

# Public Opinion on Energy, the Environment, and Climate

*Key findings from a telephone survey among 2016 voters*

*Conducted December 2016*

*for the*

Center for American Progress



# Methodology

- Telephone survey among registered voters who voted in the 2016 election, including
  - 1,002 voters nationwide; margin of error is  $\pm 3.2$  percentage points
  - 477 voters in 2018 Senate battleground states (AZ, FL, IN, ME, MI, MO, MT, ND, NV, OH, PA, WI WV);\* margin of error is  $\pm 4.6$  percentage points

	Nationwide	2018 Senate BGs
Democrats	45%	42%
Independents	13%	16%
Republicans	42%	42%
2016 Clinton voters	46%	43%
2016 Trump voters	45%	49%

\*Battleground states identified based on analysis of 2018 election by Cook Political Report.

# One in two voters nationwide lacks confidence that Trump will take the right positions on energy and the environment.

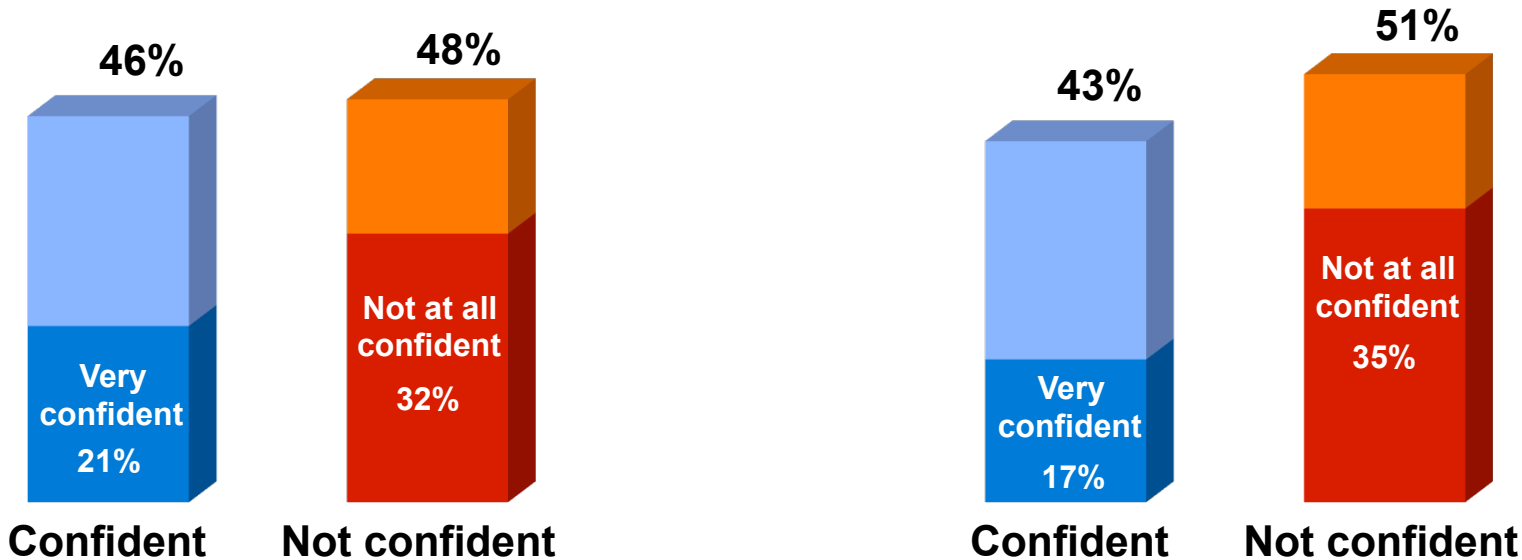
*How confident are you that Donald Trump will take the right positions on these issues?*

*Energy and what sources we should be developing*

*Environment and conservation of natural places*

Senate BG voters:  
54% confident  
41% not confident

Senate BG voters:  
49% confident  
46% not confident



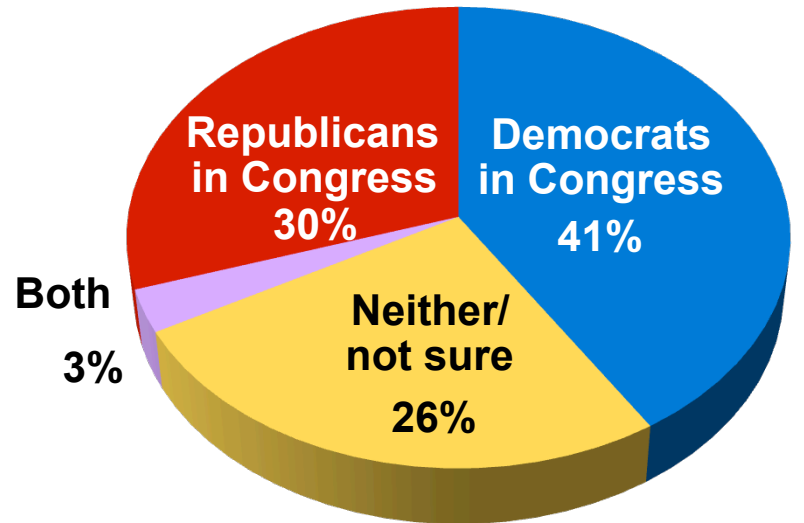
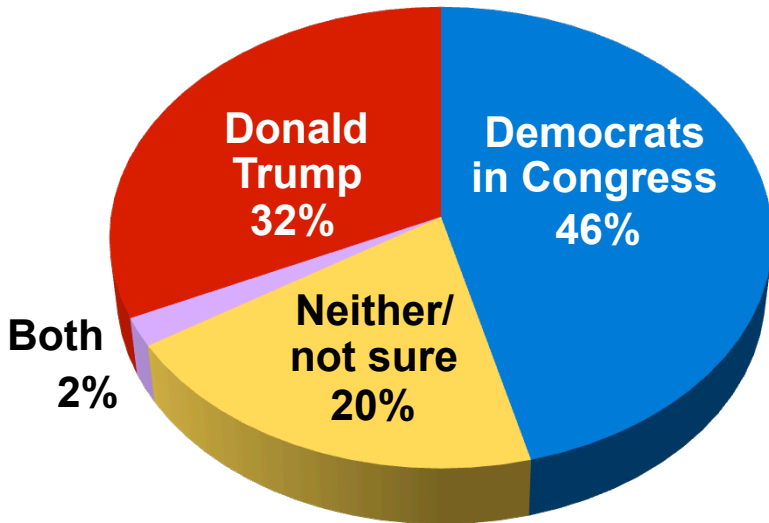
# Across demographic groups, Trump does slightly better on energy than on the environment.

*VERY/FAIRLY confident that Donald Trump will take the right positions on:*

	<b>Energy</b>	<b>Environment/ conservation</b>		<b>Energy</b>	<b>Environment/ conservation</b>
<b>All voters</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>43%</b>	Democrats	12%	10%
Men	50%	46%	Independents	50%	45%
Women	44%	40%	Republicans	<b>83%</b>	<b>78%</b>
Age 18 to 34	37%	31%	Swing voters	46%	39%
Age 35 to 49	49%	<b>48%</b>	Clinton voters	<b>10%</b>	9%
Age 50 to 64	48%	46%	Trump voters	<b>88%</b>	<b>83%</b>
Age 65/older	<b>52%</b>	46%			
Whites	<b>55%</b>	<b>51%</b>			
African Americans	14%	11%			
Hispanics	31%	35%			
White non-college grads	<b>61%</b>	<b>57%</b>			
White college grads	48%	42%			

# Democrats in Congress are more trusted on energy issues and the environment than Trump and Republicans in Congress.

*Who do you trust more on issues involving energy and the environment?*

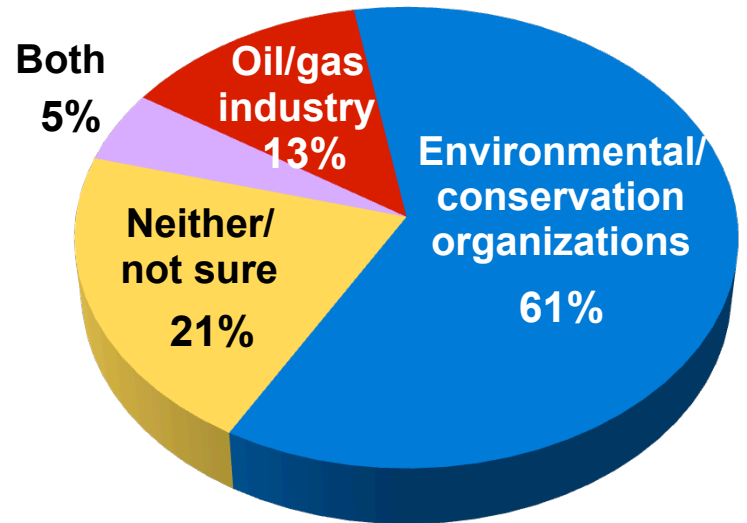
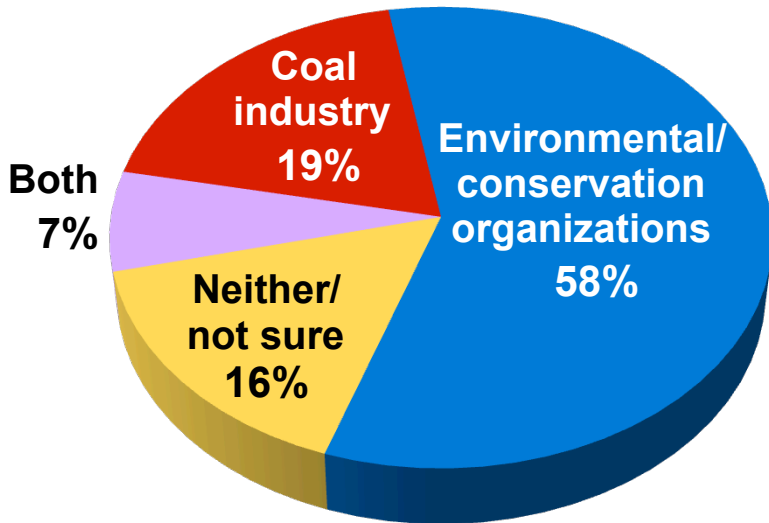


	Democrats in Congress	Trump
Clinton voters	82%	2%
Trump voters	7%	67%
Swing voters	39%	22%
Senate BG voters	42%	36%
Clinton voters	85%	1%
Trump voters	3%	71%
Swing voters	37%	27%

	Democrats in Congress	GOP in Congress
Clinton voters	76%	1%
Trump voters	6%	64%
Swing voters	38%	19%
Senate BG voters	39%	26%
Clinton voters	78%	2%
Trump voters	7%	50%
Swing voters	28%	22%

# Environmental organizations are far more trusted on energy/environmental issues than coal, oil, and gas industries.

*Who do you trust more on issues involving energy and the environment?*



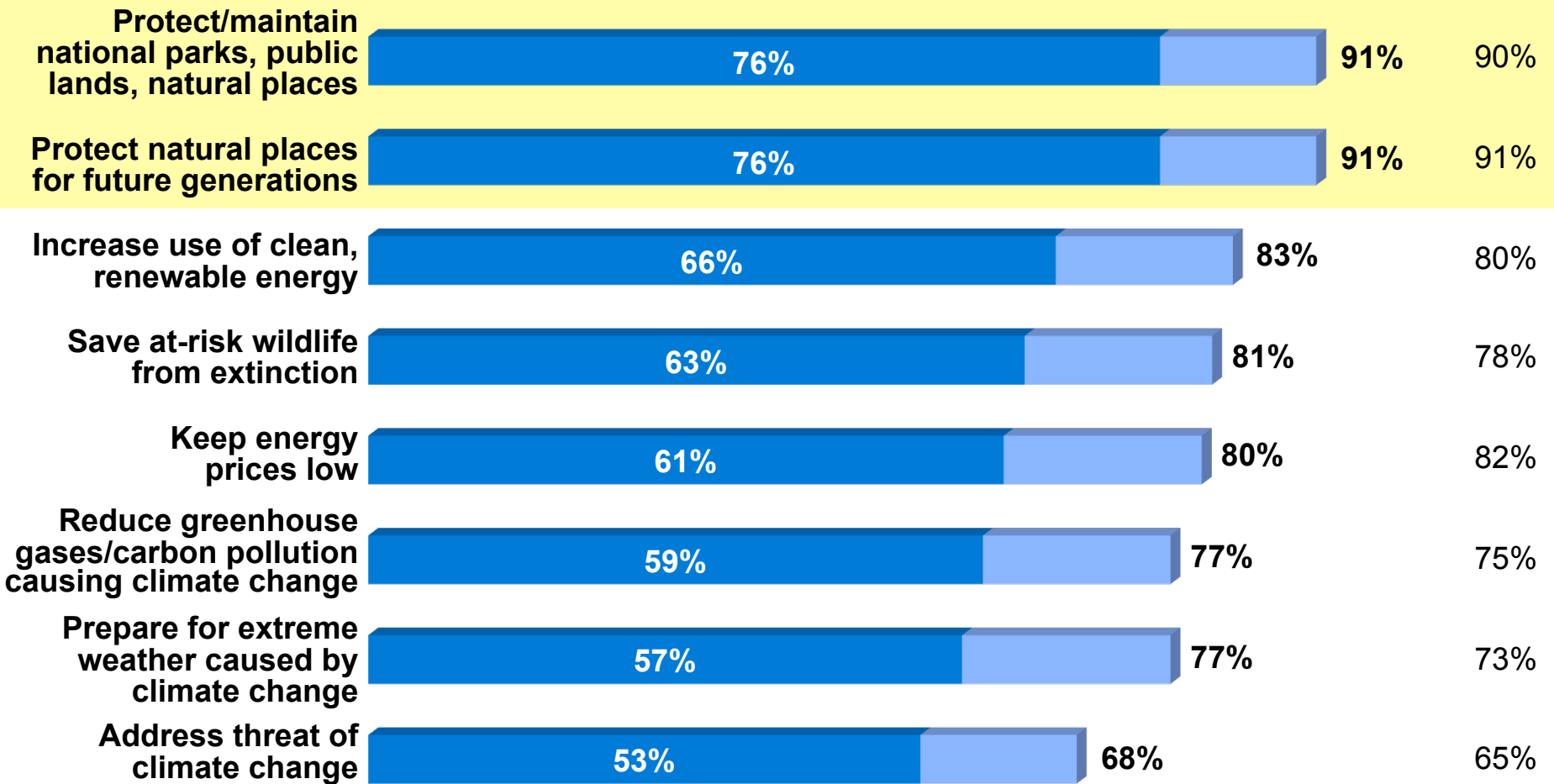
	Enviro orgs	Coal industry
Clinton voters	80%	6%
Trump voters	34%	34%
Swing voters	54%	14%
Senate BG voters	57%	24%
Clinton voters	86%	2%
Trump voters	31%	43%
Swing voters	50%	21%

	Enviro orgs	Oil/gas industry
Clinton voters	79%	5%
Trump voters	42%	22%
Swing voters	66%	10%
Senate BG voters	66%	11%
Clinton voters	86%	3%
Trump voters	47%	20%
Swing voters	70%	9%

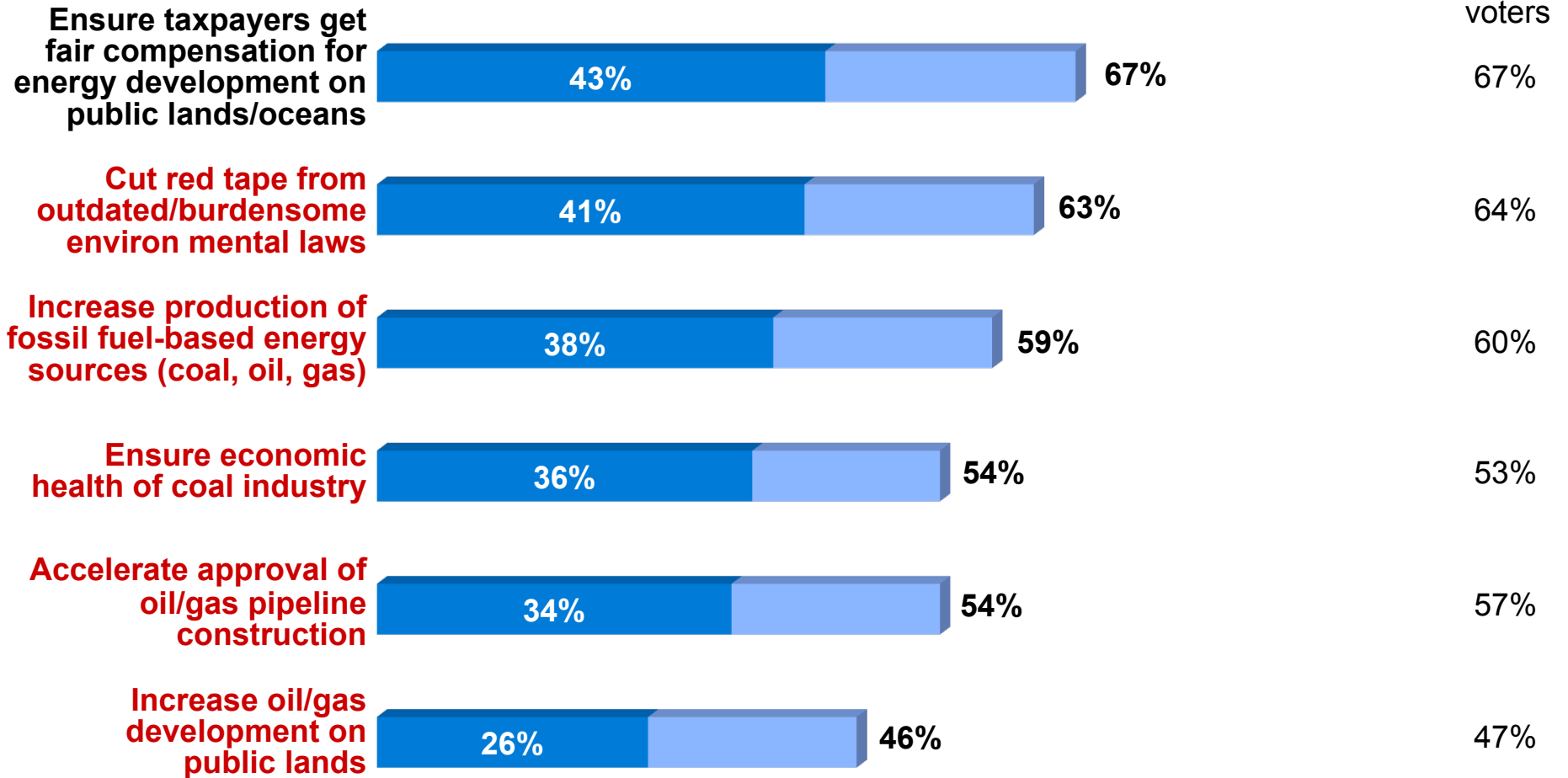
# Voters put priority on progressive goals for energy and the environment; protecting public lands tops the list.

■ Very important goal for federal government    ■ Fairly important goal

Senate  
BG  
voters



# Pro-energy development goals are significantly lower priorities for voters.





# There is strong bipartisan agreement on the importance of protecting America's public lands.

*Proportions who say each is VERY IMPORTANT*

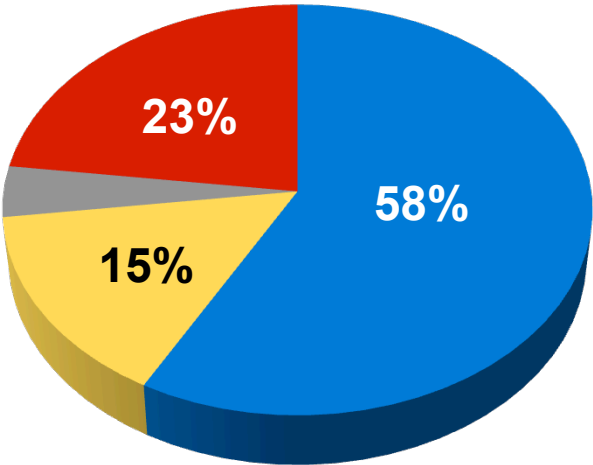
	<b>Demo- crats</b>	<b>Inde- pendents</b>	<b>Repub- licans</b>
Protect/maintain national parks, public lands, natural places	<b>85%</b>	<b>76%</b>	<b>66%</b>
Protect natural places for future generations	<b>84%</b>	<b>87%</b>	<b>65%</b>
Increase use of clean, renewable energy	<b>82%</b>	64%	49%
Reduce greenhouse gases/carbon pollution causing climate change	<b>82%</b>	51%	36%
Address the threat of climate change	<b>82%</b>	48%	24%
Save at-risk wildlife from extinction	73%	66%	52%
Keep energy prices low	52%	68%	68%

# By large margins, voters want the government to invest more in clean energy than in fossil-fuel based energy.

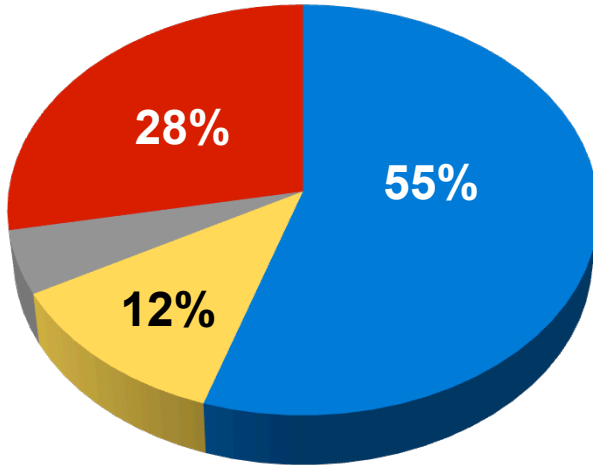
*Preferred Bigger Priority for Federal Government Energy Investment*

■ Clean, renewable energy sources ■ Fossil fuel-based energy sources ■ Some of both

**Voters nationwide**



**Senate battlegrounds**



	Clean/renewable energy	Fossil-fuel based energy
Clinton voters	77%	11%
Trump voters	37%	37%
Swing voters	61%	21%

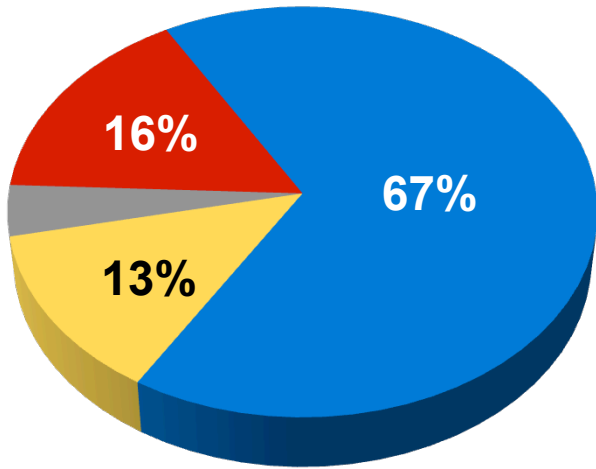
	Clean/renewable energy	Fossil-fuel based energy
Clinton voters	77%	12%
Trump voters	31%	45%
Swing voters	60%	21%

# Clinton and Trump voters agree that it's more important to protect natural places than to increase drilling on public lands.

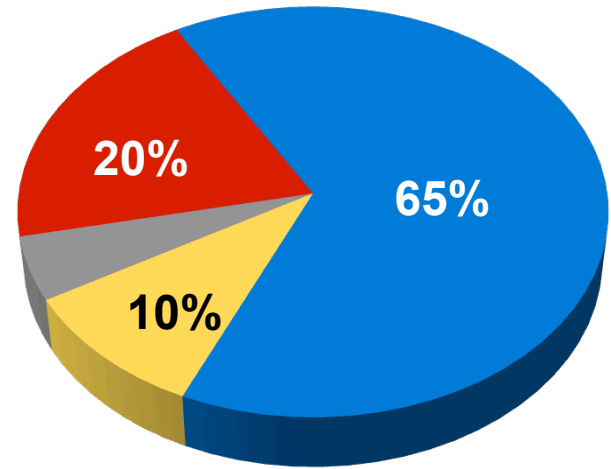
*Preferred Bigger Priority for Federal Government on Public Lands*



**Voters nationwide**



**Senate battlegrounds**



	Protect natural places	Increase oil/gas development
Clinton voters	83%	8%
Trump voters	48%	26%
Swing voters	72%	11%

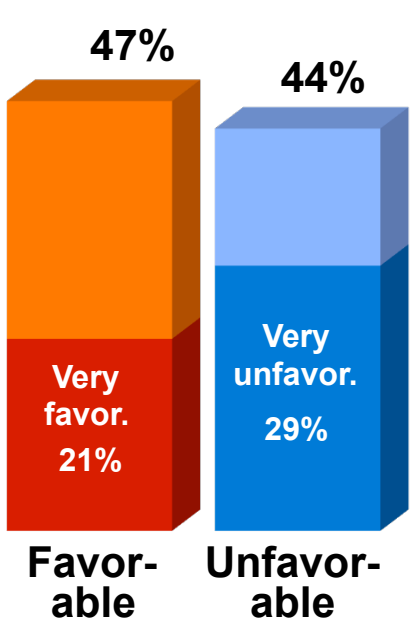
	Protect natural places	Increase oil/gas development
Clinton voters	86%	8%
Trump voters	42%	33%
Swing voters	68%	18%

# TRUMP AND CONGRESSIONAL REPUBLICAN POLICIES

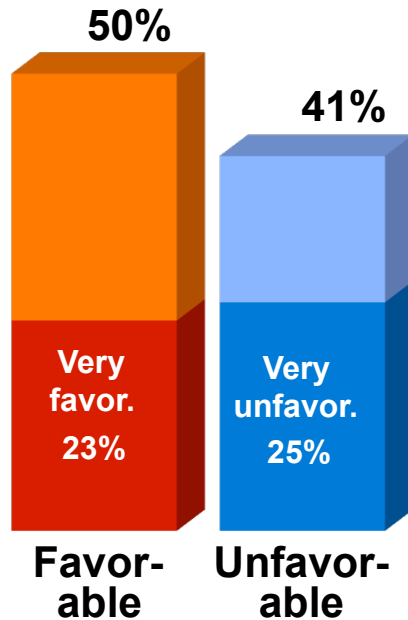
# Trump’s 100-day pledge for energy gets mixed reactions from voters nationally; voters in battleground states are more favorable.

*Reaction to Trump’s statement, “I will cancel job-killing restrictions on the production of American energy, including shale energy and clean coal.”*

Voters nationwide



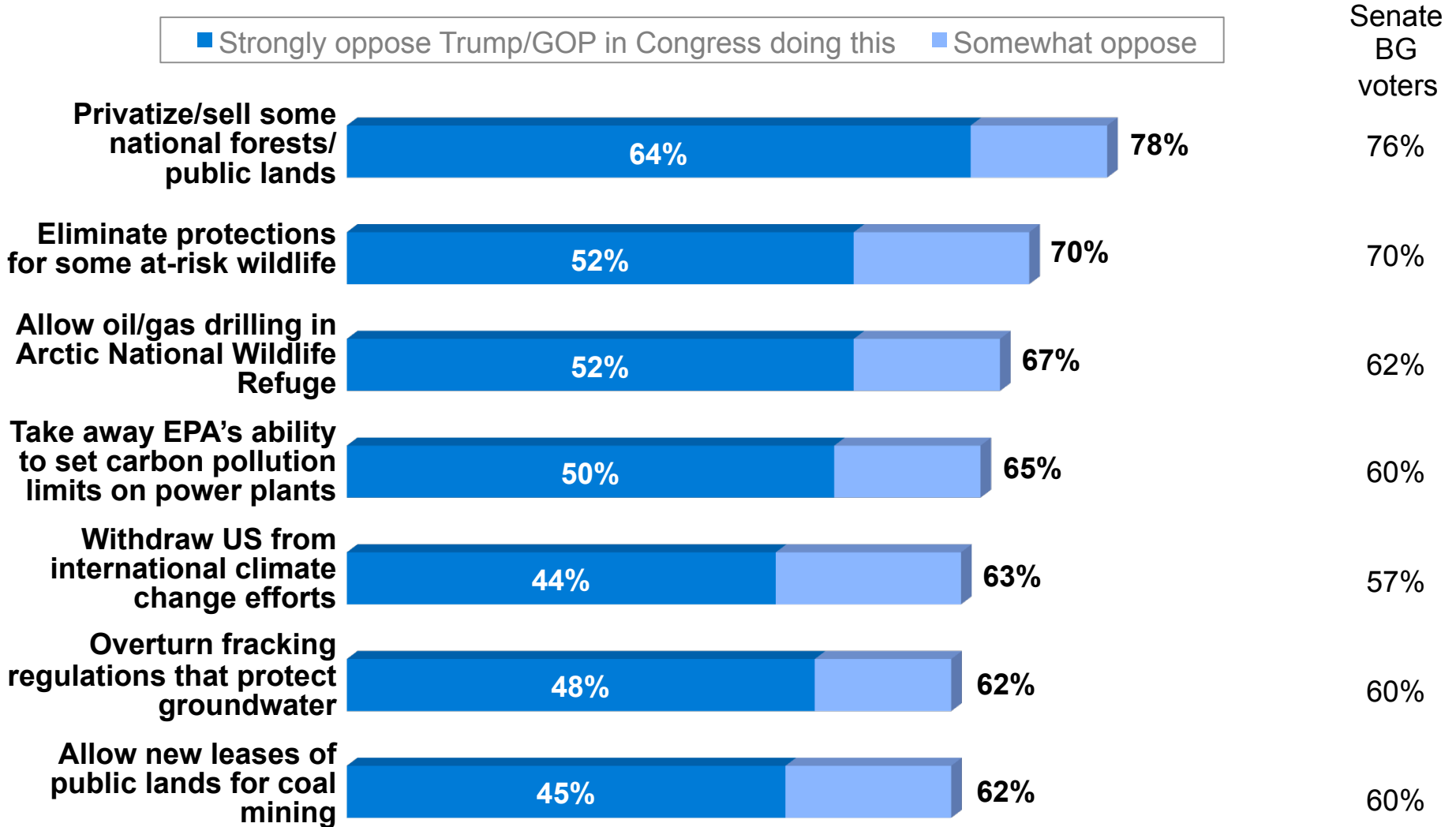
Senate BG voters



	Favorable	Unfavorable
Nationwide:		
Clinton voters	15%	77%
Trump voters	81%	11%
Swing voters	46%	43%
Senate BGs:		
Clinton voters	14%	78%
Trump voters	82%	8%
Swing voters	53%	37%

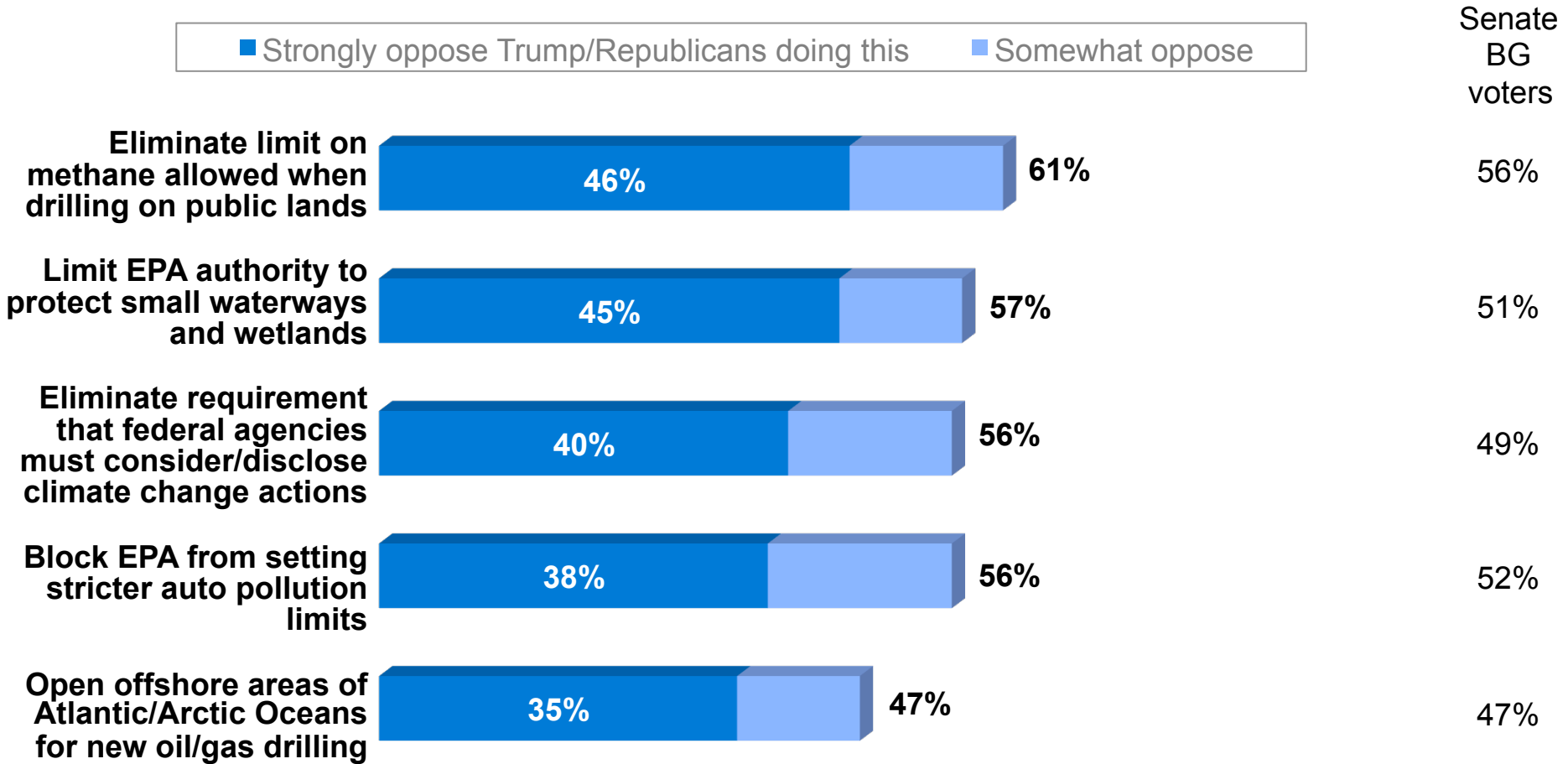
# A focus on specific Trump/Congressional-GOP policies produces broader opposition.

■ Strongly oppose Trump/GOP in Congress doing this   ■ Somewhat oppose



(continued)

# A focus on specific Trump/Congressional-GOP policies produces broader opposition. *(cont'd)*



# Most Trump voters oppose privatizing public lands and putting wildlife at risk.

*Proportions who STRONGLY/SOMEWHAT OPPOSE each proposal*

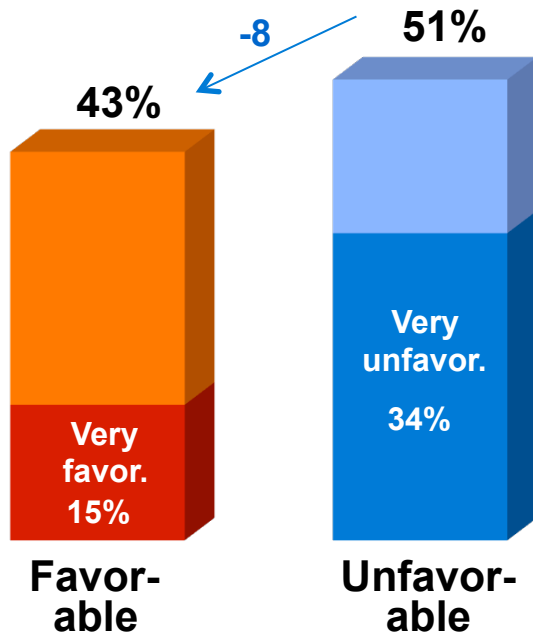
	Clinton voters		Trump voters		Swing voters	
	Total oppose	Strongly oppose	Total oppose	Strongly oppose	Total oppose	Strongly oppose
Privatize/sell some national forests/public lands	<b>91%</b>	81%	<b>64%</b>	46%	<b>83%</b>	65%
Eliminate protections for some at-risk wildlife	<b>81%</b>	69%	<b>55%</b>	34%	<b>75%</b>	50%
Allow oil/gas drilling in Arctic National Wildlife Refuge	<b>87%</b>	72%	<b>43%</b>	29%	<b>70%</b>	52%
Take away EPA's ability to set carbon pollution limits on power plants	<b>80%</b>	72%	<b>47%</b>	25%	<b>67%</b>	45%
Withdraw US from international climate change efforts	<b>84%</b>	72%	<b>41%</b>	15%	<b>63%</b>	41%
Overturn fracking regulations that protect groundwater	<b>75%</b>	66%	<b>46%</b>	28%	<b>64%</b>	46%
Eliminate limit on methane allowed when drilling on public lands	<b>76%</b>	65%	<b>45%</b>	25%	<b>63%</b>	44%



# There are big difference by gender, age, education, and race to Trump/Congressional GOP agenda.

*Based on these specific policies, what is your overall opinion of the approach that Trump/Republican Congressional leaders want to take on energy/environment?*

## Voters nationwide

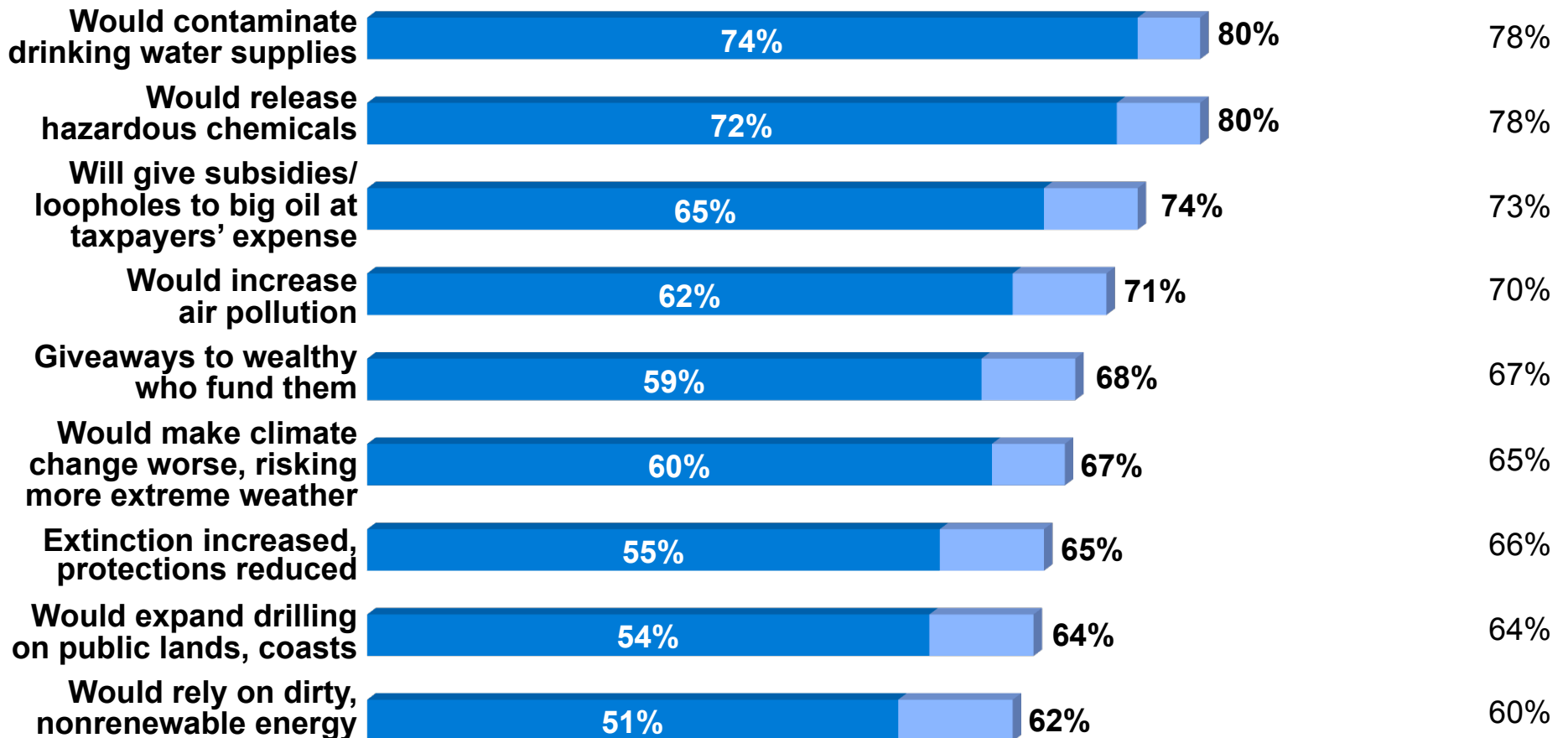


	Favorable	Unfavorable
Men	49%	45%
Women	38%	55%
Age 18 to 34	31%	66%
Age 35 to 49	45%	52%
Age 50 to 64	43%	45%
Age 65/older	53%	42%
White non-college grads	54%	39%
White college grads	41%	54%
African Americans	22%	70%
Hispanics	40%	58%
Democrats	11%	84%
Independents	45%	44%
Republicans	77%	17%
Senate BG voters	47%	47%
Swing voters	46%	48%

# **MESSAGING AGAINST TRUMP AND CONGRESSIONAL REPUBLICAN POLICIES**

# Voters have numerous major concerns about the consequences of this approach; water contamination and health hazards top the list.

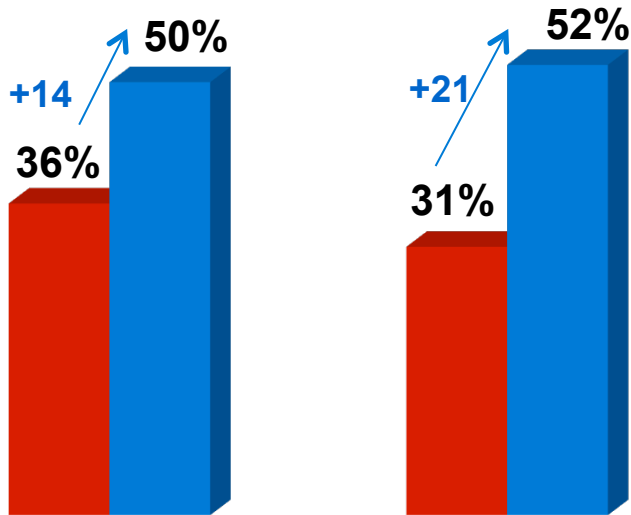
Very big concern about Trump/GOP Congress energy/enviro policies



# Focusing on the impacts gets us the high ground in the debate.

*With whom do you agree more on Trump/GOP Congress energy policies?*

**Opponents' advantage**  
 Clinton voters +75  
 Trump voters -54  
 Swing voters +28



**Voters nationwide      Senate BG voters**

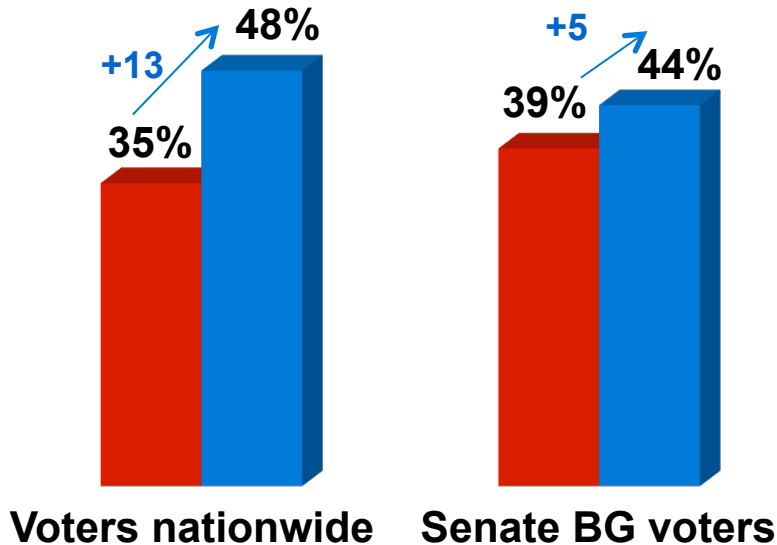
- **SUPPORTERS:** For too long Washington has stood in the way of our nation's energy independence with needless and redundant regulations that have increased the cost of energy and had a devastating effect on job production. These proposals will **allow us to take full advantage of America's abundant natural resources**--including natural gas, oil, and coal. This approach will **increase our supply of energy at home, lower fuel prices, create good-paying jobs, and reduce our reliance on foreign oil.**
- **OPPONENTS:** This **fossil-fuel driven approach to energy will harm public health and the important natural places** that are our heritage as Americans. These dangerous policies eliminate vital protections against **pollution of the air we breathe and the water we drink and will increase carbon pollution that scientists say is responsible for climate change.** We have a responsibility to our children and grandchildren to protect America's priceless natural heritage, and to preserve our clean air and clean water.

# Focusing on special interest angle produces a smaller majority.

*With whom do you agree more on Trump/GOP Congress energy policies?*

**Opponents' advantage**

Clinton voters	+71
Trump voters	-49
Swing voters	+18



- **SUPPORTERS:** For too long Washington has stood in the way of our nation's energy independence with needless and redundant regulations that have increased the cost of energy and had a devastating effect on job production. These proposals will **allow us to take full advantage of America's abundant natural resources**--including natural gas, oil, and coal. This approach will **increase our supply of energy at home, lower fuel prices, create good-paying jobs, and reduce our reliance on foreign oil.**
- **OPPONENTS:** These policies will only help the Big Oil and coal companies that have dumped millions of dollars into TV ads and political campaigns. **The fossil fuel industry already gets \$18 billion in subsidies and now it wants even more government giveaways to expand fossil fuel extraction on public lands, in our oceans, and near our communities.** Instead of investing more in **finite, dirty energy sources** such as oil, gas, and coal, we should be investing in clean energy sources that offer America a permanent solution to energy independence and would make the US a world leader in renewable energy innovation.

# Three messages have strong appeal with target groups.

*Proportions saying each is a VERY STRONG REASON to oppose Trump/GOP Congress policies for energy and the environment*

Swing voters	Persuadable Trump voters
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Our parks, lands, waters, and wildlife are part of **America's outdoor heritage that we all have a moral obligation to protect for children and grandchildren**. It is our responsibility to protect this legacy so that we can guarantee that future generations can enjoy the beauty of our nation, learn about nature, and experience their heritage just like we did.

59%	63%
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These policies are a **sell-out to the same old corporate interests**, Washington lobbyists, and millionaires and billionaires who know how to game the system. A few powerful and well-connected people are angling to make a lot of money, but it will come at the expense of the rest of us. We need to stand up for **every American's right to drink clean water, to breath clean air, and to hike, hunt, and fish on their public lands**.

54%	58%
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We have a **responsibility to our children and grandchildren to address climate change** by investing in sustainable energy sources and moving away from finite energy sources that pollute our air and water. The longer we put it off, the more expensive and painful it will be for our economy and our families to solve this problem. *(top message w/Democrats)*

58%	54%
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# Several other messages resonate with target groups.

*Proportions saying each is a VERY STRONG REASON to oppose Trump/GOP Congress policies for energy and the environment*

Swing voters	Persuadable Trump voters
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**Clean air and water is critical to the health of all Americans.** Doctors, nurses, and public health experts warn us that air and drinking water pollution is a serious threat to our health, especially for the elderly and children. Pollution from power plants is not only one of the leading causes of catastrophic climate change--it leads to thousands of additional asthma attacks and heart attacks. It even increases the risk of premature death.

56%

50%

America's natural areas and wildlife are going fast. In the West, **we lose a football field's worth of natural areas to human development every two and a half minutes.** One in five animals and plants in the United States is at risk of extinction. Instead of eliminating protections for our environment, **we must safeguard our remaining natural areas and wildlife habitat** so that they may be enjoyed by generations to come.

54%

52%

These policies go too far. They are part of an **extreme partisan agenda that tips the scales too far toward fossil fuels, special interests, and the well-connected.** We need a balanced approach that grows America's renewable energy economy, protects our air, water, and wildlife, and that helps bring our country together around our shared values.

51%

55%

# Clean energy and climate messages resonate with the base, but not with persuadable Trump voters.

*Proportions saying each is a VERY STRONG REASON to oppose Trump/GOP Congress policies for energy and the environment*

Clinton voters	Swing voters	Persuadable Trump voters
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These policies are backward looking and will only **make America more dependent on dirty energy** sources. Instead of giving special breaks to oil, gas, and coal companies, we **should be focusing on transitioning to clean, sustainable energy** to reduce carbon emissions, save consumers billions of dollars, and create hundreds of thousands of jobs in the clean energy economy.

<b>82%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>45%</b>
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**97% of scientists now agree that carbon pollution is a major cause of climate change**, and Americans can already see that **climate change is creating more extreme and costly weather events**, including superstorms, droughts, and wildfires that threaten communities and businesses. Politicians who support these policies are denying the science of climate change and are just looking to protect their own self-interest by doing the bidding of the oil companies and other polluters who fund their campaigns.

<b>82%</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>44%</b>
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**Many scientists say** that in order to avoid reaching the tipping point in the earth's temperature, which will result in severe climate impacts, we cannot afford to burn all the fossil fuels that are available. **We need to keep as much of our current supplies of oil, gas, and coal in the ground as we can, so that we do not make climate change worse.**

<b>79%</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>43%</b>
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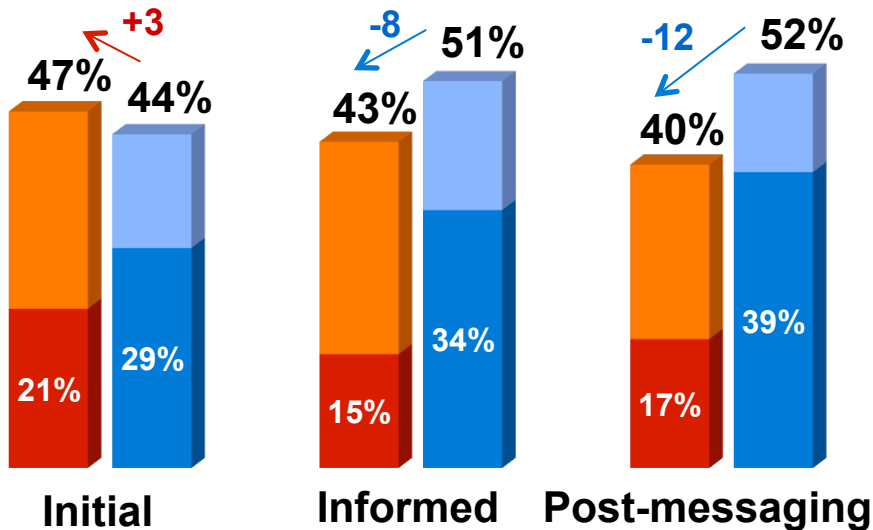


# Messaging moves nationwide and in battleground states.

*Support for Trump/GOP Congress Approach on Energy/Environment*



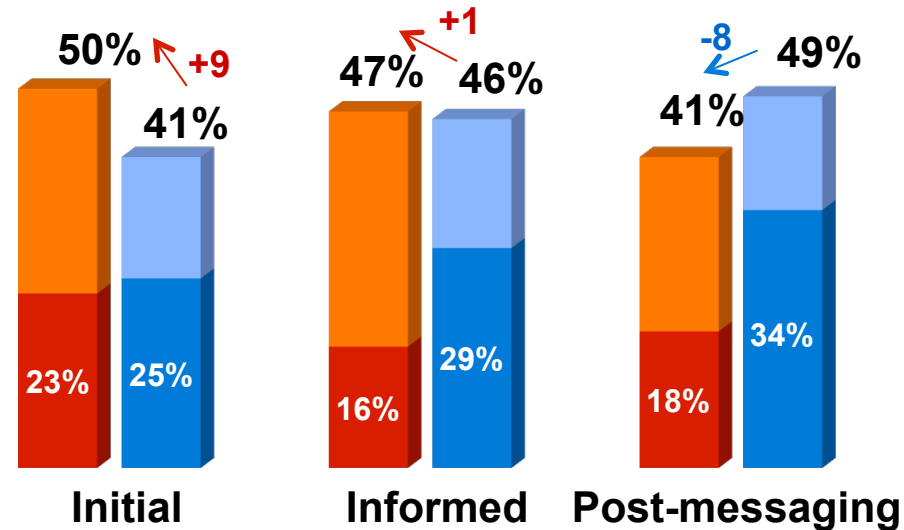
## Voters nationwide



## Senate BG voters

**Swing voters**

	Initial	Informed	Post
Favorable	53%	46%	38%
Unfavorable	37%	48%	56%

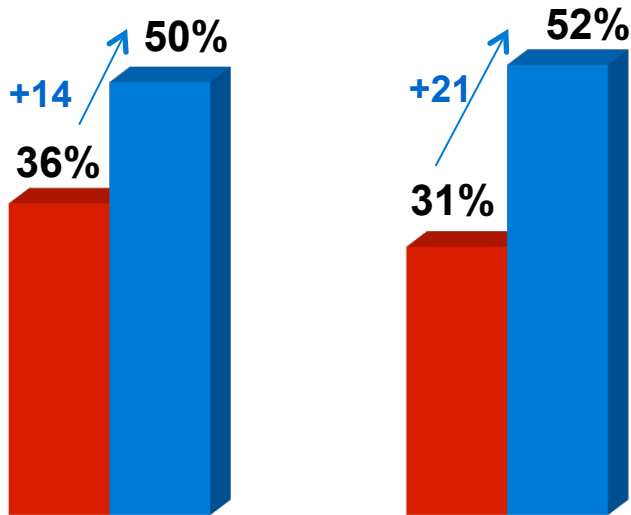


# Focusing on the impacts gets us the high ground in the debate.

*With whom do you agree more on Trump/GOP Congress energy policies?*

**Opponents' advantage**

Clinton voters	+75
Trump voters	-54
Swing voters	+28



**Voters nationwide      Senate BG voters**

- **SUPPORTERS:** For too long Washington has stood in the way of our nation's energy independence with needless and redundant regulations that have increased the cost of energy and had a devastating effect on job production. These proposals will **allow us to take full advantage of America's abundant natural resources**--including natural gas, oil, and coal. This approach will **increase our supply of energy at home, lower fuel prices, create good-paying jobs, and reduce our reliance on foreign oil.**
- **OPPONENTS:** This **fossil-fuel driven approach to energy will harm public health and the important natural places** that are our heritage as Americans. These dangerous policies eliminate vital protections against **pollution of the air we breathe and the water we drink and will increase carbon pollution that scientists say is responsible for climate change.** We have a responsibility to our children and grandchildren to protect America's priceless natural heritage, and to preserve our clean air and clean water.