

**MEMORANDUM**

TO: Citizens for Balanced Use  
FROM: Dustin Frost  
SUBJECT: Poll Results  
DATE: January 12, 2011

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As you know, the Montana Business Leadership Council completed a statewide survey of 400 likely Montana voters, conducted by 47 North Communications and Opinion Diagnostics. The poll was completed on January 5<sup>th</sup>, 2011 and has a margin of error of +/- 4.65% with a 95% level of confidence. As part of this survey, two questions relating to Montana wilderness legislation were included at the request of Citizens for Balanced Use. Attached with this memo are all top line results and crosstabs related to those questions, including all media market and demographic information. The purpose of this memorandum is to review the key findings and their implications on the wilderness debate in Montana.

**Key Findings**

- ✓ **Montanans do not "overwhelmingly support" new wilderness designation (from August 2009 Montana Trout Unlimited press release).** While supporters of recent wilderness legislation point to results from an August 2009 survey by Harstad Strategic Research as the basis for their claim of "overwhelming" support for Senator Jon Tester's Forest Jobs and Recreation Act, CBU members raised concerns about the accuracy of those results. While Harstad's survey showed only the support for FJRA after voters were provided a supportive description of the bill, CBU's request for baseline information about wilderness legislation shows a much different result. In this survey, voters heard the following question:

*Thinking now about wilderness land in Montana, Senator Jon Tester recently worked to pass legislation that would have created nearly one million acres of new wilderness in Montana. While his bill failed to pass this Congress, some Montanans are working to bring new wilderness bills to Congress after the first of the year. Knowing this, would you support or oppose legislation to permanently designate more public land in Montana as wilderness in the upcoming Congress? (Probe for STRONGLY/SOMEWHAT)*

**After hearing this question, a plurality (48%) of voters in Montana say they oppose new wilderness legislation, including 37% who say they *strongly oppose* it. Only 42% say they support new wilderness legislation.**

- ✓ **The more they know, voters' opposition to wilderness grows.** After hearing a description of wilderness designation effects, opposition grows. With a wide **52%-32% majority**, Montana voters oppose new wilderness legislation after hearing the following description:

*Some Montanans say that wilderness designation permanently removes multiple-use access for seniors, individuals with disabilities, campers, and family recreationists. They also say that it would inhibit Montana job creation by ending any new development of Montana made energy, prevent Montana loggers from removing dangerous, overgrown fuels, and limit ranchers' ability to effectively graze livestock.*

**The Bottom Line**

Despite supporters' claims, the effort to designate new wilderness lands in Montana does not have widespread support. In fact, CBU's opposition to new wilderness designation is shared by a significant number of Montana voters, including a wide majority after they have learned about effects on access, job creation, forest management, and agriculture. With CBU's ongoing public education and communication efforts, organizational leaders can be confident telling Montana leaders that "overwhelming support" for wilderness legislation does not exist.

## Other Notable Results

### Wilderness by Age

When educated about the impacts of wilderness, a plurality of Montanans of every age oppose new wilderness designation.

#### Q5 Knowing this - More Wilderness?

Support	44.4%	38.6%	43.9%	29.5%	38%
Oppose	55.6%	59.1%	45.1%	56.6%	49.6%
DK/Refuse	0.0%	2.3%	11%	13.9%	12.4%

### Wilderness by Gender

When educated about the impacts of wilderness, opposition from both men and women increases.

#### Q4 Designate public land as wilderness

Support	40.1%	43.8%
Oppose	53.6%	42.8%
DK/Refuse	6.3%	13.5%

#### Q5 Knowing this - More Wilderness?

Support	36.5%	37.5%
Oppose	58.9%	44.7%
DK/Refuse	4.7%	17.8%

### Wilderness and Party Affiliation

#### Q4 Designate public land as wilderness

Support	19.4%	74.5%	40.5%
Oppose	73.4%	13.6%	50.7%
DK/Refused	7.3%	11.8%	8.8%

#### Q5 Knowing this - More Wilderness?

Support	16.9%	64.5%	36.5%
Oppose	69.4%	24.5%	56.1%
DK/Refused	13.7%	10.9%	7.4%

### Wilderness by Major Montana Media Market

#### Q4 Designate public land as wilderness

Support	39.4%	41.5%	31.3%	47.5%	60.7%
Oppose	47.9%	44.7%	60.9%	44.9%	28.6%
DK/Refuse	12.7%	13.8%	7.8%	7.6%	10.7%

#### Q5 Knowing this - More Wilderness?

Support	36.6%	36.2%	29.7%	39.8%	46.4%
Oppose	47.9%	48.9%	62.5%	51.7%	39.3%
DK/Refuse	15.5%	14.9%	7.8%	8.5%	14.3%