



THE COLORADO COLLEGE
STATE OF THE ROCKIES PROJECT

Conservation in the West Poll

KEY FINDINGS

THE 2019 SURVEY OF THE ATTITUDES OF VOTERS IN EIGHT WESTERN STATES



JANUARY 2019

**CONDUCTED BY: LORI WEIGEL / NEW BRIDGE STRATEGY
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, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, Wyoming.
- ❖ Interviews conducted January 2-9, 2019, 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 annually in 2011-2018; trend data prior to 2018 is based on seven states (not including Idaho).
- ❖ Bi-partisan research team of New Bridge Strategy (R) and Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates (D).



By nearly a three-to-one margin, voters advocate for Congress 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

65%

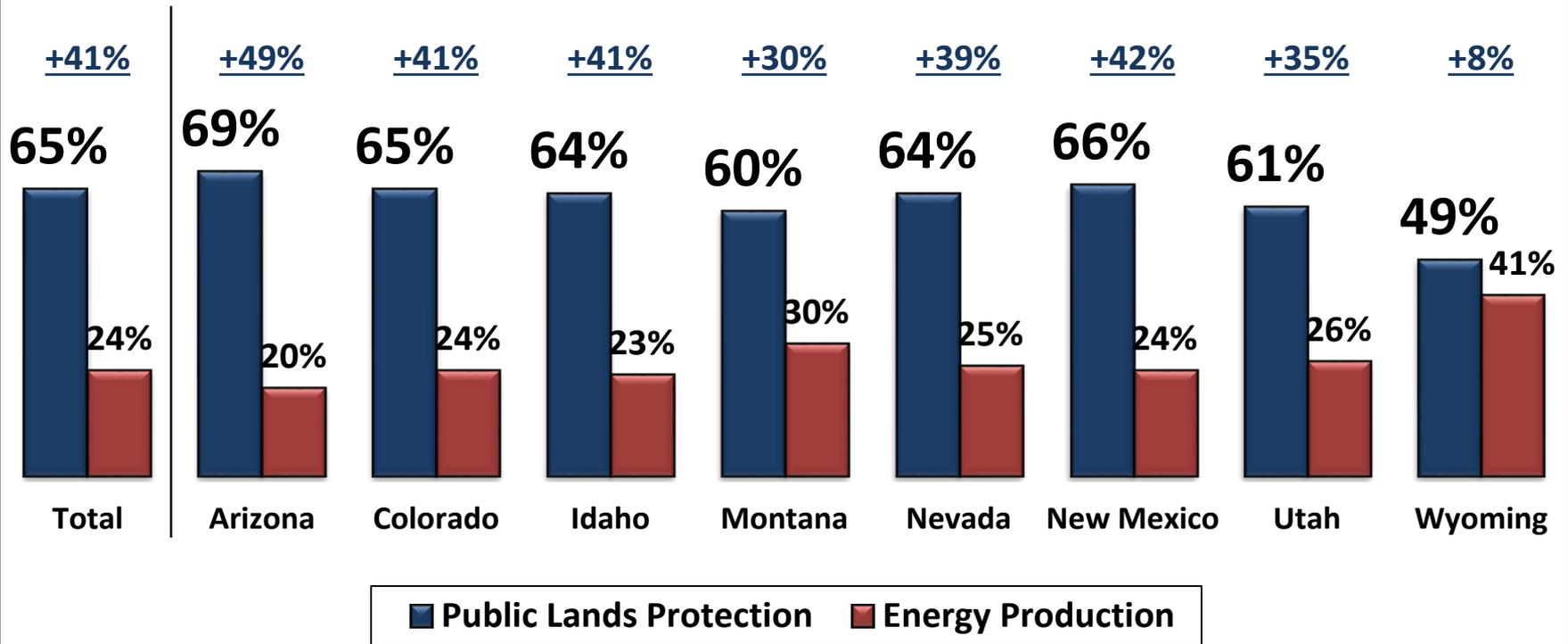
Ensuring we produce more domestic energy by maximizing the amount of national public lands available for responsible oil and gas drilling and mining

24%

Still thinking about the new Congress, which one would you prefer they place more emphasis on in upcoming decisions regarding national public lands...?

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

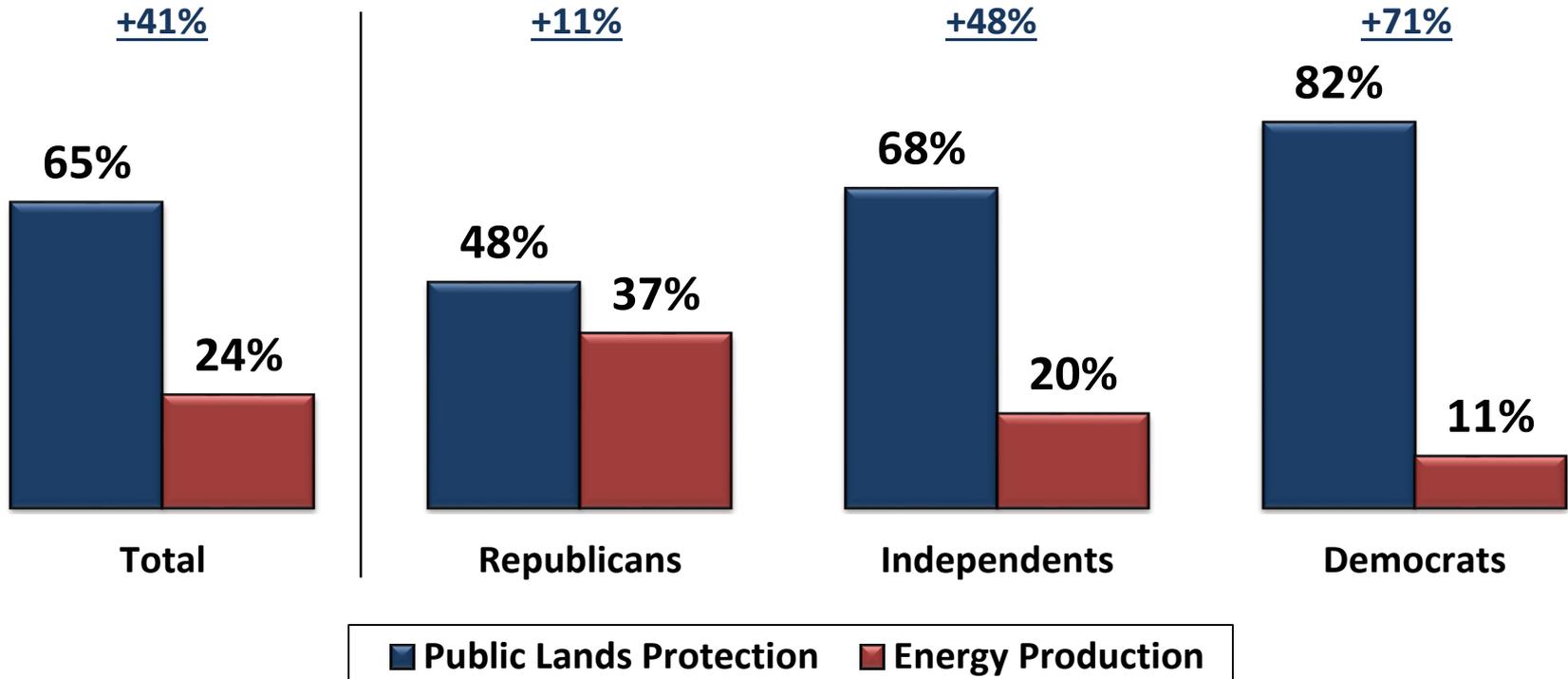
Preferred Emphasis for Public Lands – By State



Still thinking about the new Congress, which one would you prefer they place more emphasis on in upcoming decisions regarding national public lands...?

GOP voters tilt to protection; independents side with protection by more than a three-to-one margin.

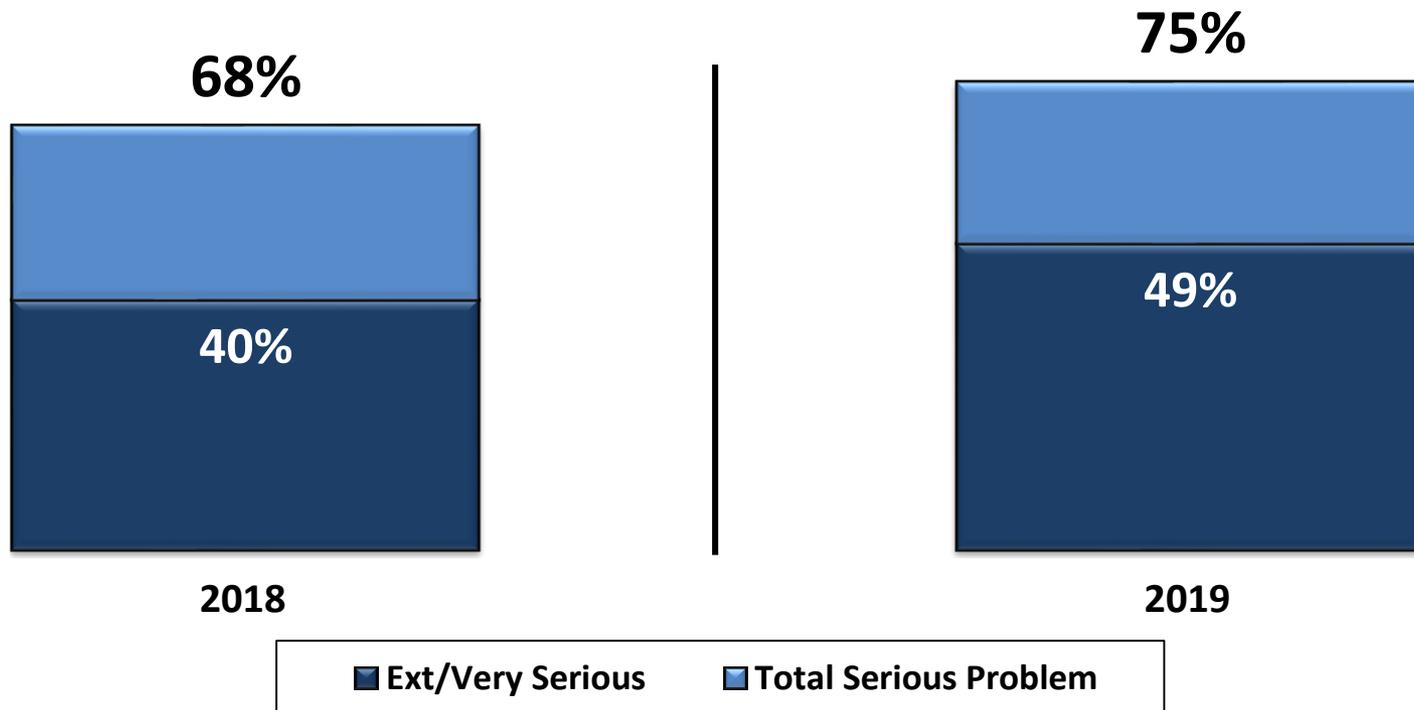
Preferred Emphasis for Public Lands – By Party



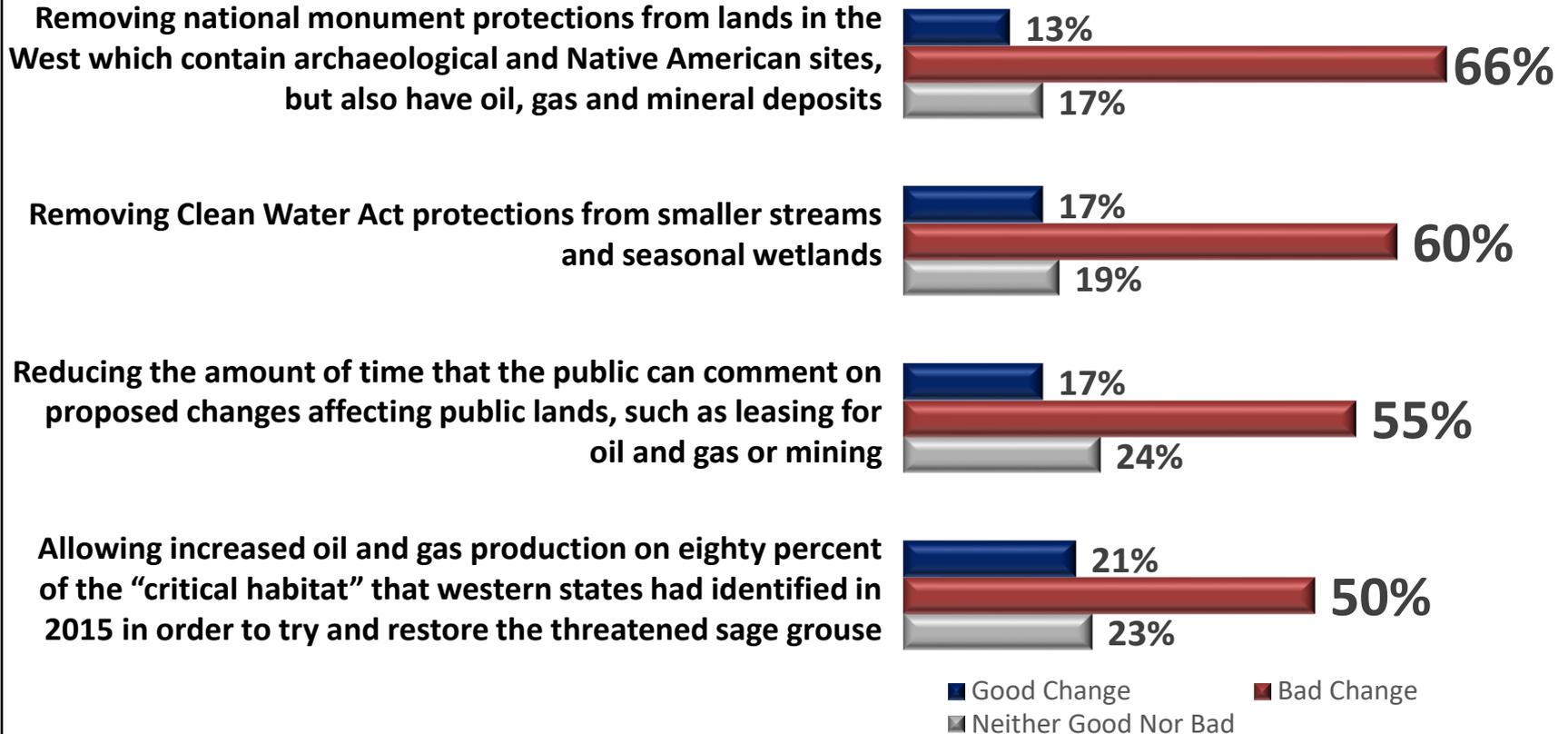
Still thinking about the new Congress, which one would you prefer they place more emphasis on in upcoming decisions regarding national public lands...?

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

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



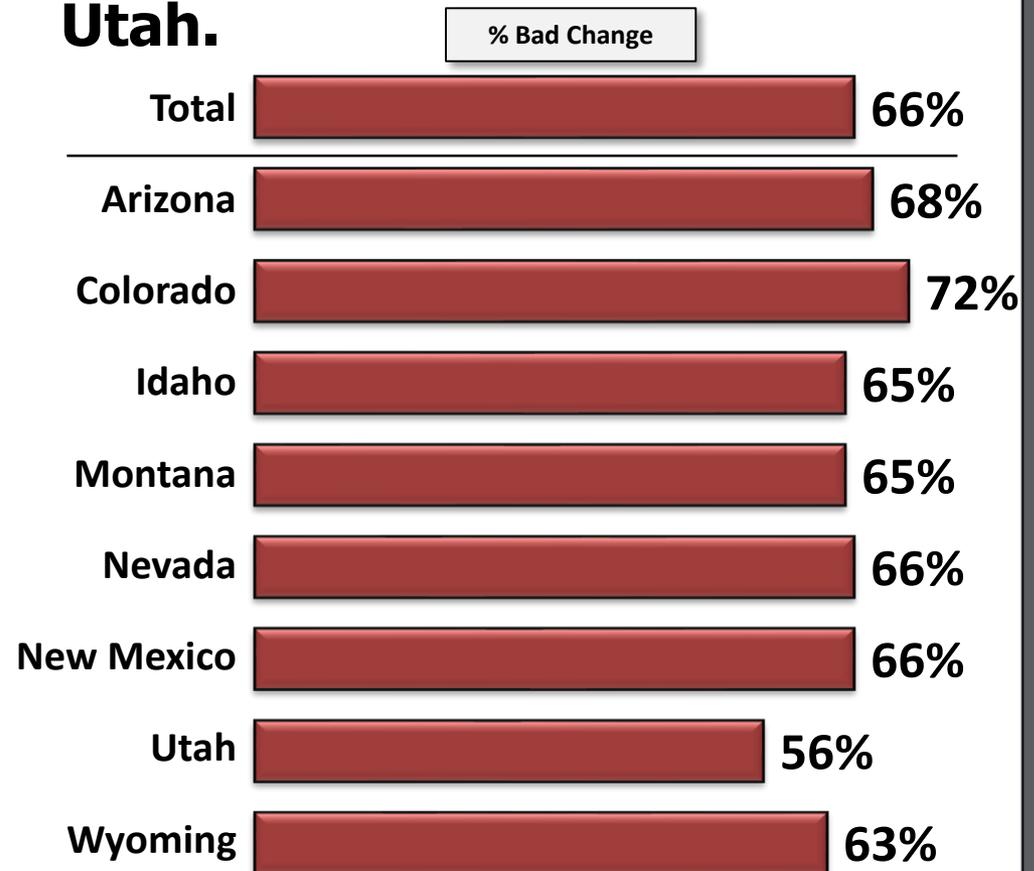
Voters perceive a number of changes to policies affecting land, water and wildlife as more bad than good by wide margins.



There have been some changes in the rules and standards affecting natural areas, water and wildlife recently. For each of the following, please indicate if that sounds like more of a good change, more of a bad change, or neither good nor bad. (Ranked by % Bad Change)

Removing national monument protections are considered to be a bad change by a majority in each state, including Utah.

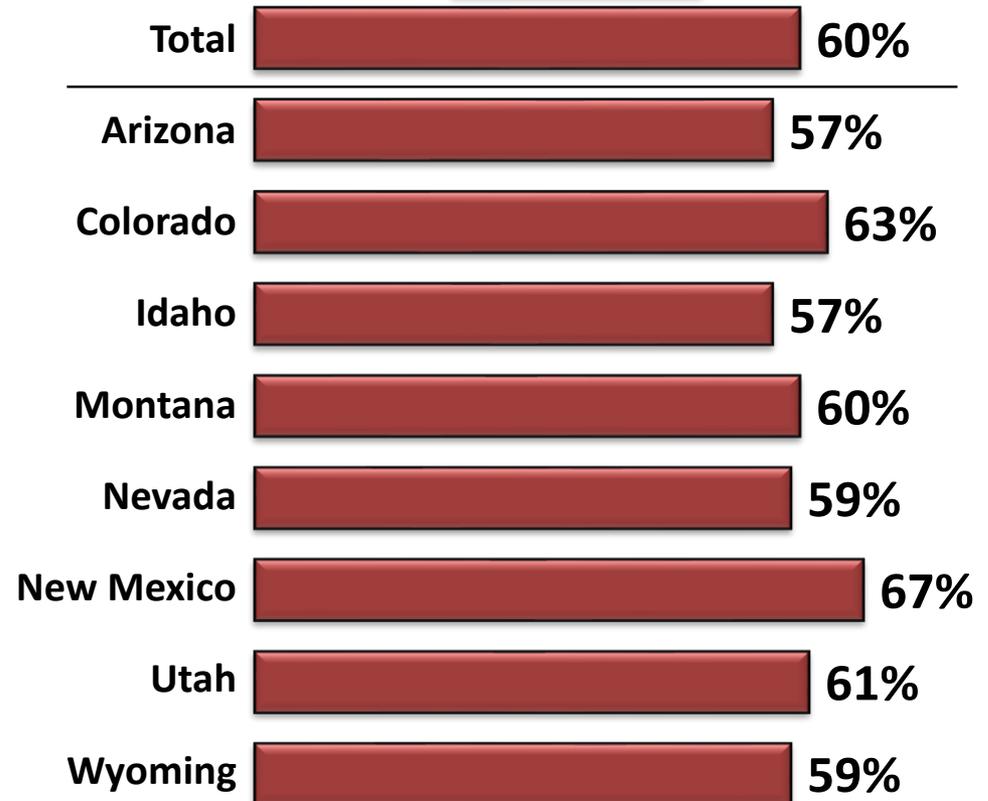
Removing national monument protections from lands in the West which contain archaeological and Native American sites, but also have oil, gas and mineral deposits



There have been some changes in the rules and standards affecting natural areas, water and wildlife recently. For each of the following, please indicate if that sounds like more of a good change, more of a bad change, or neither good nor bad.

Similarly, majorities in each state also view changes to the Waters of the U.S. rule poorly.

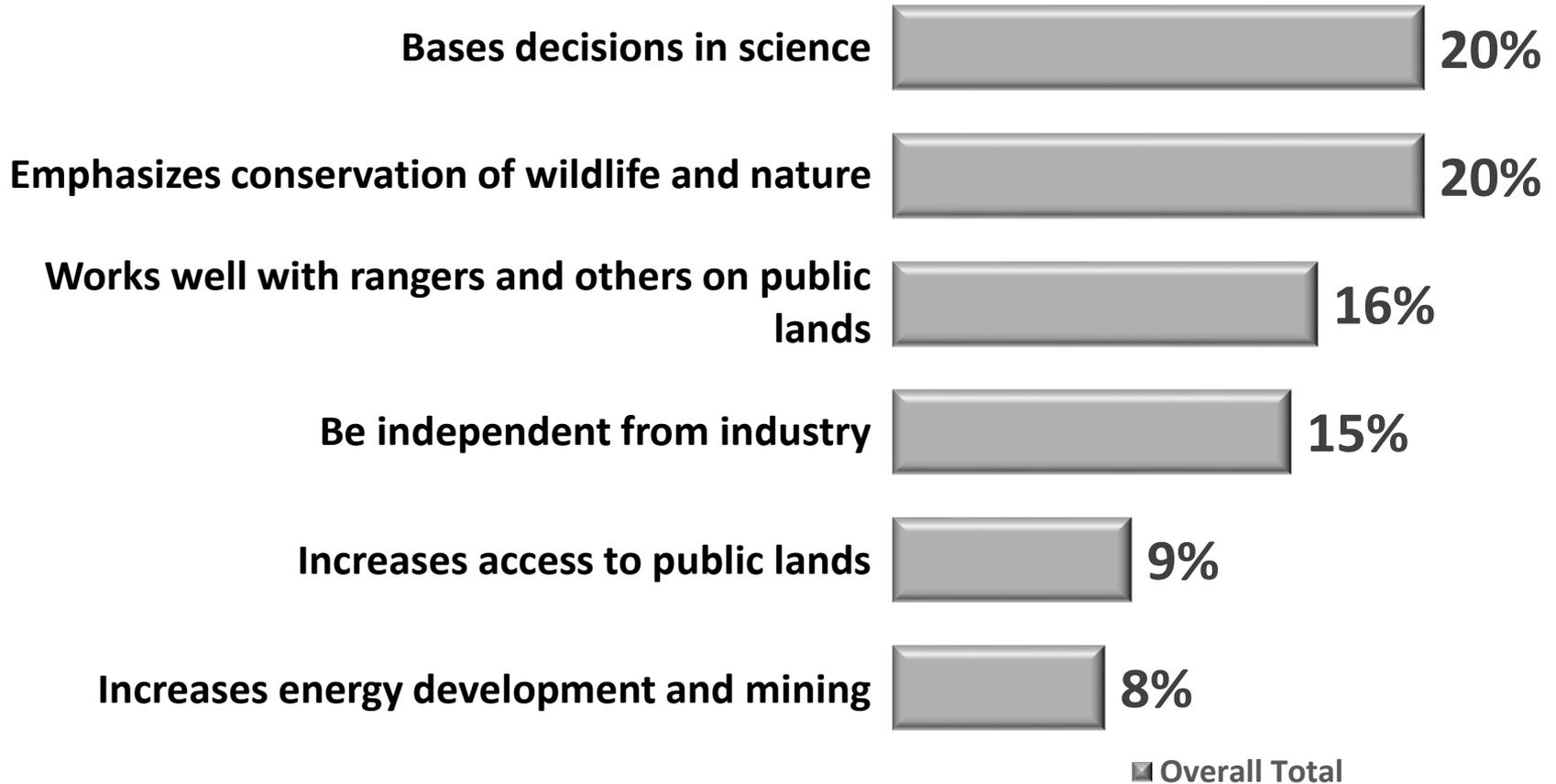
% Bad Change



Removing Clean Water Act protections from smaller streams and seasonal wetlands

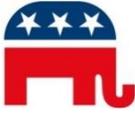
There have been some changes in the rules and standards affecting natural areas, water and wildlife recently. For each of the following, please indicate if that sounds like more of a good change, more of a bad change, or neither good nor bad.

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



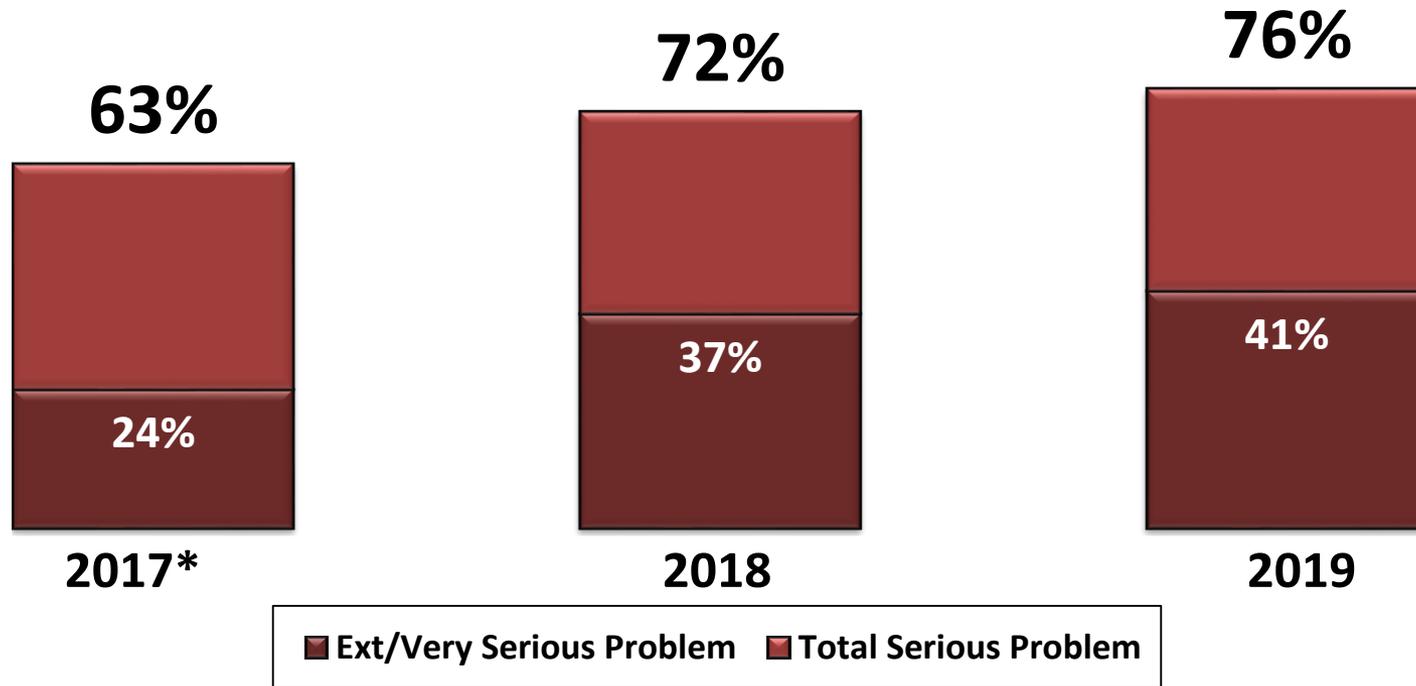
This year, the Senate will also vote on a new Secretary of the Interior, who oversees national public lands like national parks, as well as many natural, historic, and cultural resources. What is most important in deciding whether or not to approve this new secretary?

Only modest distinctions by party in the ideal qualities of next Secretary:

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

This year, the Senate will also vote on a new Secretary of the Interior, who oversees national public lands like national parks, as well as many natural, historic, and cultural resources. What is most important in deciding whether or not to approve this new secretary?

Voters are increasingly concerned about a lack of resources to care for public lands.

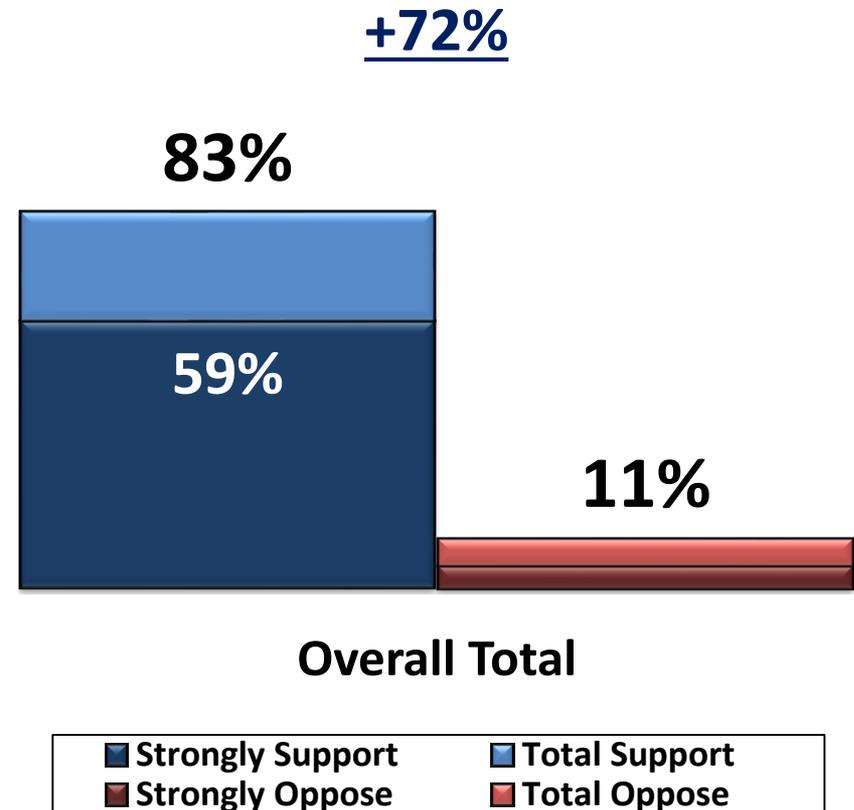


**Idaho not included in 2017 survey*

Next, I'm going to read you a list of issues some people say are problems in your 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 your state... Lack of Resources to Properly Maintain and Take Care of National Parks, Forests and Other Public Lands

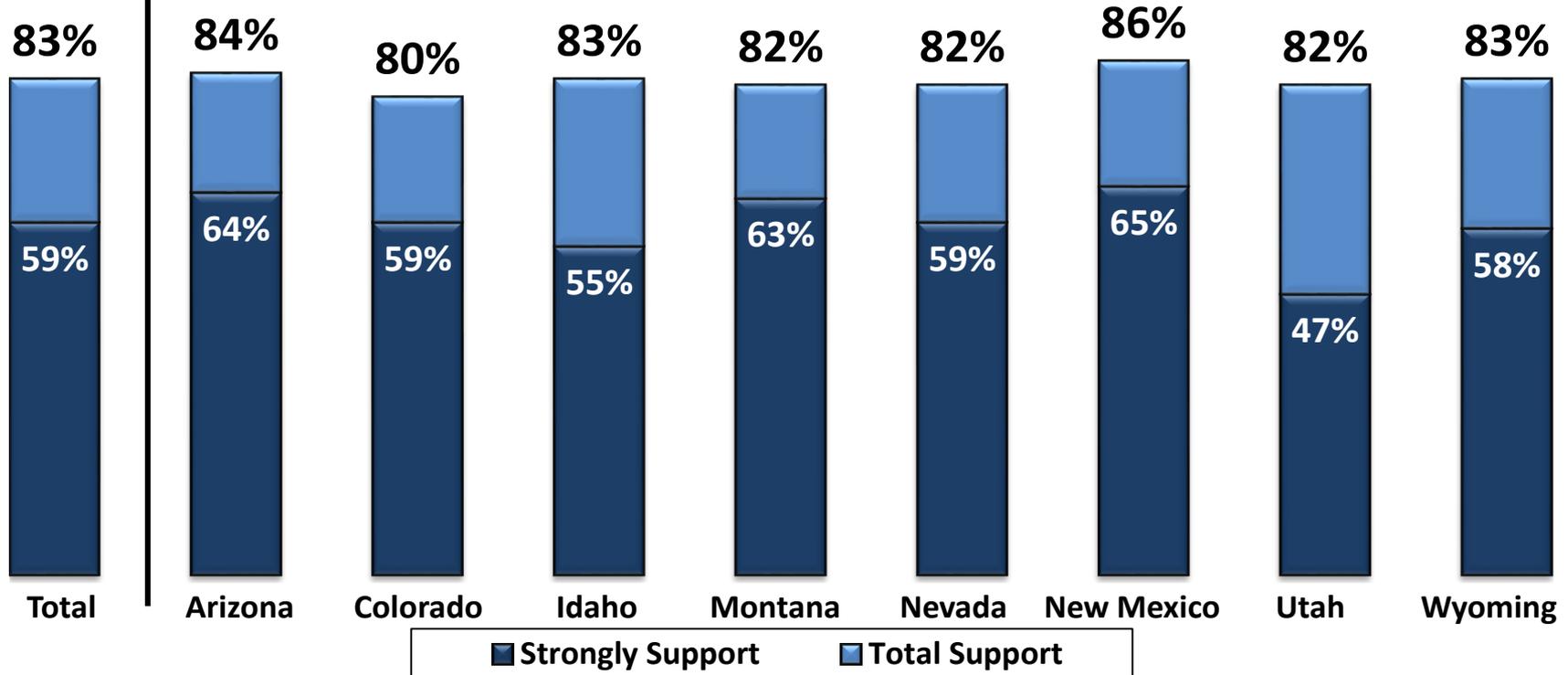
The overwhelming majority of Western voters want Congress to reauthorize LWCF.

Some of the money from fees charged to oil and gas companies that drill offshore used to be dedicated to the Land and Water Conservation Fund, but Congress allowed the Fund to expire last September. Do you support or oppose Congress restoring this Fund, and providing dedicated funding to be used to protect natural areas, clean water, local parks and access to outdoor recreation across the country?



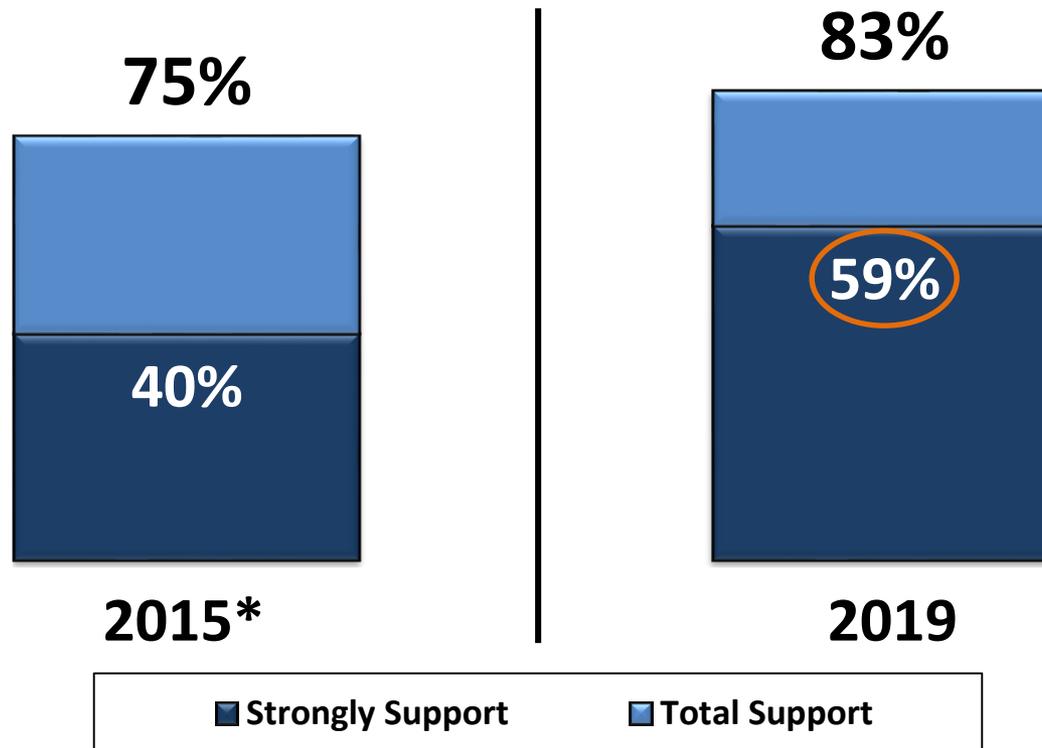
Support for LWCF is overwhelming in every state.

Support for Reauthorization – By State



Do you support or oppose Congress restoring this Fund, and providing dedicated funding to be used to protect natural areas, clean water, local parks and access to outdoor recreation across the country?

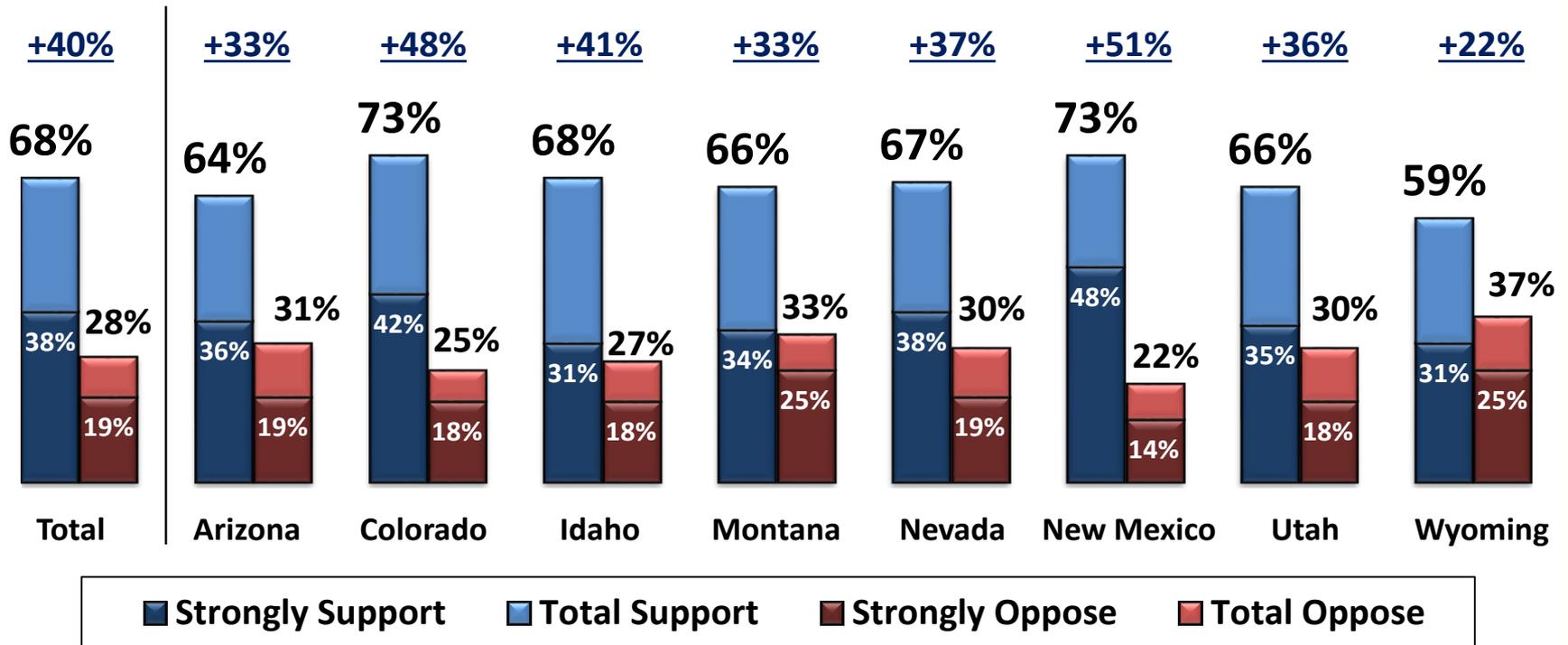
The intensity of support for re-authorization has increased dramatically from a few years ago.



**Asked differently in 2015: Continue to use some of the money from fees charged to oil and gas companies that drill offshore for conservation of natural areas and clean water, and to ensure access to outdoor recreation.*

A majority of voters in every state are also willing to increase taxes for conservation.

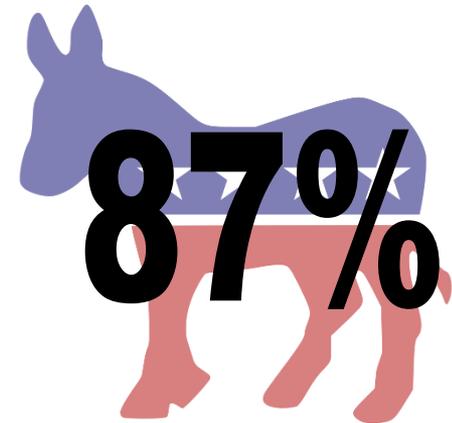
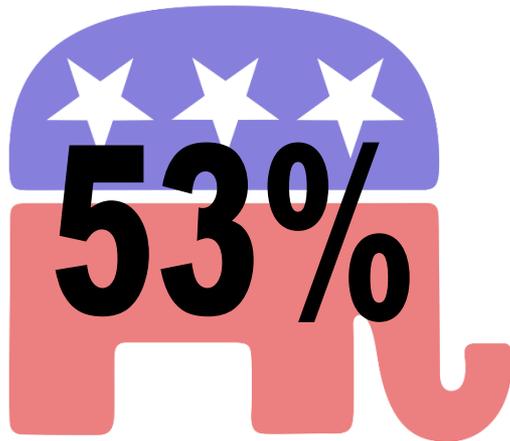
Support for Taxation for Conservation – By State



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?

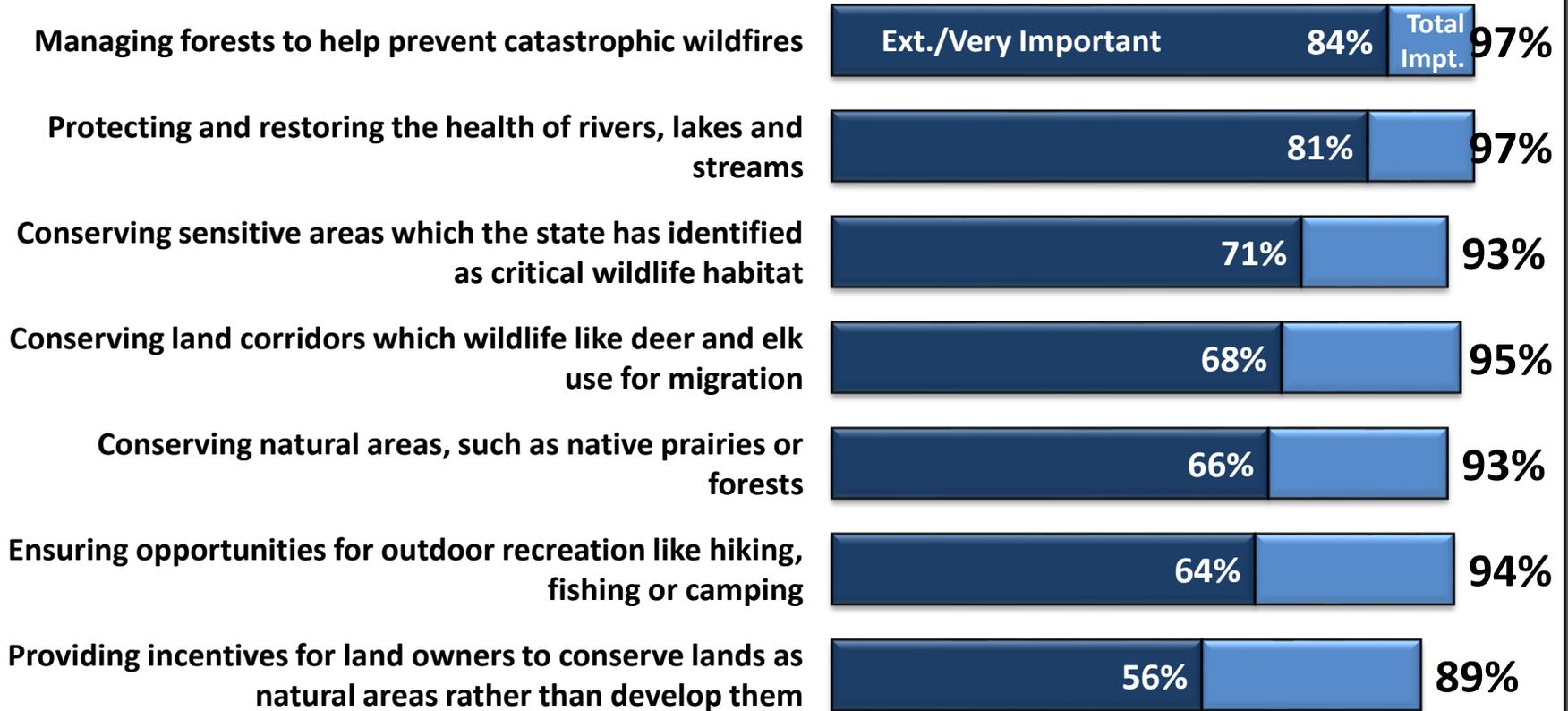
Support for a tax increase for conservation is evident across the political spectrum.

% Total Support Tax Increase – by Party



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?

Priorities for conservation funding are forest management, restoring water, and wildlife habitat.



Thinking more broadly - I am going to read you a list of projects that your state either currently funds or might undertake in the future to conserve land, water, and wildlife. Recognizing that there frequently is not enough funding for all of these, please tell me how important it would be to you that each project be funded: extremely important, very important, somewhat important, or not important:



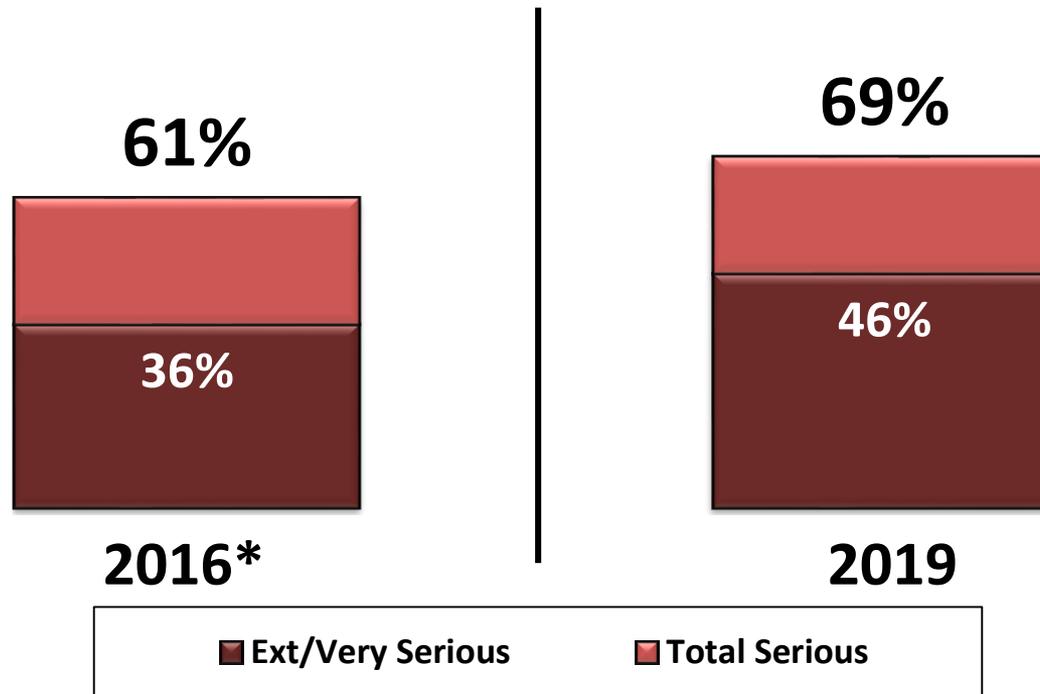
Climate Change in the West



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A majority of Western voters say that climate change is a serious problem today, up significantly in just the last few years.

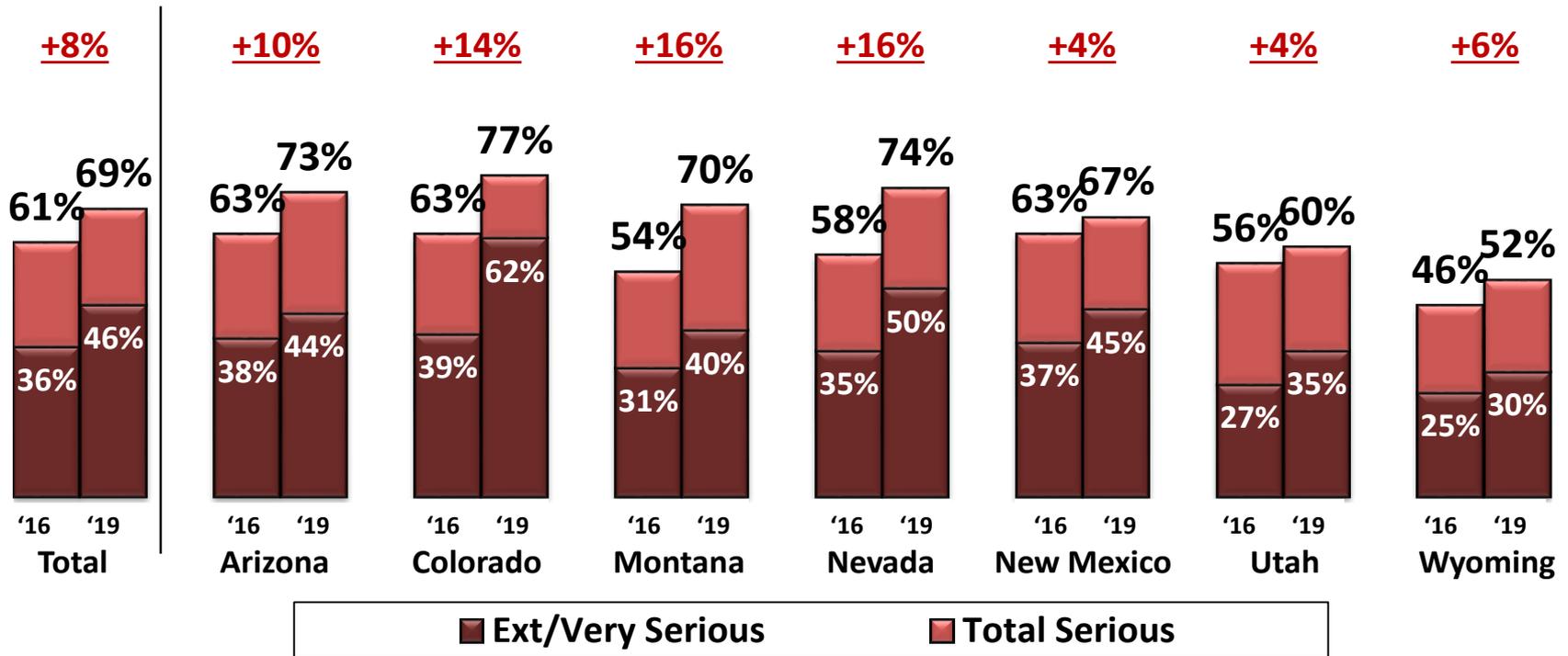


**Idaho not included in 2016 survey.*

Next, I'm going to read you a list of issues some people say are problems in your 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 your state.

The perception that climate change is a serious problem has increased in every state.

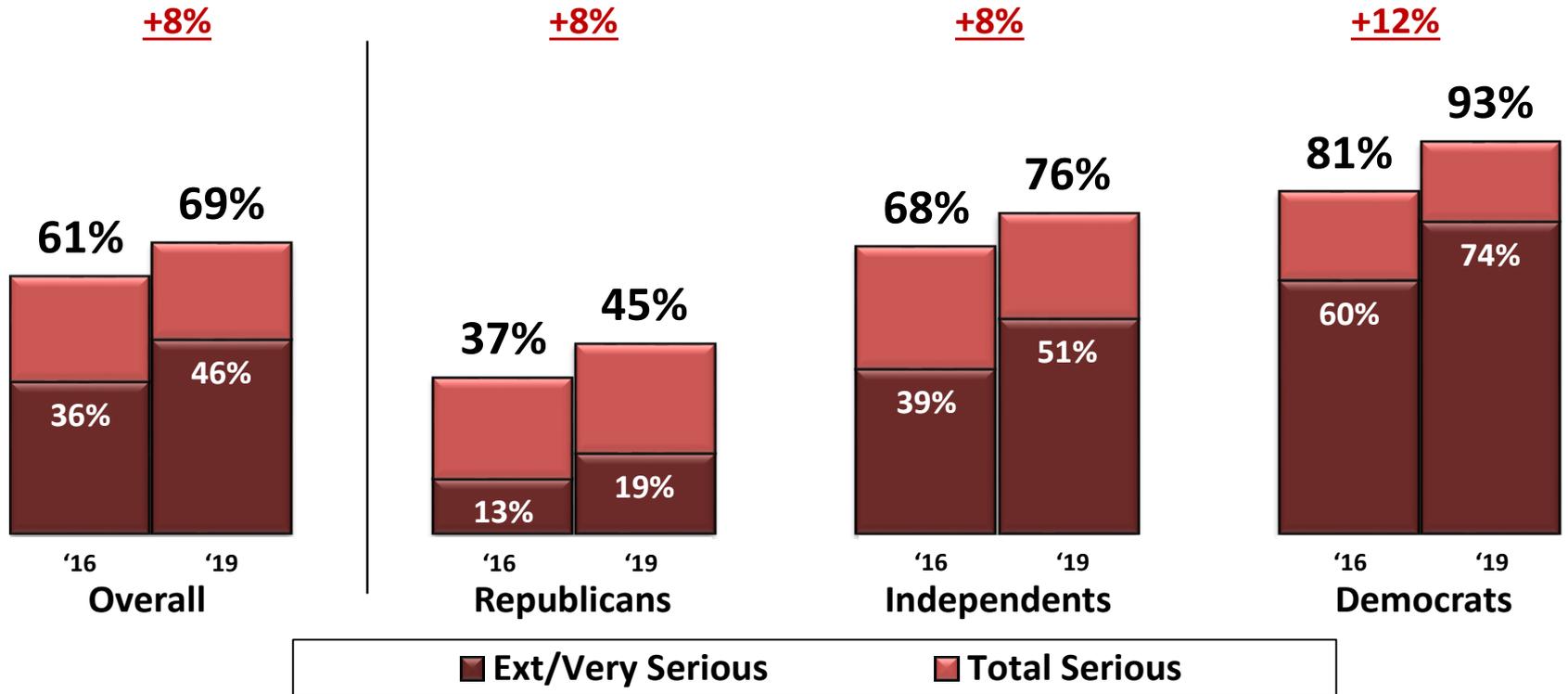
Climate Change – By State Since 2016



Next, I'm going to read you a list of issues some people say are problems in your 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 your state.

Views of climate change as a serious problem have also increased across party lines, although a divide persists.

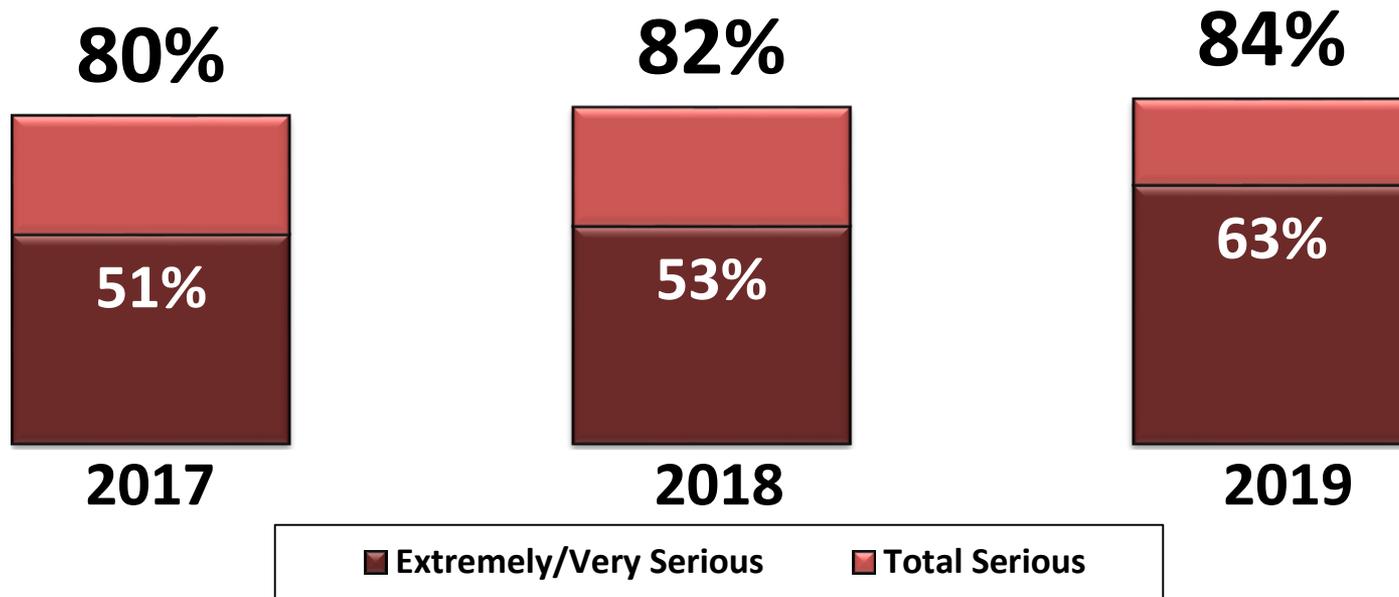
Climate Change – By Party



Next, I'm going to read you a list of issues some people say are problems in your 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 your state.

A low level of water in rivers has been a consistent concern but has gained intensity over time.

Low Level of Water in Rivers – By Year



Next, I'm going to read you a list of issues some people say are problems in your 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 your state.

Two-thirds of Western voters say that water supplies in the West are becoming more unpredictable.

Water supplies in the West are becoming more unpredictable every year.

67%

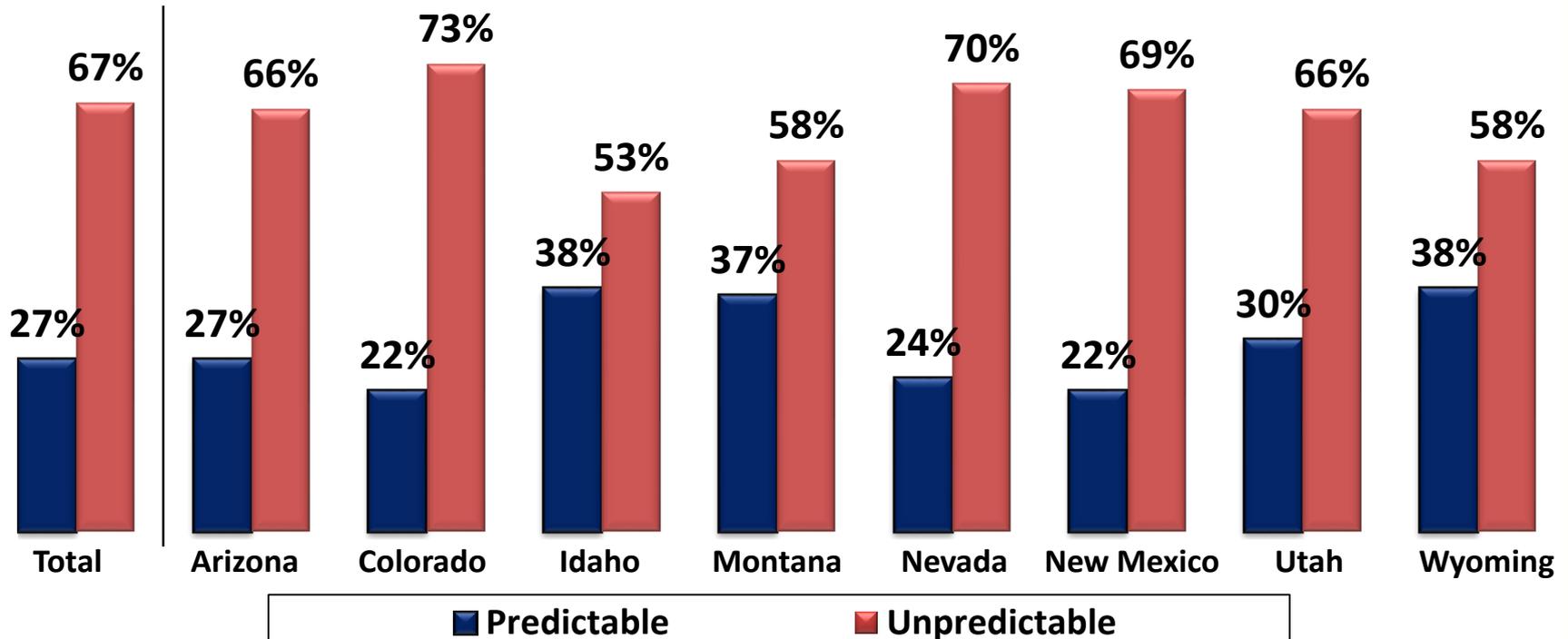
The amount of rain and snow in the West is pretty predictable over time.

27%

Switching now to thinking about water in the West – which of the following statements comes closest to what you think?

A majority in each state also says that water supplies are becoming more unpredictable.

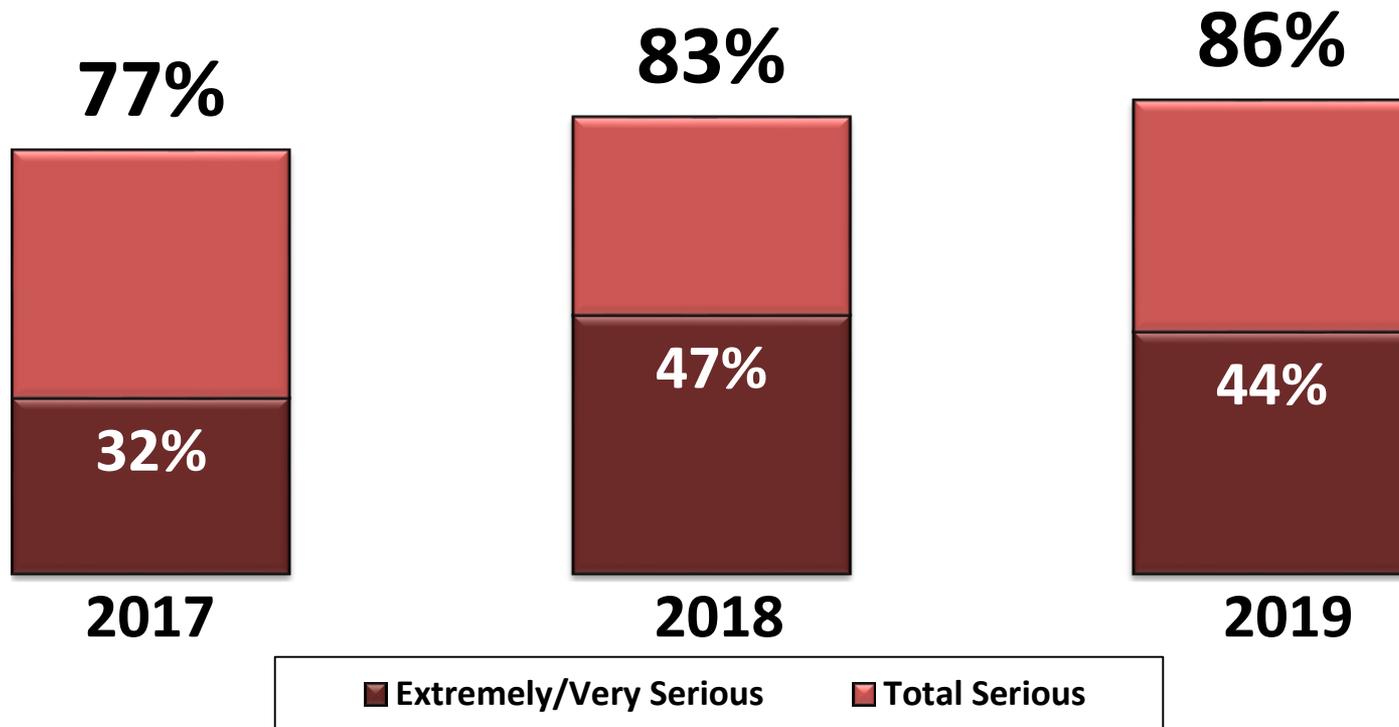
Water Supply Predictability – By State



Switching now to thinking about water in the West – which of the following statements comes closest to what you think? The amount of rain and snow in the West is pretty predictable over time, OR Water supplies in the West are becoming more unpredictable every year.

The view that wildfires are a problem has also been moving upward.

Uncontrollable Wildfires That Threaten Homes and Property – By Year



Next, I'm going to read you a list of issues some people say are problems in your 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 your state.

Two-thirds of Western voters say that wildfires in the West are more of a problem than ten years ago.

Do you think wildfires in the West are - more of a problem than ten years ago, less of a problem than ten years ago -- or about the same?

More of a problem than ten years ago

67%

Less of a problem than ten years ago

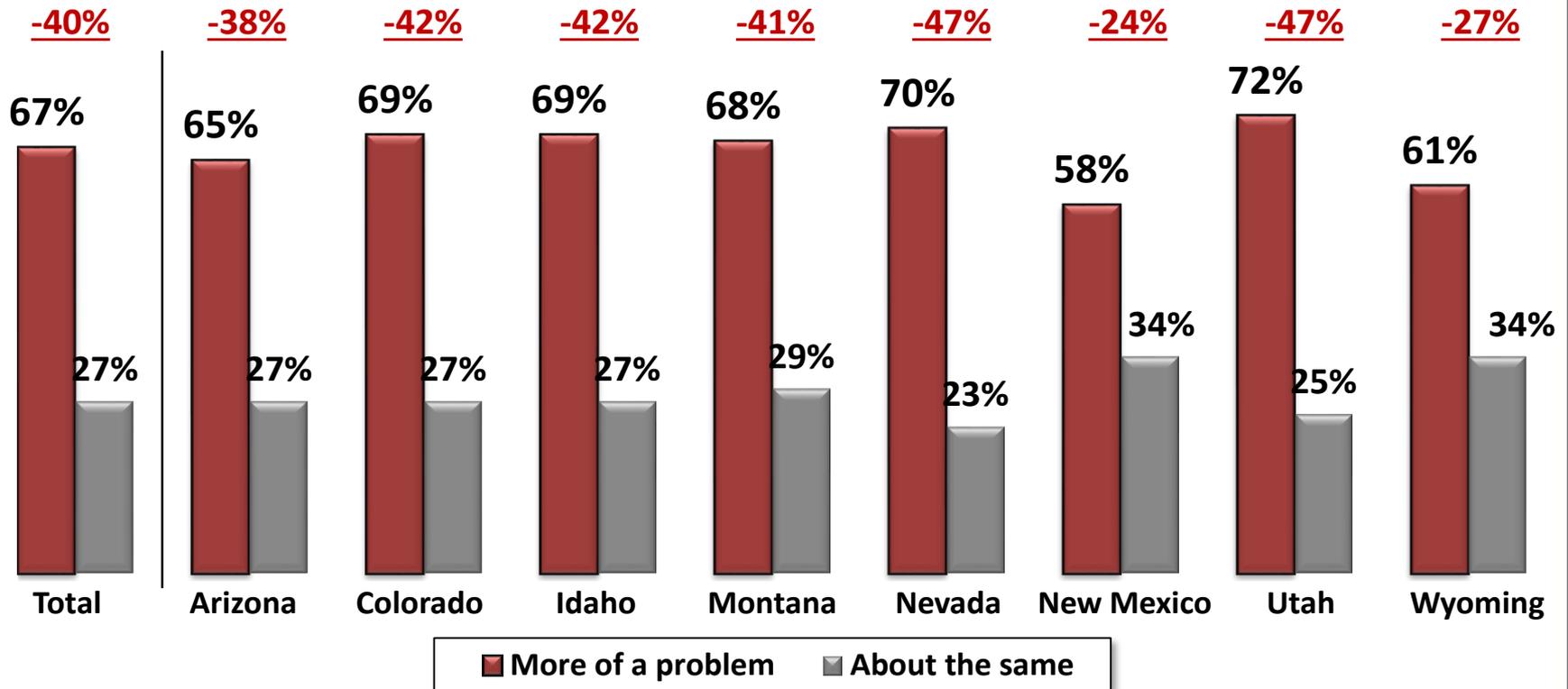
3%

About the same

27%

A majority in every state views wildfires as more of a problem than a decade ago.

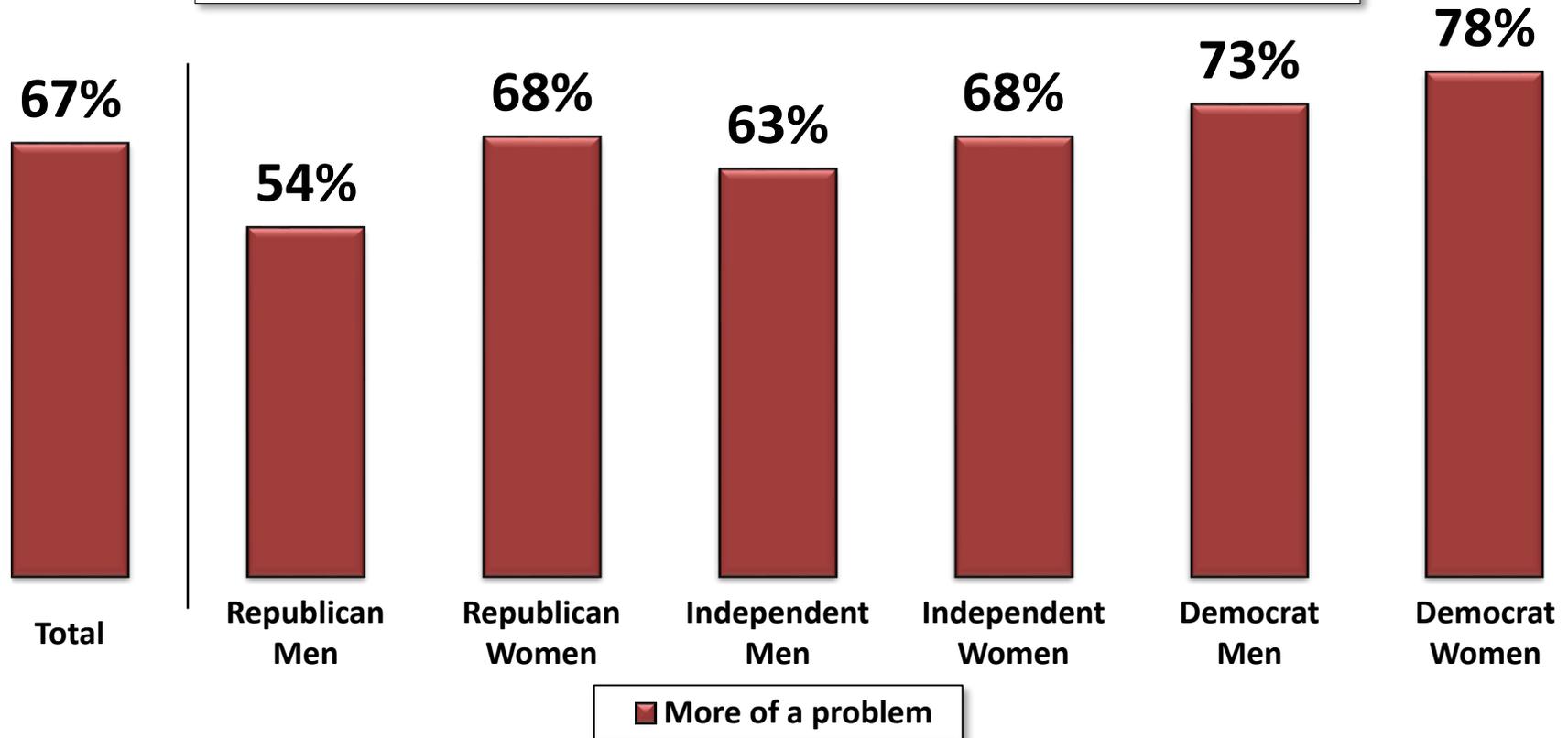
Wildfire Problem – By State



Do you think wild fires in the West are - more of a problem than ten years ago, less of a problem than ten years ago -- or about the same?

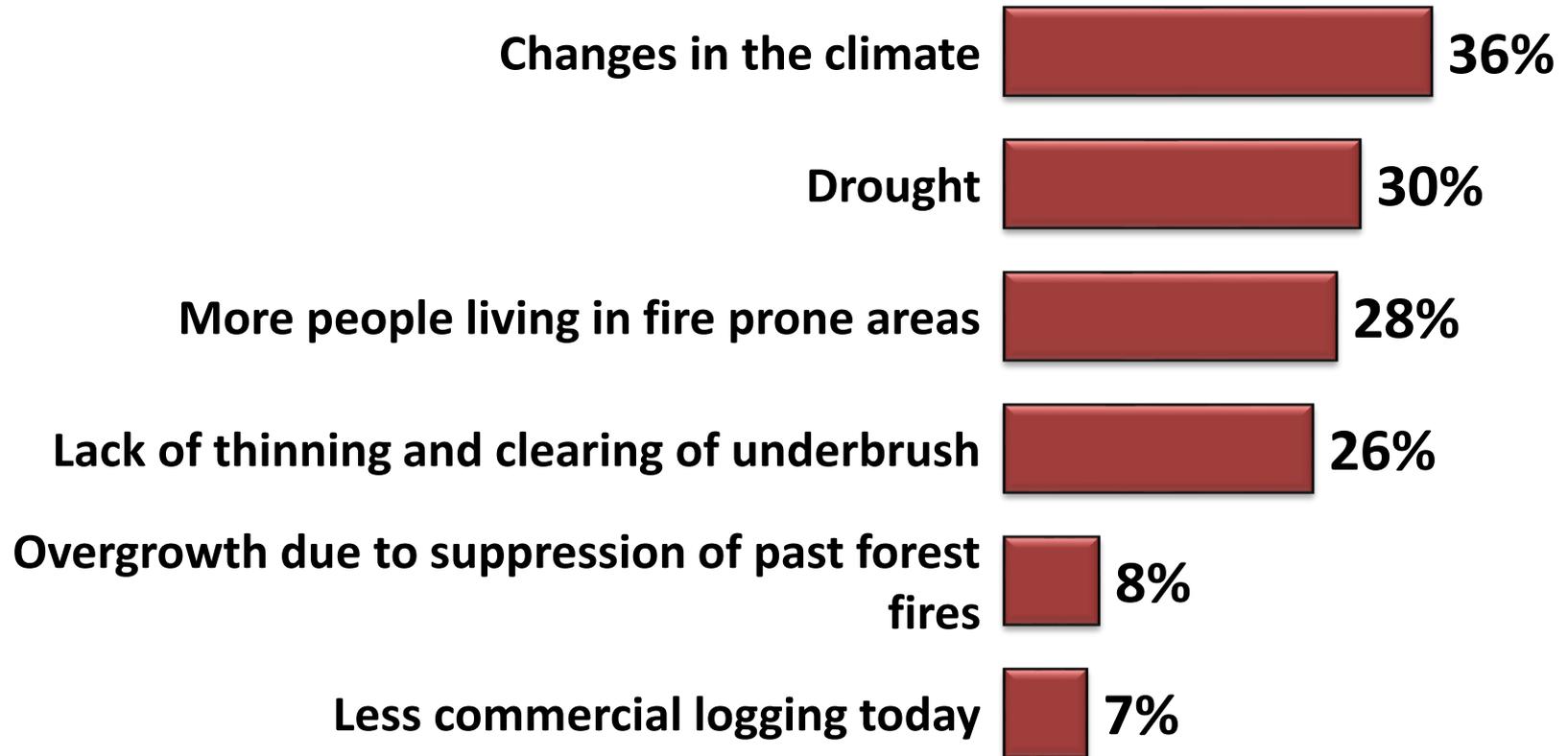
Women across the political spectrum are more likely to view wildfires as a problem.

Wildfire Problem – By Gender/Party



Do you think wild fires in the West are - more of a problem than ten years ago, less of a problem than ten years ago -- or about the same?

Western voters point to changes in the climate and drought as the main reasons for more wildfires.



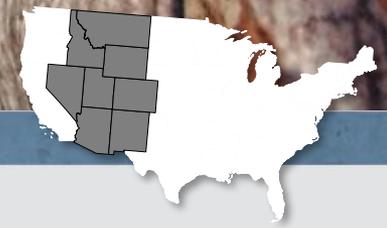
**Only asked among those who say fires are more of a problem.*

What are the main reasons you think wildfires are more of a problem than ten years ago?

There are partisan distinctions in perceptions of the cause of more wild fires in the West.

<i>Actions Ranked by Total</i>	Overall Total			
Changes in the climate	36%	15%	39%	52%
Drought	30%	24%	31%	35%
More people living in fire prone areas	28%	32%	28%	26%
Lack of thinning and clearing of underbrush	26%	41%	24%	15%

What are the main reasons you think wildfires are more of a problem than ten years ago?



Outdoor Recreation

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Conservation in the West Poll

Seven-in-ten Westerners identify as an outdoor recreation enthusiast.

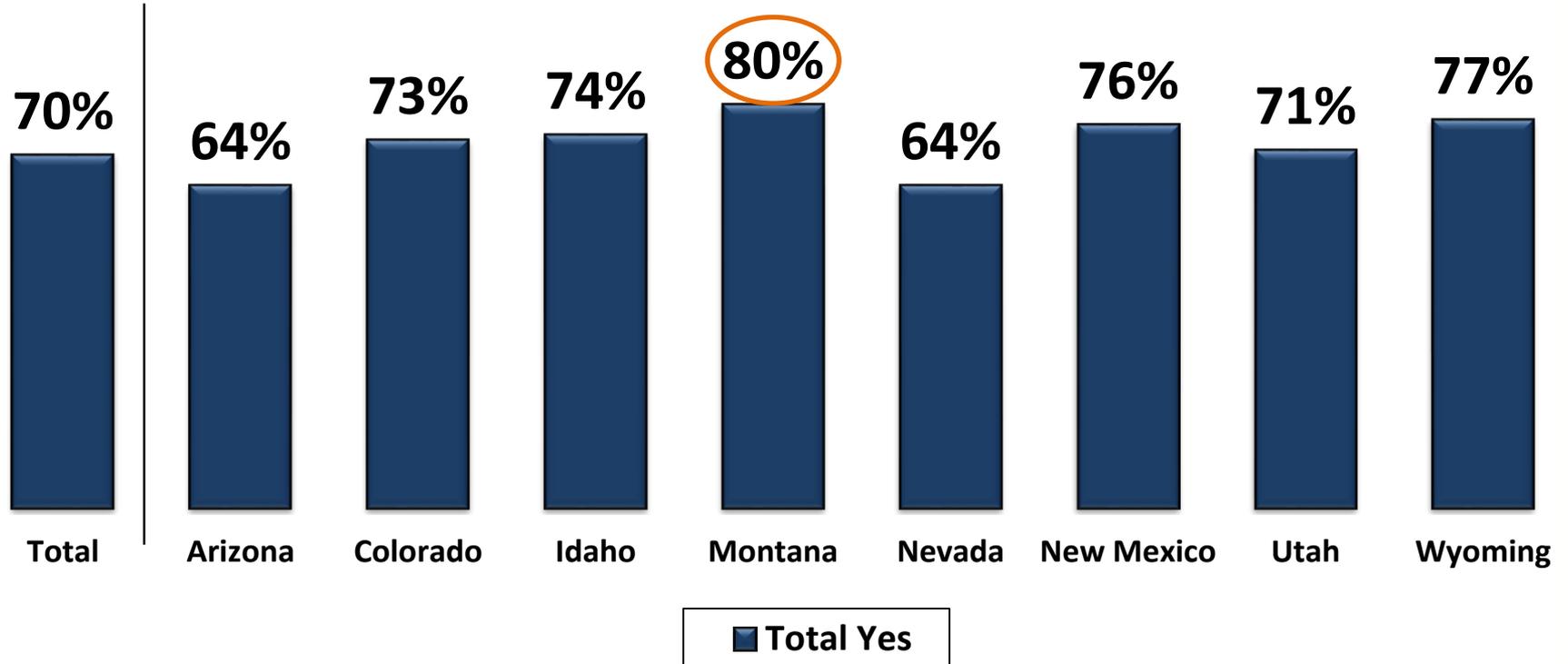


**Consider Themselves an
Outdoor Recreation
Enthusiast**

Do you consider yourself to be an outdoor recreation enthusiast?

Montanans are the most likely to view themselves as outdoor recreationalists.

Outdoor Recreation Enthusiast – By State



Do you consider yourself to be an outdoor recreation enthusiast?

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

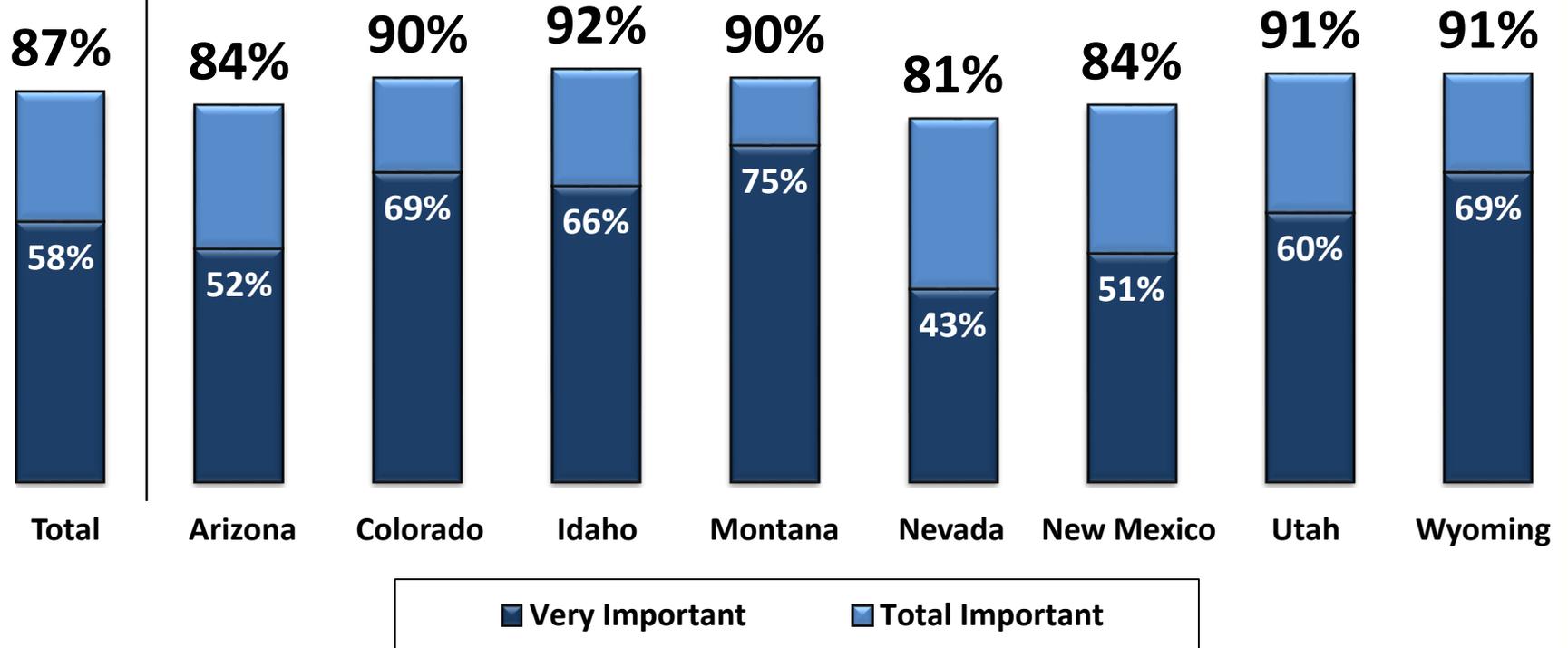
Economic Importance of Outdoor Recreation

When you think about the economic future of your 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	58%
Somewhat Important	29%
Total Important	87%
Total Not Important	10%
A Little Important	6%
Not Important At All	4%

The vast majority of voters in every state view outdoor recreation as economically important.

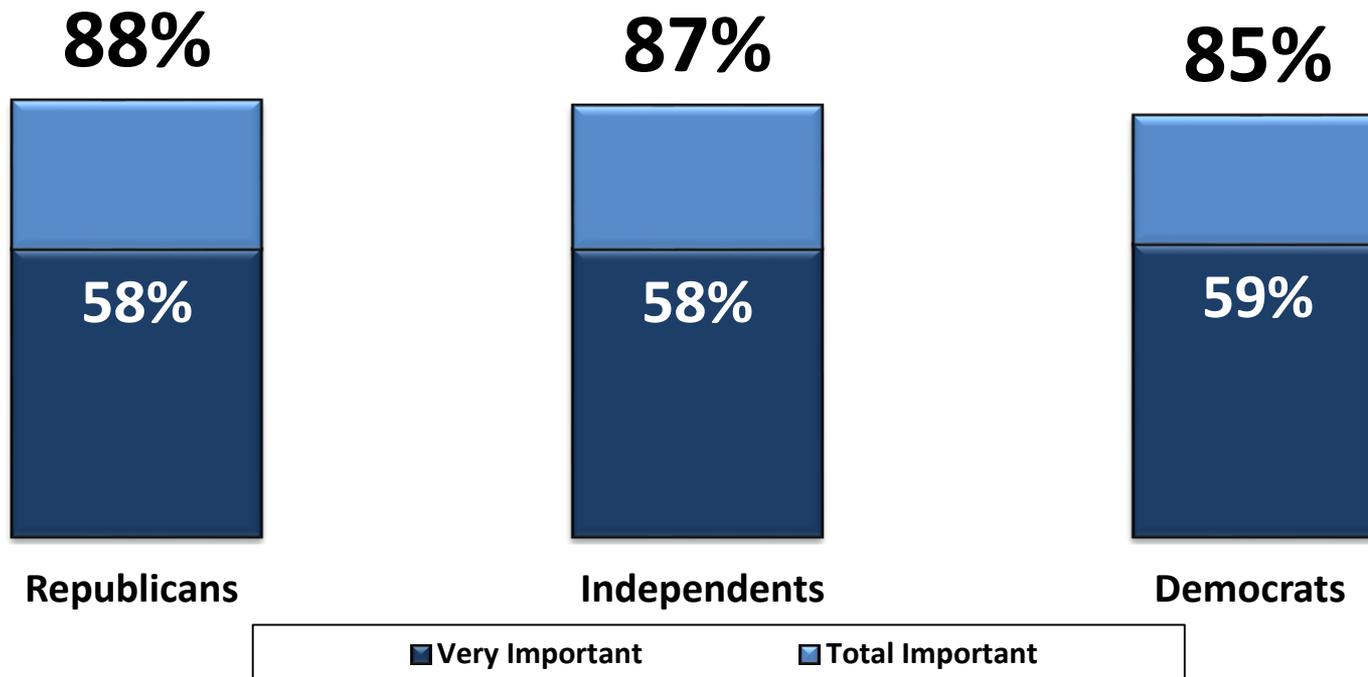
Importance of Outdoor Recreation to Economic Future of West – By State



When you think about the economic future of your 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?

There is almost no partisan distinction in perceptions of outdoor recreation's importance to the economic future of the West.

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



More than three-in-five Westerners say that being near public lands and trails is a factor in their decision to live where they do.

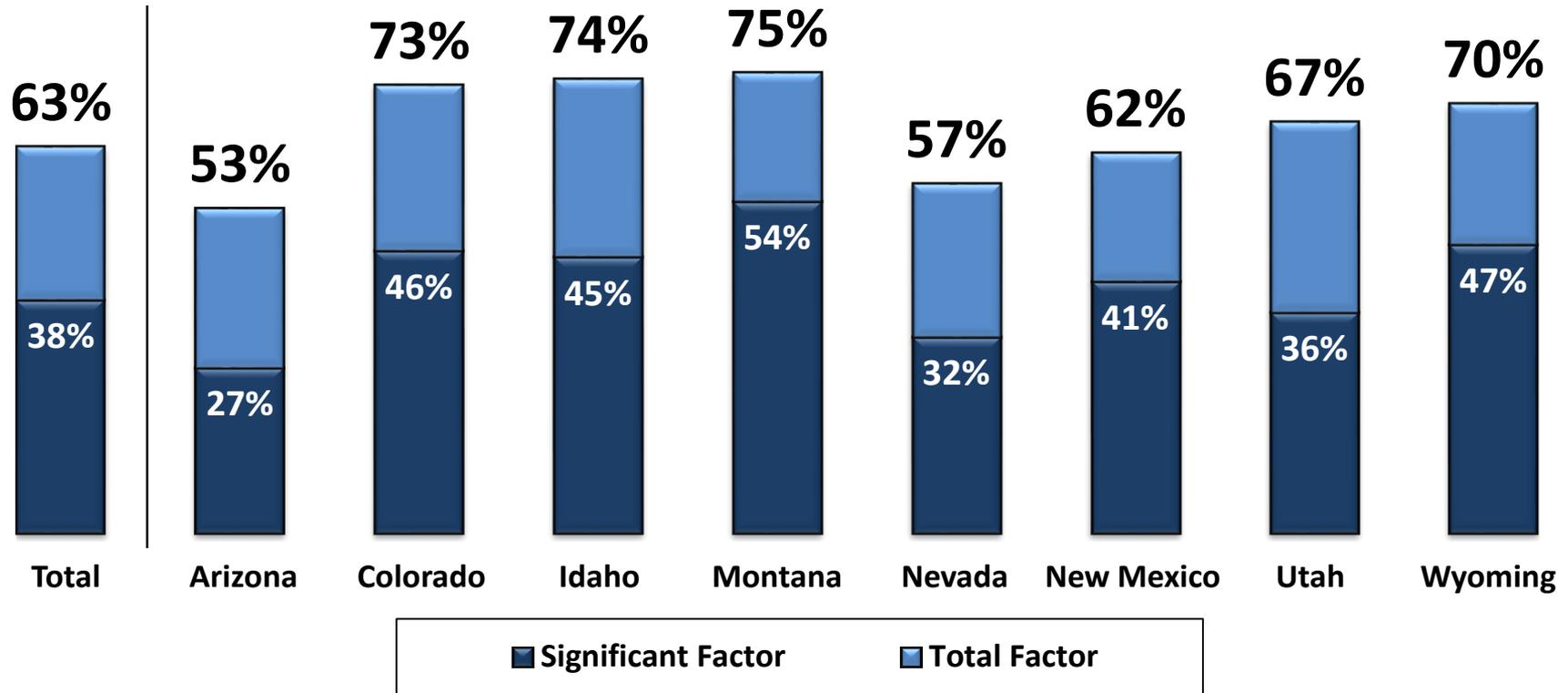
Thinking about living in the Western United States - One reason some people say they live in the West is the ability to live near, recreate on and enjoy public lands like national forests, parks or trails. Is that a significant factor, somewhat of a factor or not really a factor in you living in the West?

Significant Factor **38%**

Somewhat of a Factor **26%**

Not Really a Factor **35%**

Majorities in each state say living near public lands is a factor in choosing to live in the West.



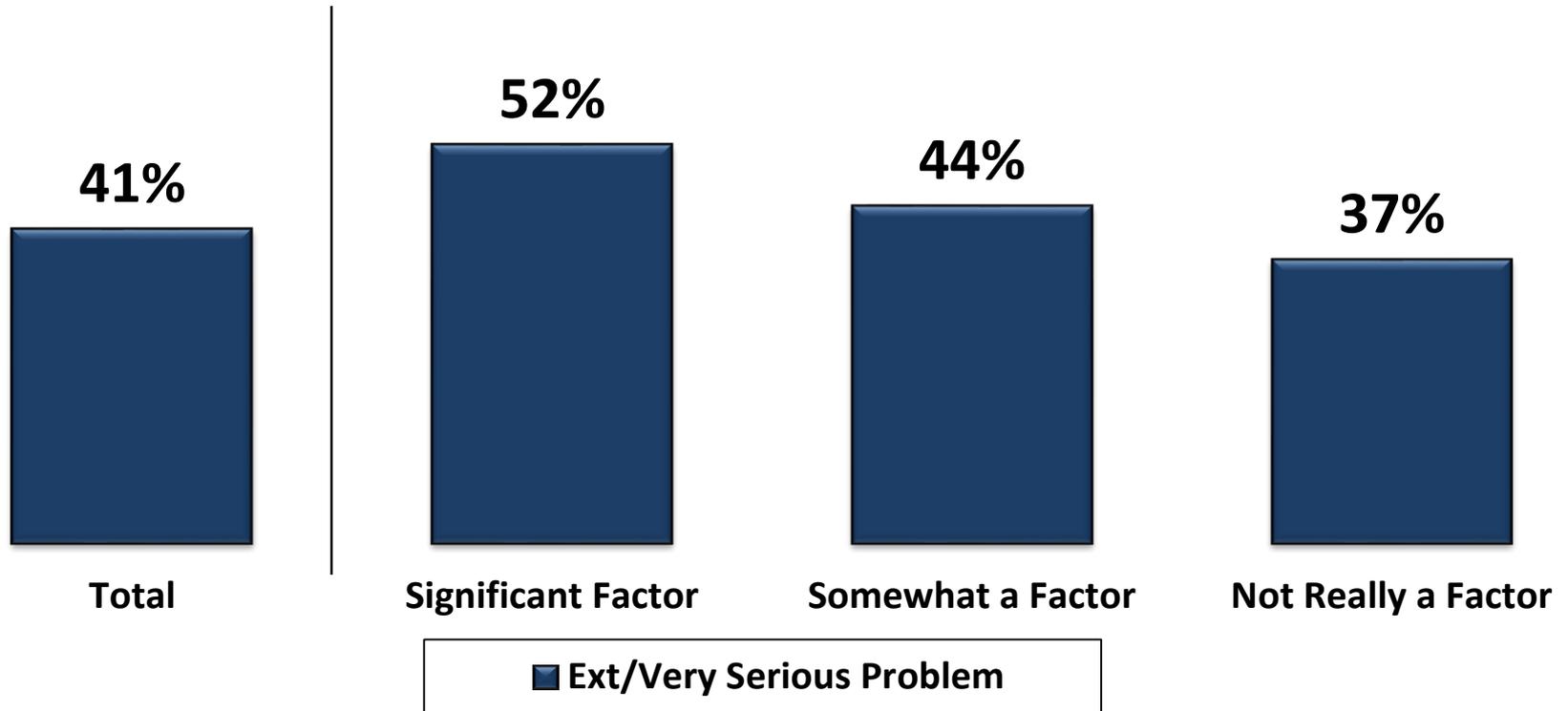
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Those who are most likely to say living near public lands is a factor in their decision to live in the West include...

Top Subgroups	
Men who are Sportsmen	76%
Sportsmen Republicans/Independents	76%
Outdoor Recreation Enthusiasts	74%
Anglers	74%
White Men	72%
Hunters	72%
Men Ages 18-44	72%
Post-Graduate Education	69%
Suburban Men	69%
Independents Ages 18-44	69%
Women who are Sportsmen	69%
Four-year College Graduates	68%
Small Town Residents	68%
Ages 18-34	67%

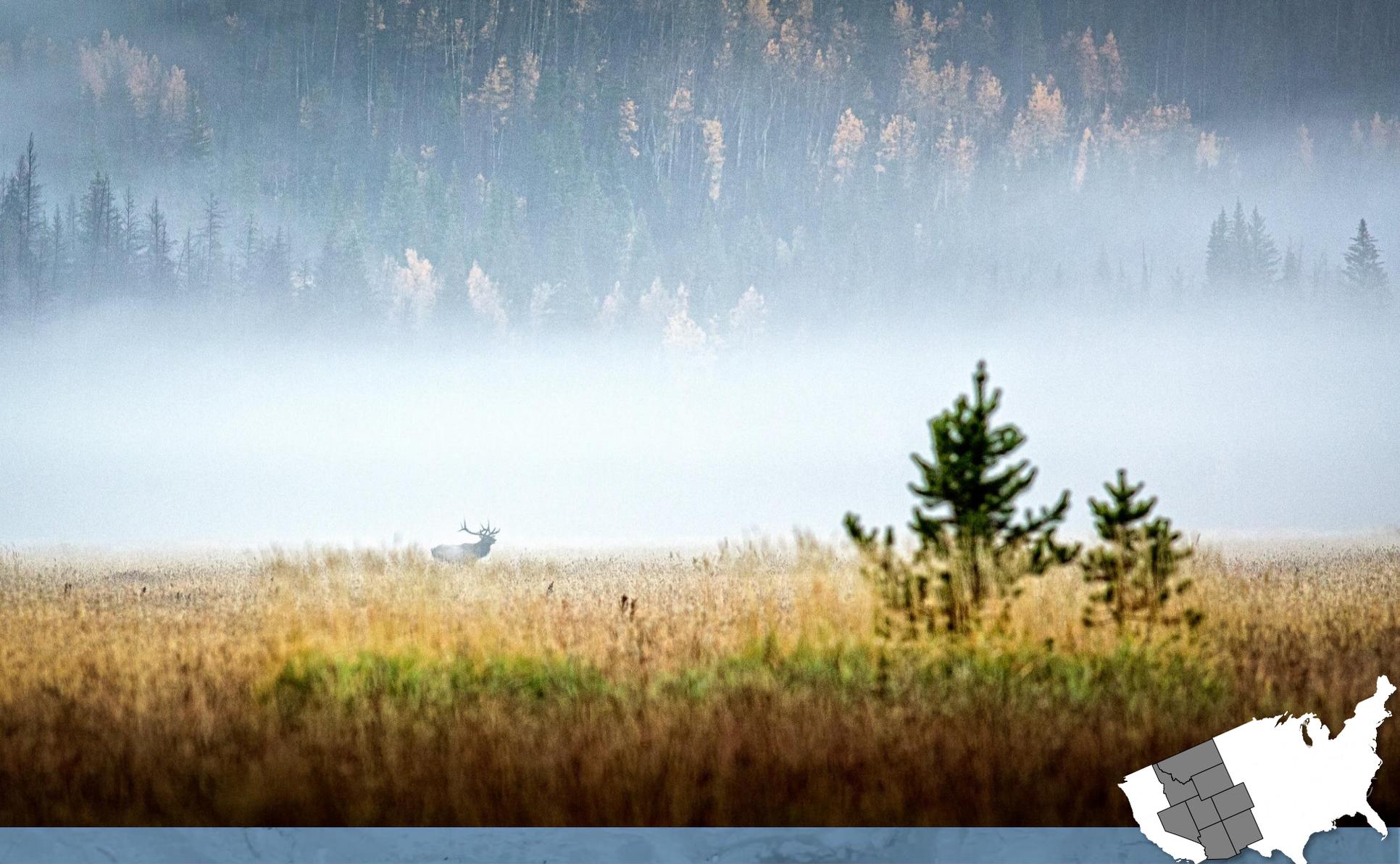
Thinking about living in the Western United States - One reason some people say they live in the West is the ability to live near, recreate on and enjoy public lands like national forests, parks or trails. Is that a significant factor, somewhat of a factor or not really a factor in you living in the West?

Those who say access to recreation on public lands is a factor in why they live in the West tend to be more concerned about the lack of resources to care for those lands.



These voters also tend to be more likely to view recent policy changes affecting public lands as poor decisions.

<i>% Bad Change by Role of Public Lands in Why they Live in the West</i>	Public Lands is Significant Factor in Living in the West	Public Lands is Somewhat a Factor in Living in the West	Public Lands is Not Really a Factor in Living in the West
Bad Change to Remove National Monuments	71%	69%	62%
Bad Change to Limit Public Comments	63%	60%	47%

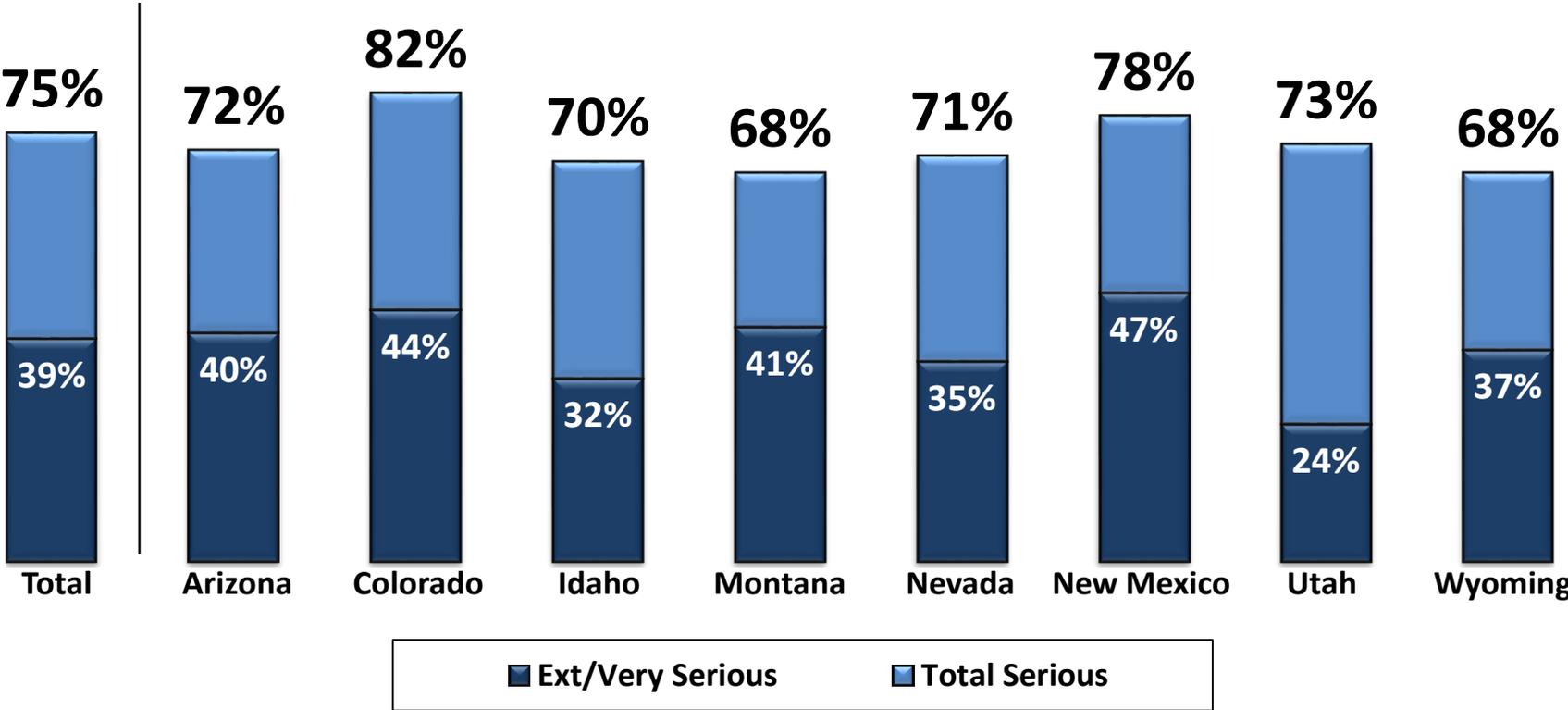


Wildlife

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Conservation in the West Poll

Loss of wildlife habitat is seen as a serious problem in every state.

Loss of Habitat for Fish and Wildlife – By State



Next, I'm going to read you a list of issues some people say are problems in your 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 your state.

Voters were asked to consider one wildlife program:

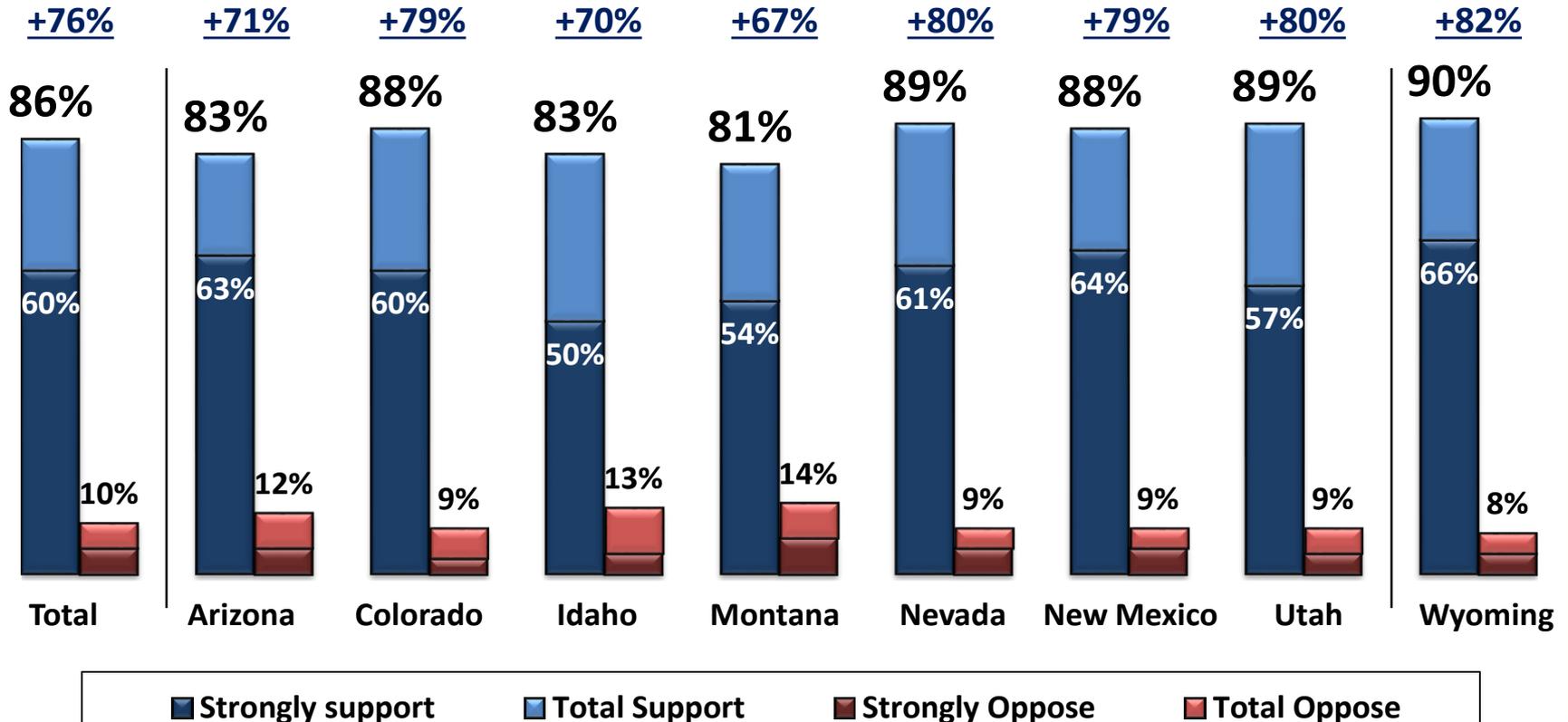
In Wyoming, university researchers, state wildlife biologists, and ranchers worked together to track the movement of antelope, mule deer, and other wildlife. They identified specific areas where these animals migrate along every year and have proposed ways to protect these wildlife, such as highway overpasses or underpasses to ensure safety of both drivers and animals, incentives for landowners who conserve habitat, and ways to reduce disturbance from development in these migration areas.

*All but WY: Does this effort sound like something you would support or oppose implementing in your state?**

*Asked in WY: Do you support or oppose this effort in Wyoming?****

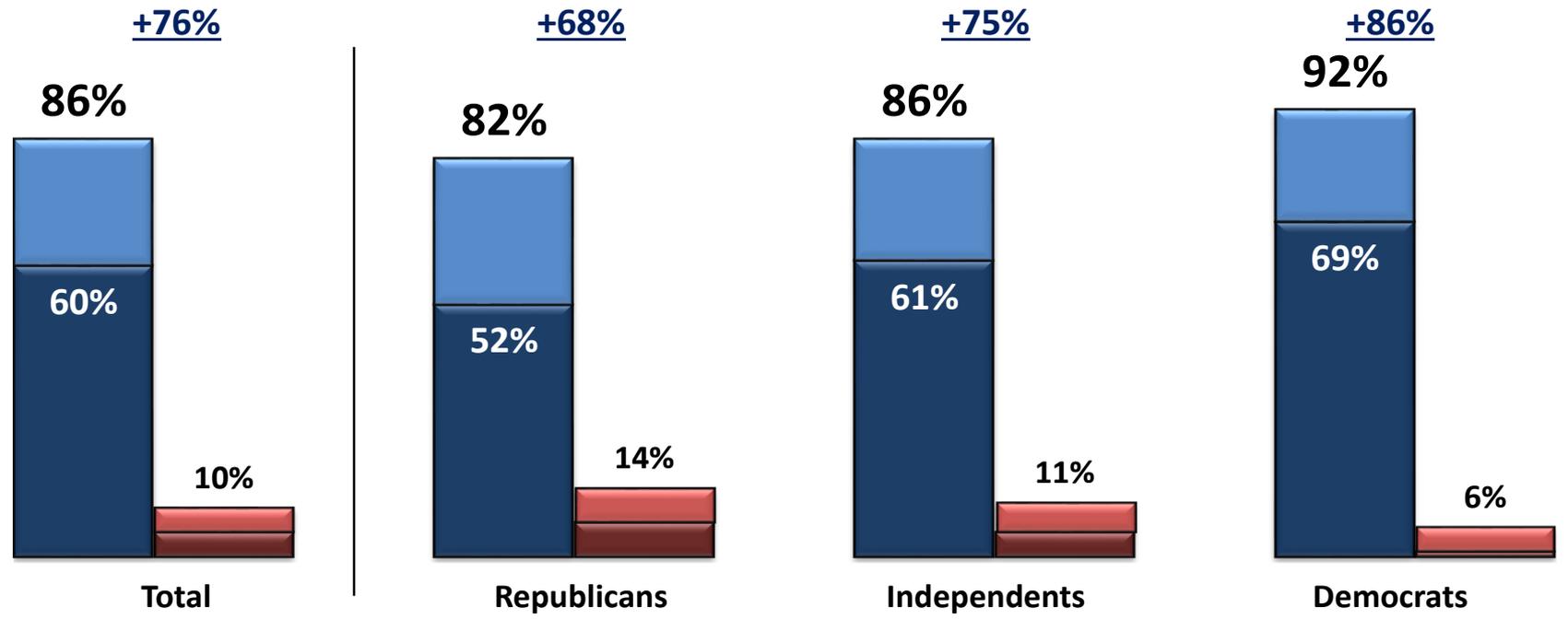
There is near unanimity in support for conservation of migration corridors modeled on Wyoming.

Support for Migration Corridor Conservation – By State



Support for conservation of migration corridors is strong across party lines.

Development Near Migration Sites – By Party



Strongly support
 Total Support
 Strongly Oppose
 Total Oppose

*Does not include Wyoming

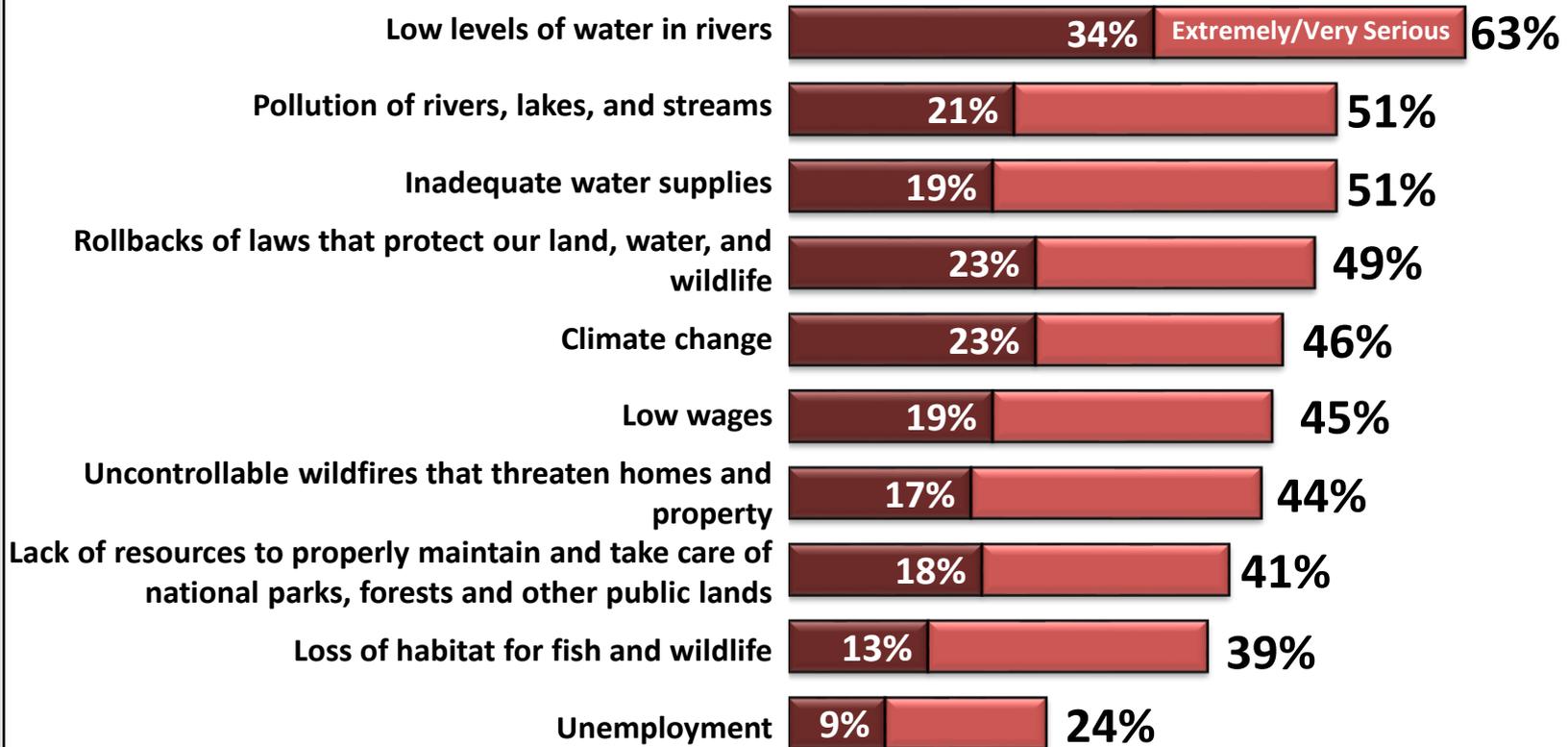


Water

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Water-related concerns top the list of most serious problems for voters in the West.

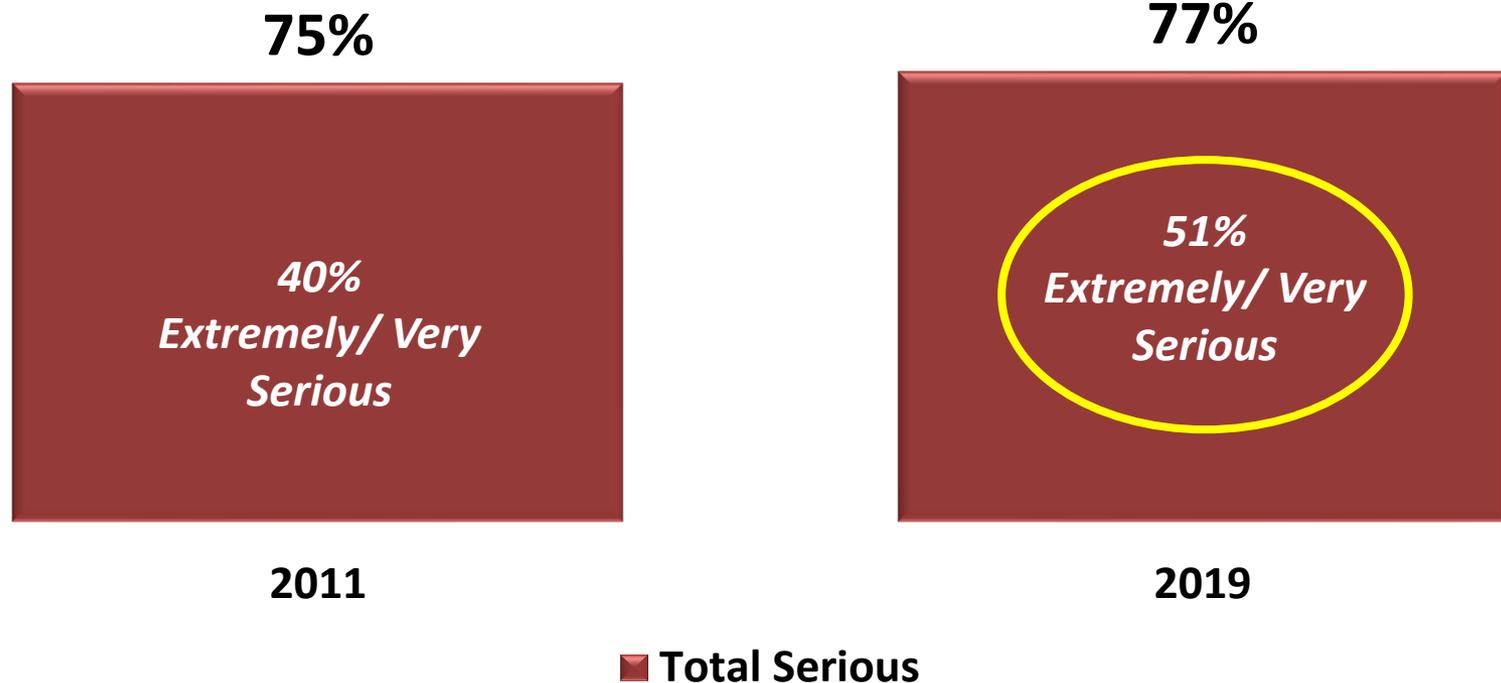
Problems Ranked by % Extremely/Very Serious



Next, I'm going to read you a list of issues some people say are problems in your 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 your state.

Inadequate water supplies is more likely to be seen as a very serious problem than eight years ago.

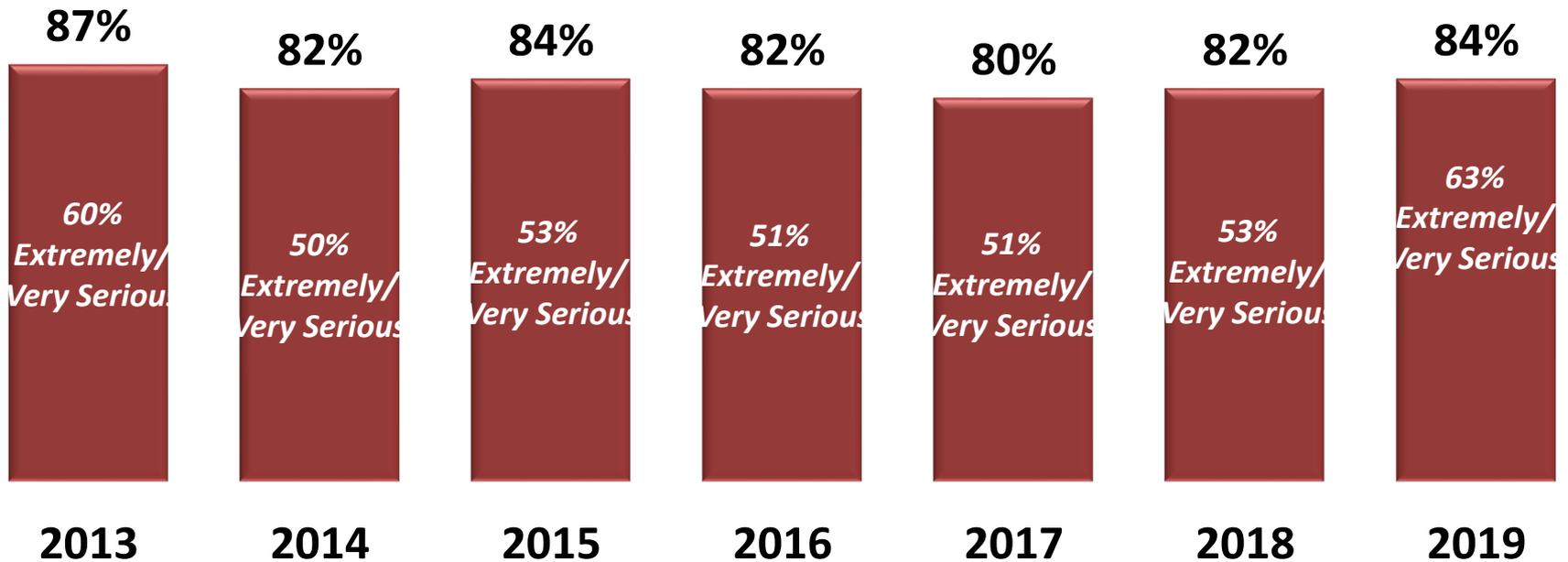
Inadequate Water Supplies Viewed as a Serious Problem – Trend



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 your state.

This is the highest proportion since 2013 that say the condition of rivers is a very serious problem.

Low Levels of Water in Rivers Viewed as a Serious Problem – Trend



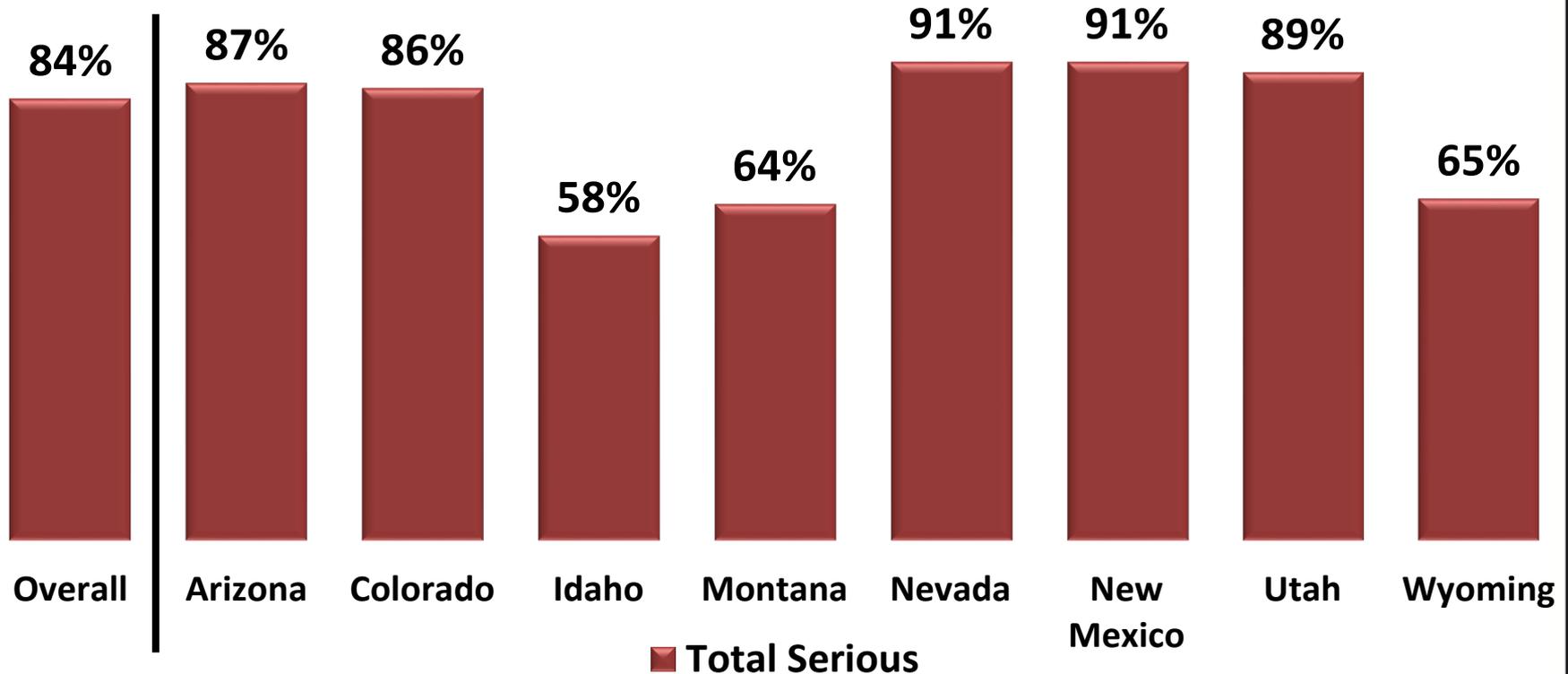
■ Total Serious

2013-2015 excludes NV; 2013-2017 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 your state.

There are some differences between more northern states and the rest in levels of concern about rivers.

Low Levels of Water in Rivers 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 your state.

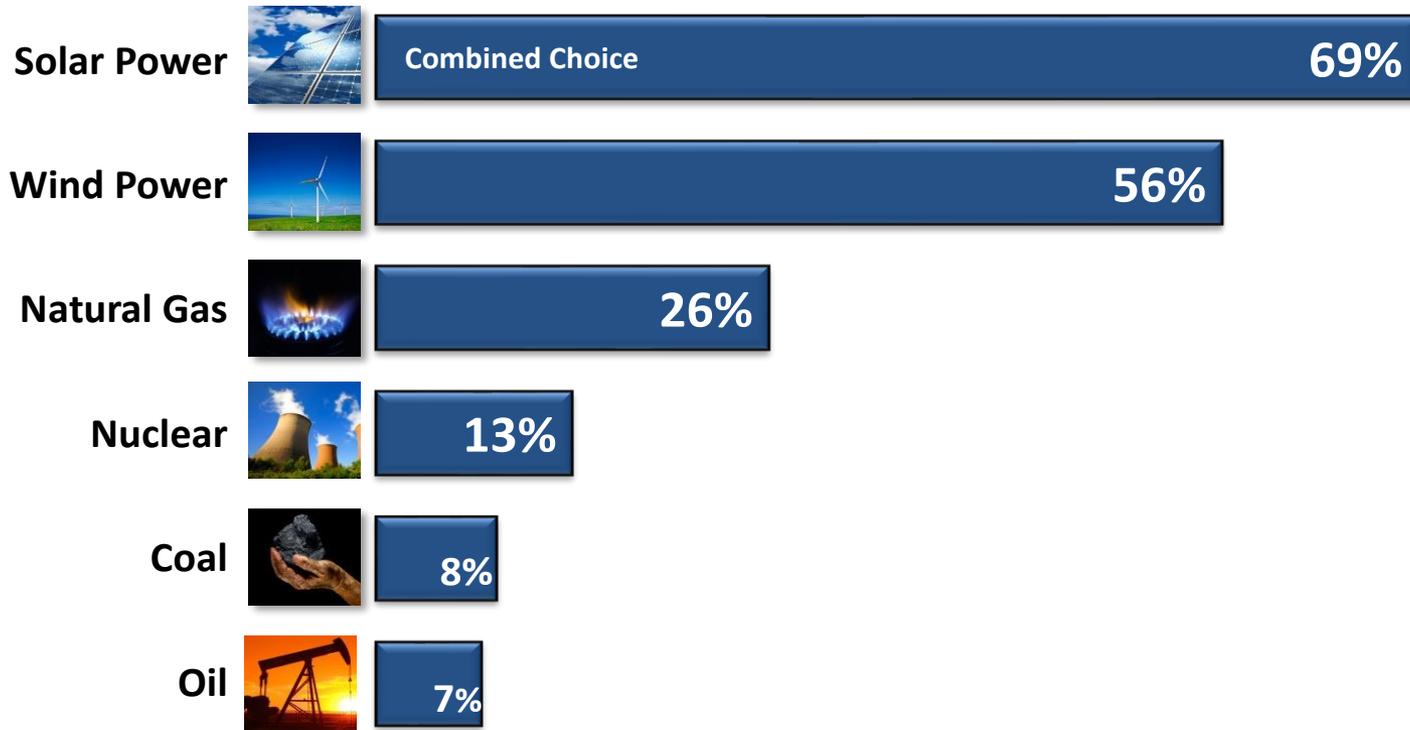


Energy

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Western voters are most likely to say that solar and wind should be encouraged in their state.

Two Energy Sources to Encourage in Your State



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

Which one of the following sources of energy would you want to encourage the use of here in your state?

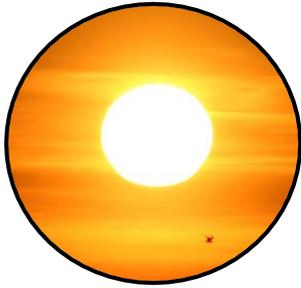
The proportion of voters saying to encourage solar and wind has gradually increased, while natural gas has remained stable.

<i>Ranked by % 2019</i>	2013	2016	2019
Solar Power	57%	67%	69%
Wind Power	48%	47%	56%
Natural Gas	27%	22%	26%

Note: In previous surveys, "energy efficiency" was an option.

Which one of the following sources of energy would you want to encourage the use of here in your state?

Voters across the political spectrum say their state should encourage solar and wind.



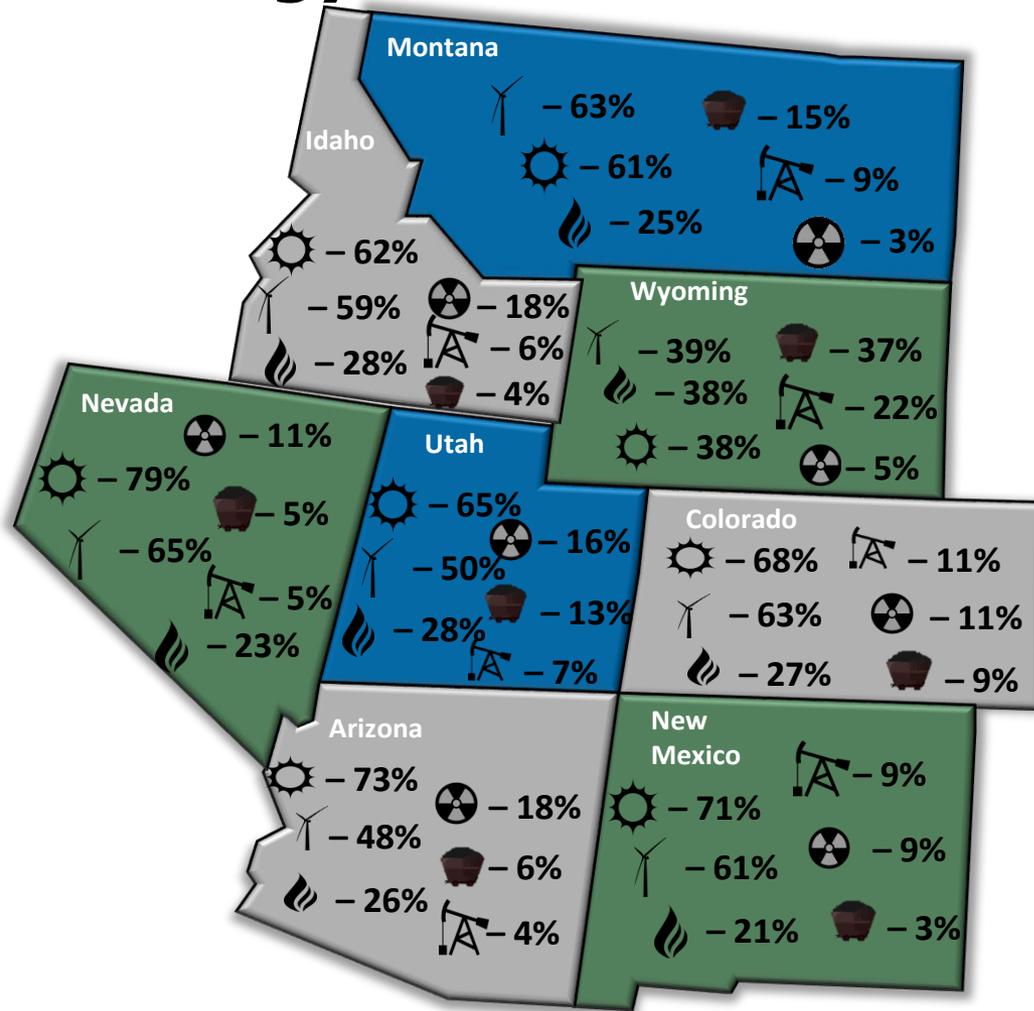
	2013	2019
GOP	46%	56%
IND	58%	69%
DEM	71%	86%

	2013	2019
GOP	36%	44%
IND	46%	57%
DEM	63%	70%

	2013	2019
GOP	37%	36%
IND	25%	26%
DEM	16%	14%

Which one of the following sources of energy would you want to encourage the use of here in your state?

Energy Sources to Encourage By State:



Western States Preferred Top 2 Energy Sources

- Solar Power – 69%
- Wind Power – 56%
- Natural Gas – 26%
- Nuclear – 13%
- Coal – 8%
- Oil – 7%

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



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