#  Round Up of State-Level Polling – August/Sept. 2014



**CO, ID, MT, NV, NM, OR, UT, WY:** [**Westerners Oppose Right-Wing Efforts To Seize And Sell National Parks, Forests And Public Lands**](http://thinkprogress.org/climate/2014/09/25/3572341/westerners-oppose-seizing-public-lands/)

According to a new survey released today, 59 percent of western voters believe that state efforts to take over America’s public lands would be unfair to taxpayers, resulting in increased taxes, reduced access for recreation and a high risk of the lands being sold off to the highest bidder.

The research, conducted by a bipartisan team of nationally-recognized polling firms, confirms that the majority of westerners oppose proposals to transfer America’s national parks, forests and public lands to state ownership. As noted in the polling firms’ analysis of the results, “it comes down to the issue of fairness for voters” who do not believe that state taxpayers should have to shoulder the “entire burden” of management.

The results of the survey, the first in-depth analysis of westerners’ views of these proposals, come as no surprise to some policymakers.

Senator Martin Heinrich (D-NM) observed that “these lands belong to all of us, and it is imperative that we keep it that way. Efforts to seize or sell off millions of acres of federal public lands throughout the West would bring a proliferation of closed gates and no trespassing signs in places that have been open and used for generations. These privatization schemes would devastate outdoor traditions like hunting and fishing that are among the pillars of Western culture and a thriving outdoor recreation economy.”

Advanced by a small group of right-wing politicians, state legislative proposals to take over public lands have gained some momentum this year, particularly after rancher Cliven Bundy’s April standoff in Nevada drew national attention to the fringe movement.

In addition to being fundamentally unconstitutional, these proposals would place extreme financial burdens on state taxpayers, including forcing state taxpayers to incur the full costs of fighting wildfires, which could force states to put iconic natural landscapes up for auction. The Center for American Progress has highlighted the growing contingent of elected officials and candidates arguing for these radical proposals in the “Bundy’s Buddies” series.

Conducted by a bipartisan team of public opinion research firms, the survey released Thursday reached 1,600 voters in eight western states: Colorado, Idaho, Montana, New Mexico, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, and Wyoming.

David Metz, President of FM3 Research, one of the firms that conducted the survey, said that “rather than supporting land transfer proposals, voters say their top priorities are to ensure public lands are protected for future generations and that the rangers and land managers have the resources they need to do their jobs.”

The analysis of Thursday’s survey results also shows that voters from both political parties, as well as independents, oppose state land transfer proposals, and concludes that “this view is widespread and broad-based, cutting across most demographic sub-groups.”

Senator Jon Tester (D-MT), who will be joining sportsmen’s groups on Saturday to rally against proposals to turn national forests and other public lands in in Montana over to the state, explained that the views observed in the survey reflect westerners’ deep ties to America’s public lands.

“It’s no surprise that Montanans want to keep their public lands public,” Tester said. “These places not only create lasting memories for our families, they’re also huge economic drivers for our communities. We must keep these treasured places accessible for our kids and grandkids, and I will keep working to improve that access.”

Find the full poll report [here](http://cdn.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/2014-Western-Voter-Attitudes-Toward-Management-of-Public-Lands_analysis.pdf).

*FM3 and Public Opinion Strategies interviewed 1,600 voters across 8 Western states (CO, ID, MT, NM, NV, OR, UT and WY) from Sept. 10 - 14; MoE is +/-3.5% points at the 95% CI overall*

**CA:** [**L.A. County wants San Gabriel Mountains protected**](http://wilderness.org/blog/poll-la-county-wants-san-gabriel-mountains-protected-you-can-help)

A new poll finds broad support for protecting Southern California’s San Gabriel Mountains and rivers--and you can help by attending a public meeting August 26.

About 80 percent of Los Angeles County voters expressed support for protecting the San Gabriel Mountains and rivers, including preserving wildlife habitat, outdoor recreation opportunities and clean air and water.

The poll, conducted by Public Opinion Strategies, was released just days before officials from the Obama administration came to Southern California to hear from local residents about the creation of a national monument for the San Gabriel Mountains.

Key stats from the poll results:

- 80% of LA County voters support protecting the San Gabriel Mountains and rivers

- 88% of Latino voters supported protecting the San Gabriels (Nearly half of Los Angeles County residents identify as Hispanic or Latino)

- A strong majority of self-described liberal (87%), moderate (81%) and conservative (74%) voters supported protection

- 73% of those who hunt or fish supported protection

- 55% of LA County voters said they would tell President Obama to take action and designate the San Gabriels as a national monument

Los Angeles County, whose seat is the city of Los Angeles, is one of the most populous in the entire country, making up more than a quarter of the population of the state of California.

The county surveyed contains many of the millions who live within an hour’s drive of the San Gabriel Mountains--a “backyard” for Southern California featuring miles of majestic mountain peaks, clear rivers and countless recreation opportunities for urban communities that might otherwise not have access to nature.

The San Gabriels’ proximity to all those people brings its value into especially stark contrast. But since Californians rely on it so heavily as a natural refuge, source of clean drinking water and site for fishing, hiking and camping, it is highly vulnerable to wear and tear. A bill introduced in June by Rep. Judy Chu (D-CA) included plans to safeguard this area, but has gained little traction. In situations like this, it often falls to the president to protect natural places that have broad local support, under the authority of the Antiquities Act of 1906.

Recently, some prominent voices have joined the chorus of ordinary citizens rallying behind protection for the San Gabriels, and specifically indicating that the White House should take action if Congress will not. Op-eds from Dolores Huerta, co-founder of the United Farm Workers of America, and Michael L. Whitehead, CEO of a water utility serving the San Gabriel Valley, each expressed strong support. In the former, Huerta wrote that “[t]hese communities and more around the country want the rich diversity of our country’s heritage honored. They want places for their kids to play in the great outdoors, breathing in fresh air.”

Lately, Congress has been lax in its responsibility to America’s wild lands. It may now fall to the president to protect this natural treasure of California.

Find the full poll presentation [here](http://www.sangabrielmountains.org/docs/LA_County_Key_Findings_Memo_Aug_2014.pdf).

*Public Opinion Strategies interviewed 500 voters in LA County from May 27 - 31; MoE is +/-4.4% points at the 95% CI overall*

**CO:** [**76% of Coloradans support rooftop solar, poll finds**](http://cleantechnica.com/2014/09/05/76-coloradans-support-rooftop-solar-poll-finds/)

A telephone poll, carried out between August 21-24, found that 76% of Coloradans support net metering. 73% were opposed to the state’s largest utility, XCEL Energy, cutting the amount of credit it provides for customers who feed electricity into the grid. Yet according to Gabriel Romero, a media relations specialist from XCEL Energy, “The only thing regarding rooftop solar that’s on the table right now is a discussion about how to classify net metering.”

Keating Research and Public Opinion Strategies contacted 500 registered voters from all across Colorado. According to information in the form, respondents were from all political persuasions and income levels.

“This poll demonstrates increased public understanding of and support for solar net metering and a willingness to defend the tremendous benefits it has already delivered to Colorado,” said Walker Wright, spokesperson for The Alliance for Solar Choice (TASC) and Director of Government Affairs at Sunrun. “Coloradans want the choice for self-generated solar power, which contributes to the grid’s improvement while creating jobs in a growing industry.”

Romero said he had not seen it, but from my questions he suspected it is a partisan poll.

“There isn’t a concerted effort to stop solar. We’re not changing our rebate amount. We have not proposed cutting anything,” he added. “The issue before the Public Utilities Commission is how to classify net metering. Is it a subsidy? is it not a subsidy? It is a discussion about what net metering is and how to classify it.”

TASC is concerned about what could transpire as a result of that discussion. XCEL has tried to reduce the amount paid to solar owners before. This “discussion” could open the door for the utility to try again.

Romero said XCEL and the solar industry have both expressed their opinions, and it is up to the Colorado Public Utilities Commission to decide what is fair.

Find the full poll presentation [here](http://b.3cdn.net/solarchoice/20a40661d7ad707353_fxm62yg5q.pdf).

*Keating Research & Public Opinion Strategies interviewed 500 voters in CO from August 21 - 24; MoE is +/-4.4% points at the 95% CI overall*

**OH:** [**Majority of Ohio Electricity Customers Do Not Support Coal Plant Bailouts**](http://content.sierraclub.org/press-releases/2014/08/new-poll-majority-ohio-electricity-customers-do-not-support-coal-plant)

In results from a new poll by Public Policy Partners (PPP) released today by Public Citizen and the Sierra Club, a strong percentage of Ohio electricity customers favor clean, renewable energy sources to power the state -- and do not support paying more to keep aging coal plants in operation. The poll also found that by wide margins, these customers are concerned about air pollution and the rising costs of electricity in Ohio.

The results come out as the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio is considering requests from FirstEnergy, American Electric Power and Duke Energy to increase customers’ monthly bills to pay for aging coal plants.

The telephone poll reached 526 Ohio electricity customers between August 7 and August 9, 2014.

 Among the poll highlights:

● More than three-in-four Ohio electricity customers (78 percent) say they are concerned about air pollution in the state, with 39 percent saying they are "very concerned”

● Three-in-four Ohio electricity say that if the decision was up to them, they would deny the AEP's request to allow them to increase rates to pay for extra costs associated with continuing to generate electricity from existing power plants

● An overwhelming majority (92 percent) of Ohioans say it is important for Ohio to invest in measures to increase energy efficiency, with 66 percent saying it is "very important"

● 65 percent of Ohio electricity customers say their household electricity bills has gone up in recent years

● More than two-in-three Ohio electricity customers (68 percent) say they would be more favorable towards their electric utility if it replaced electricity from coal with electricity from clean energy such as wind and solar, with 45 percent saying they would be "much more favorable"

● The majority of Ohio electricity customers say they think the state should be investing more in renewable energy like solar and wind

“The results of this poll back up what we are hearing throughout Ohio -- people don’t want to pay more for dirty energy,” said Tyson Slocum, director of the energy program at Public Citizen. “We call on the PUCO to listen to what Ohio electricity customers are trying to tell them and reject the utilities’ requests for coal plant bailouts.”

According to the poll, an overwhelmingly majority of Ohio electricity customers who are Republicans (88 percent) support increased investments in energy efficiency because it leads to job creation, with 57 percent saying it is “very important” to them. This falls in line with the general population of Ohio electricity customers who support energy efficiency, 86 percent.

 Jim Williams, an issue polling specialist with Public Policy Polling, said: “Ohio electricity customers consistently show a preference for renewable energy in this survey, and we found that this support holds across different demographic groups. It's also clear that Ohio electricity customers are not favorable to burning coal, and they expect their state to transition to cleaner fuels and more energy efficiency measures.”

Find the full poll memo [here](http://action.sierraclub.org/site/DocServer/OhioResults.pdf?docID=16201).

*PPP interviewed 526 electricity customers in OH from August 7 - 9; MoE is +/-4.3% points at the 95% CI overall*

**TN:** [**According to new study, Tennessee supports clean energy**](http://www.bizjournals.com/memphis/news/2014/08/25/according-to-new-study-tennessee-supports-clean.html?page=all)

Tennessee voters agree that reducing carbon and introducing clean energy is a good move for the state.

A recent poll conducted by North Star Opinion Research and commissioned by the Energy Foundation confirms that 83 percent participants support increasing the use of renewable energy in Tennessee.

The polls showed that 72 percent of voters support TVA's move to retire its coal fleet, seen most recently in the decision to switch Memphis' Allen Fossil Plant to natural gas. Additionally, 25 percent of voters prefer renewable energy sources such as wind and solar to meet the area's need.

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The 600 registered voters also fielded questions on the Environmental Protection Agency's Clean Power Plan. The plan puts pressure on power plants to convert to cleaner generation. Under the decree, states must reduce their carbon emissions 30 percent by 2030.

A total of 68 percent of participants believed the Clean Power Plan to be a good idea. Even though 50 percent of participants said that their electricity bills are too high, more than half of participants said that they would be willing to pay at least $1 more on their energy bill to account for increased renewable energy generation.

"These results confirm there is strong support for new rules to reduce carbon pollution and increase renewable energy in Tennessee," said Dr. Stephen Smith, executive director for the Southern Alliance for Clean Energy and grantee of the Energy Foundation. "These issues are not controversial but enjoy a broad base of bipartisan support."

After looking over the report, answer our poll if you think renewable energy is right for Memphis.

Find the full poll memo [here](http://www.cleanenergy.org/wp-content/uploads/TN_Energy_Presentation_for_Release.pdf).

*North Star Opinion Research interviewed 600 voters statewide in TN from June 2 - 5; MoE is +/-4.0% points at the 95% CI overall*

**VA:** [**Majority of Virginia's small business owners support carbon pollution limits, addressing climate change**](http://www.consumerelectronicsnet.com/article/New-E2-poll%3A-Majority-of-Virginias-small-business-owners-support-carbon-pollution-limits-addressing-climate-change-3515999)

As world leaders meet this week to address climate change and 400,000 people march in the streets in New York City, a new survey shows that Virginia's small business owners support state action to cut carbon pollution and believe that doing so will help Virginia's economy.

At the same time, Virginia's small business community is not entirely pleased with the job Gov. Terry McAuliffe has done protecting the state's water, air, and overall environment.

According to a survey conducted by Public Policy Polling (PPP) for the nonprofit, nonpartisan business group Environmental Entrepreneurs (E2):

63 percent of small business owners in Virginia think state leaders should do more to compete with other states to attract and develop more clean, renewable energy companies and jobs to Virginia. A similarly high number 65 percent voiced support for advancing energy efficiency.

52 percent of small business owners in Virginia think Gov. McAuliffe and the state legislature should support the federal standards to reduce carbon pollution produced by power plants.

60 percent of Virginia's small business owners give Gov. McAuliffe a fair or poor rating or are not sure about the job he has done protecting the state's water, air, and overall environment. Meanwhile, 84 percent of small business owners in Virginia believe protecting Virginia's good environment and quality of life is important to their state's economic growth.

In Virginia Beach, E2 Mid-Atlantic chapter director and retired Air Force colonel Dave Belote said: "To build a stronger foundation for Virginia's small businesses and spur innovation, I ask our governor to publicly support the federal Clean Power Plan. That's a step Gov. McAuliffe can take right now that will help grow our economy and protect our environment right here in Virginia."

E2 executive director Bob Keefe, an Alexandria resident, said: "It's crystal-clear that Virginia's business community wants more clean, renewable energy and the jobs and economic growth that come with it. The governor has talked the talk when it comes to the economy and the environment; now he needs to walk the walk on the Clean Power Plan and deliver."

Jim Williams, an analyst at Raleigh, N.C.-based Public Policy Polling, said: "Virginia's small business owners clearly believe a strong economy and a clean environment go hand-in-hand. While they're worried about climate change and there's support for federal and state action to address climate change Virginia business owners aren't too positive on the jobs the governor and the General Assembly have been doing to protect the environment."

The newly released polling was part of a survey of more than 340 small business owners from across the state done for E2 September 19-21, 2014. Poll respondents represented diverse sectors of the economy, with the majority owning businesses in the service, retail, wholesale trade, finance, insurance or real estate industries.

In other poll results:

* Nearly 80 percent of small business owners in Virginia think it is important to safeguard the state's clean water, clean air, and environment in order to attract and grow businesses in Virginia.
* Nearly 70 percent think clean air, clean water, and reducing carbon pollution are important to attracting tourists to Virginia.
* Under the federal Clean Power Plan announced in June, states like Virginia have an opportunity to determine how best to meet the new limits on power plant pollution through a combination of energy efficiency, renewable energy, and other options.

Virginia has abundant clean energy resources, including solar energy resources and existing offshore wind leases that if fully developed could power 700,000 homes and create 11,600 jobs within the next 20 years. Strong, state-level implementation of the Clean Power Plan could also create as many as 5,600 direct energy efficiency jobs in Virginia and save commercial and industrial businesses $531 million in 2020.

Find the full poll memo [here](http://cleanenergyworksforus.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/VA_Business_Poll.pdf).

*PPP interviewed 343 small business owners in VA from Sept. 19 - 21; MoE is +/-4.0% points at the 95% CI overall*