61 – 33 percent.

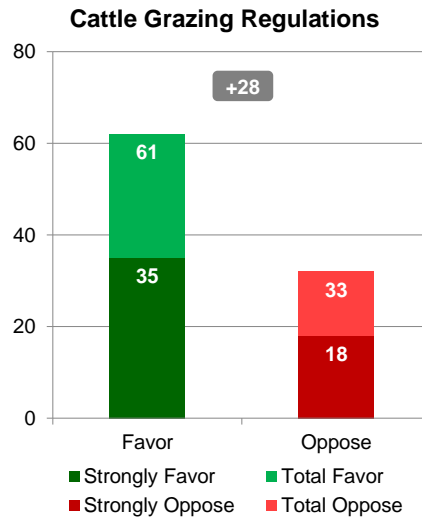
Generally speaking, do you favor or oppose regulations that place limits on how much cattle grazing can be done on public lands in order to protect the land from overuse?



(Some/Other) people say that these regulations are important in order to protect public land, water, and wildlife from overuse that makes it less productive. Our public land and water are part of our community's cultural traditions, and we need to leave it in better shape for our children than we found it.

(Some/Other) people say being able to control our public land and make a living off of it is part of our cultural tradition. The government needs to stop trying to tell us what we can do with our public land, water and wildlife. It's our land and we have the right to use it.

Having heard these statements do you favor or oppose regulations that place limits on how much cattle grazing can be done on public lands in order to protect the land from overuse?



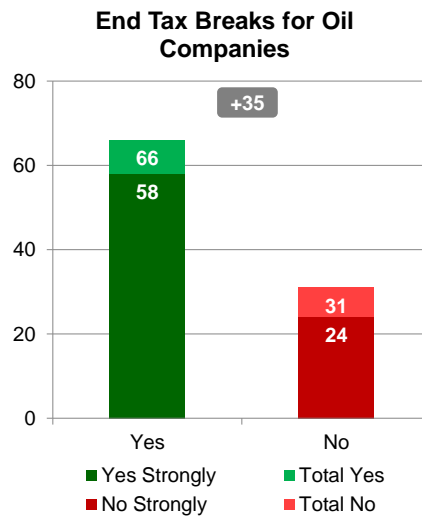
Ending Tax Breaks for Oil Companies

Finally, the majority of Hispanic voters in New Mexico reject the arguments made by oil companies that ending the \$16 billion in federal tax breaks given to them annually will somehow cost jobs in an industry that has made over \$67 billion in profits so far this year. After hearing both sides of a balanced debate, Hispanic voters favor ending tax breaks for oil companies, 63 – 31 percent, including 58 percent who say they feel strongly about ending them.

(Some/other) people say that big oil and gas companies receive nearly \$16 billion in tax breaks every year, while making record profits and charging us higher prices for gasoline. We pay the oil companies twice—once at the pump and then again on tax day. At a time when the country is facing huge deficits, it's time for oil companies to lose some of these tax breaks and pay their fair share.

(Some/other) people say that the oil and gas industry is critical part of New Mexico's economy, providing people thousands of jobs in the state. New energy taxes would increase the cost of energy for consumers, hurt the economy, and kill jobs. Instead we should reduce energy costs and develop energy sources at home to create jobs and reduce our dependence on foreign oil.

Having heard these statements, do you think the U.S. should end tax breaks for oil companies?



Support for ending these tax breaks is consistently high across the state. In the 1st District 63 percent want to end tax breaks while only 36 percent want to keep them. In the 2nd District and 3rd District the numbers stand at 70 – 25 percent and 66 – 32 percent, respectively.