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Americans' Views on US Fossil Fuel Policy and Clean Energy

*Key findings from a nationwide survey
conducted September 2016 for NRDC and LCV*

Methodology

- Telephone survey among a representative national sample of 1,103 registered voters, contacted via landlines and cell phones
- Oversamples among:
 - African-American voters, for a total of 170
 - Hispanic voters, for a total of 136
- Margin of error: ± 2.9 percentage points for the full national sample, higher tolerances among subgroups

Key Findings

- Americans have a general negative reaction to the idea of leasing public lands and waters for fossil fuel development, particularly off the Atlantic and Arctic coasts.
- This is driven by concerns about a number of negative outcomes of such development.
- As such, solid majorities of Americans—especially Millennials—would support the Obama administration:
 - Permanently protecting the Arctic and Atlantic from drilling
 - Preventing the expansion of new leases on public lands and waters.
- On the other hand, Americans are exceedingly positive about increasing development of renewables and would like to see this as the country's energy priority.





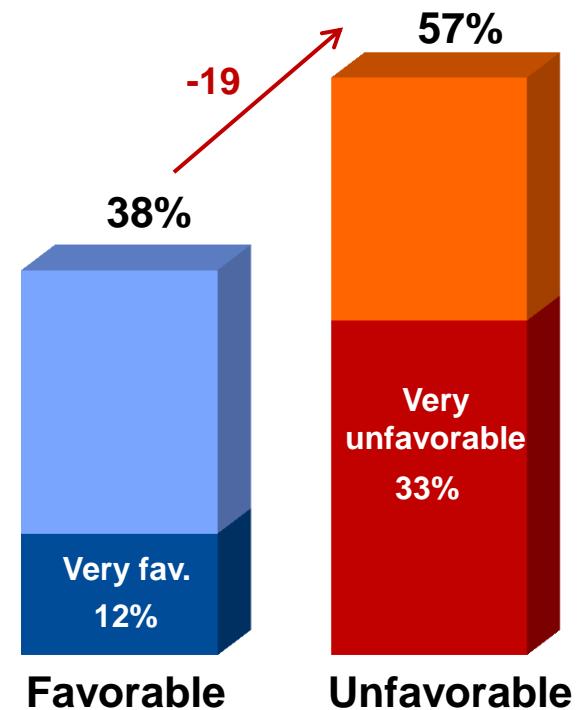
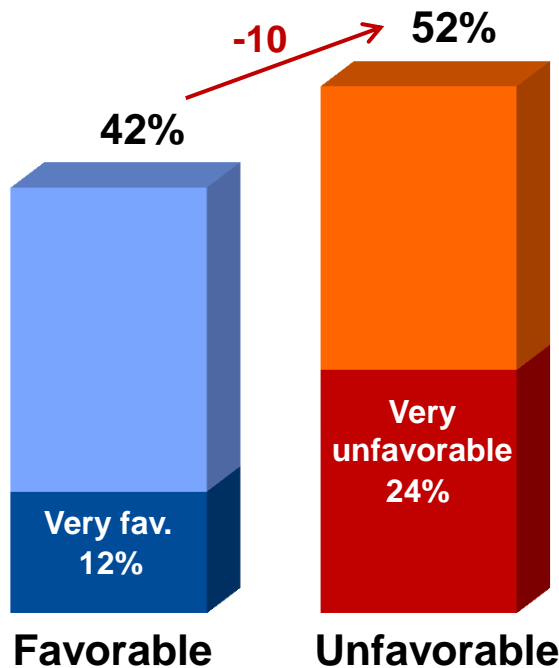
Americans take a dim view of federal leasing, particularly in the Arctic and Atlantic.



Reaction to Selected US Policies regarding Public Lands

General Federal Leasing: the US government leases our public lands/waters to private companies for extracting oil, gas, coal

Arctic/Atlantic Leasing: the US gov't is considering leasing publicly owned waters in Arctic & Atlantic Oceans for oil/gas drilling by private companies

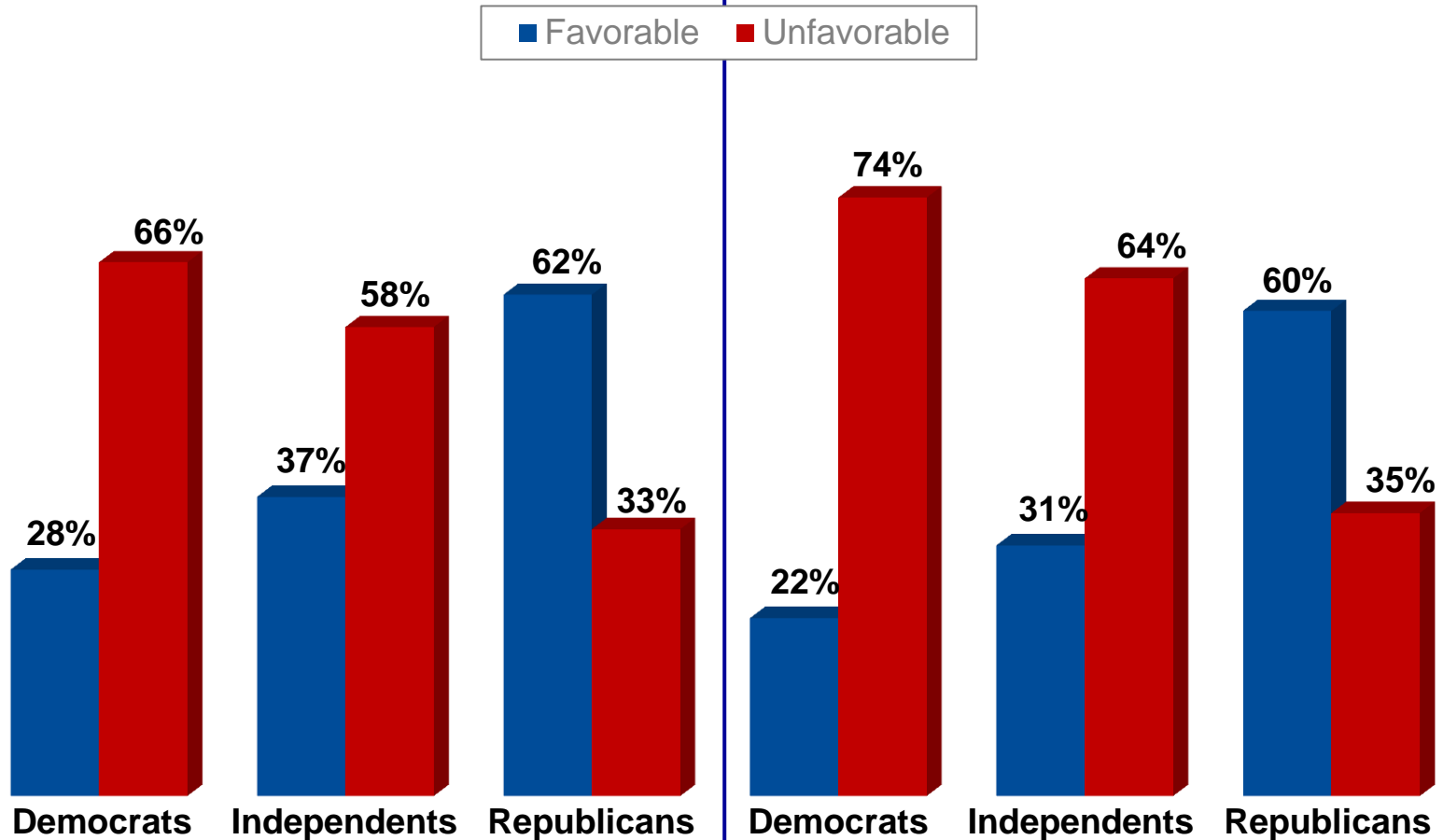


A sizable partisan division emerges on these points, with majorities of independents and Democrats opposed to leasing.

Reaction to Selected US Policies regarding Public Lands

General Federal Leasing

Arctic/Atlantic Leasing



We also find a generational divide, with Millennials appreciably more negative to leasing than seniors.

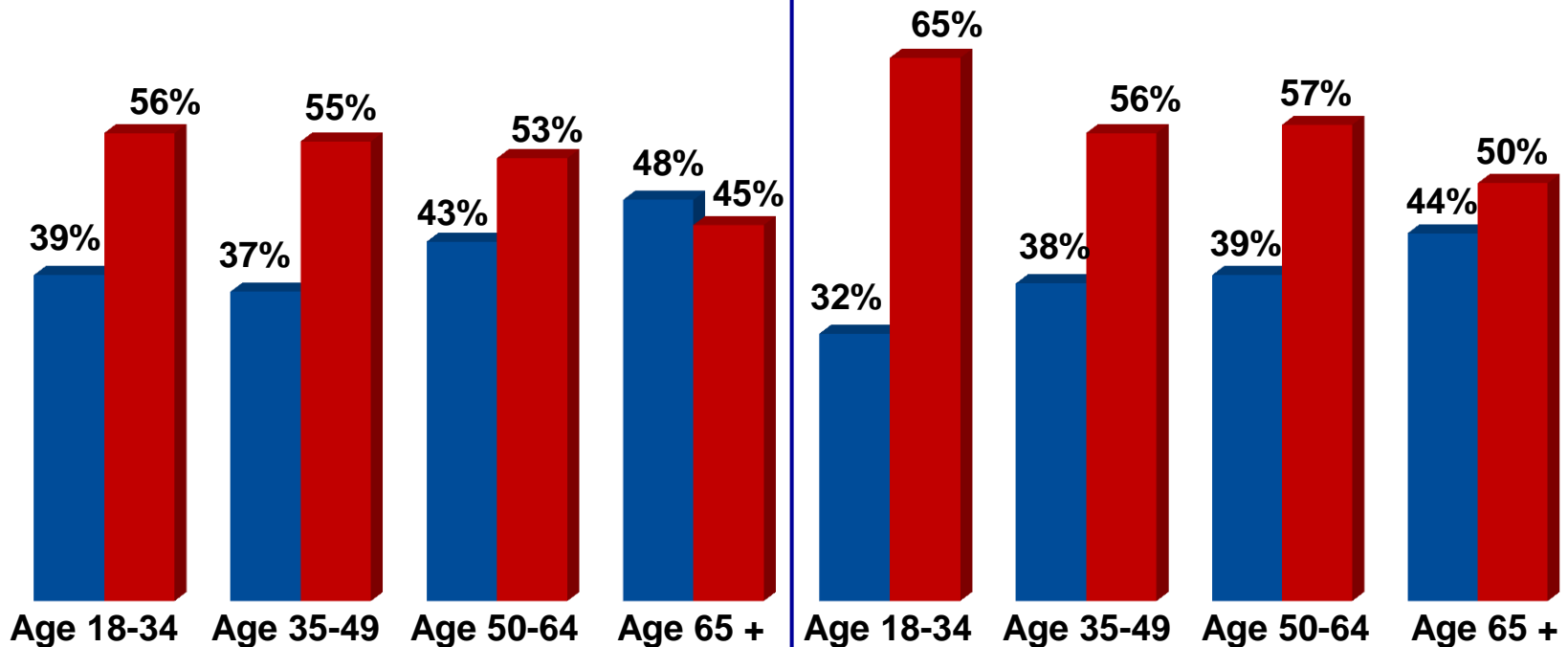


Reaction to Selected US Policies regarding Public Lands

General Federal Leasing

Arctic/Atlantic Leasing

■ Favorable ■ Unfavorable



Among various energy development proposals, only expanding renewables has wide support.

Reaction to Selected Proposals Related to Energy



Expand development of renewable energy sources



Favorable:
 Democrats 93%
 Independents 90%
 Republicans 84%

Expand development of nuclear power



Allow for the first time oil drilling/extraction by oil companies off the Atlantic coast



Expand oil drilling/extraction of oil, gas, coal by private companies on US public lands



Allow for the first time oil drilling/extraction by oil companies in the Arctic Ocean

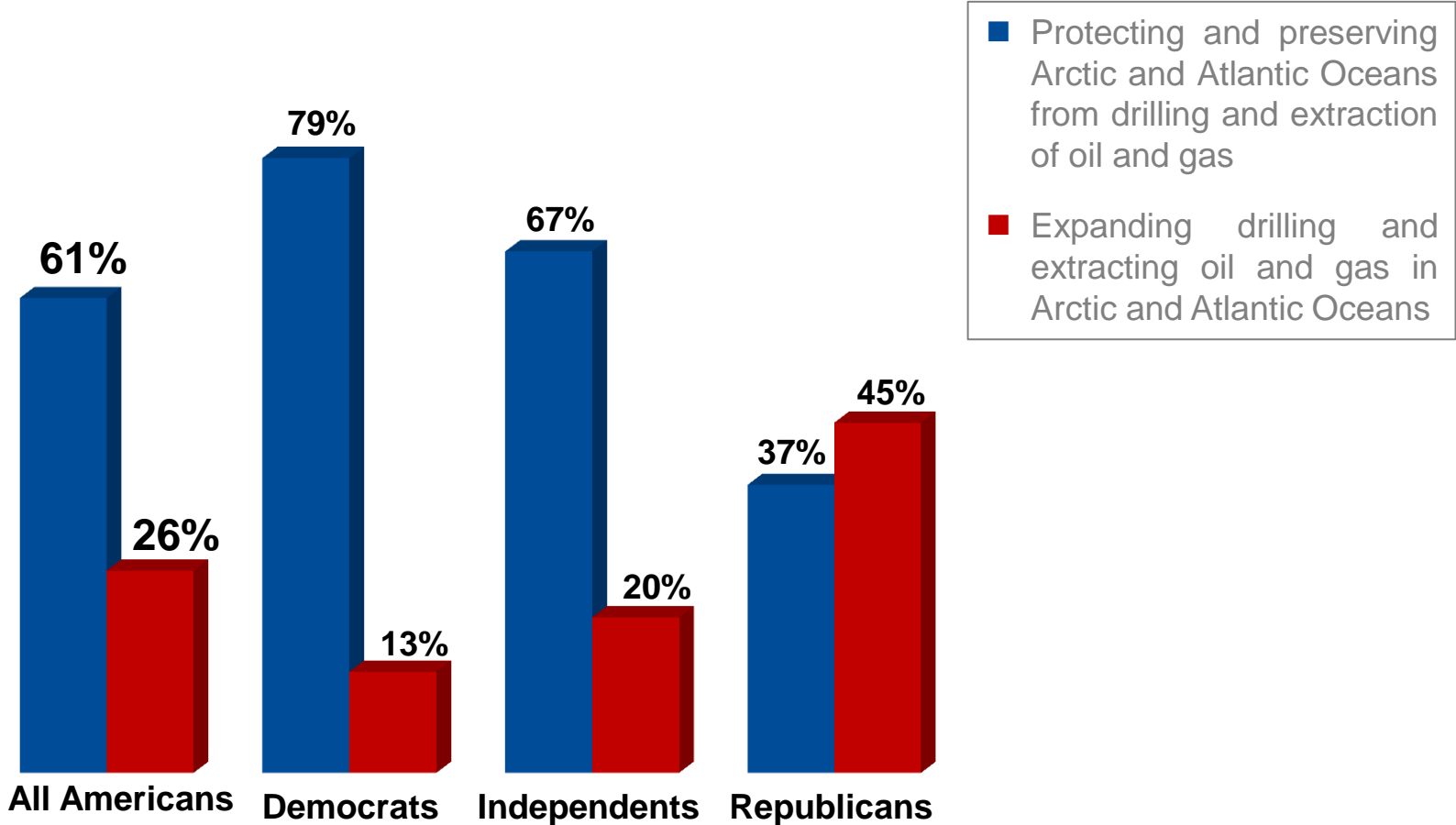


Expand natural gas drilling/extraction by hydraulic fracturing, or fracking



Democrats and independents overwhelmingly want to protect the Arctic and Atlantic; Republicans only narrowly support drilling.

Preferred Focus for Federal Government on Arctic/Atlantic Oceans



In a head-to-head choice, Americans put priority on renewables over fossil fuels by two to one, with much cross-generation agreement.

Which should be given priority on the environment and energy production?

Development of US supplies of oil, gas, and coal, even if clean energy development suffers to some extent

30%

Development of clean energy, even if that means limiting development of US supplies of oil, gas, & coal

60%

10%
Neither/both

Development of clean energy

Age 18 to 34	66%
Age 35 to 49	57%
Age 50 to 64	65%
Age 65/older	53%

Americans have a host of concerns about continued fossil fuel development, with health issues chief among them.

How concerned are you about this aspect of the continued production and use of energy sources such as oil, gas, and coal?



Contaminating water supplies



Releasing chemicals hazardous to human health



Increasing air pollution and respiratory disease, asthma



Harming wildlife and wildlife habitats



Releasing carbon pollution that contributes to climate change



Diverting investment away from clean, renewable energy sources



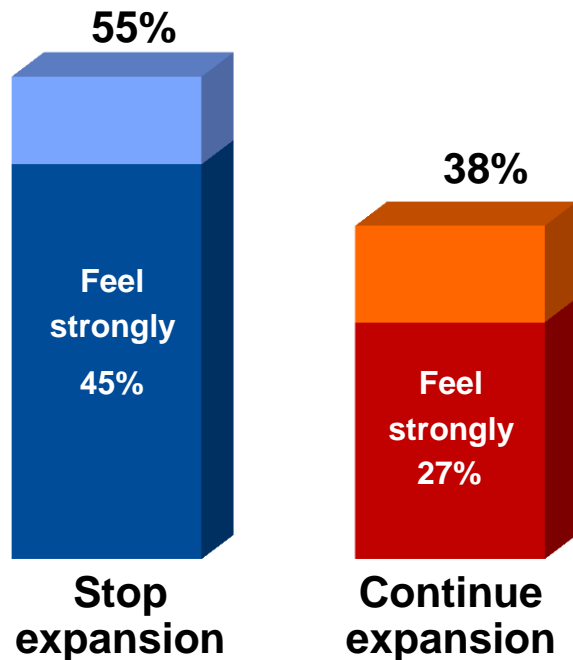
After hearing both sides, Americans remain firm that we should stop expanding leasing for fossil fuel development.

*After hearing both sides, do you think we should continue or stop expanding oil, gas, and coal development on America's public lands and waters?**

* Information prior to question:

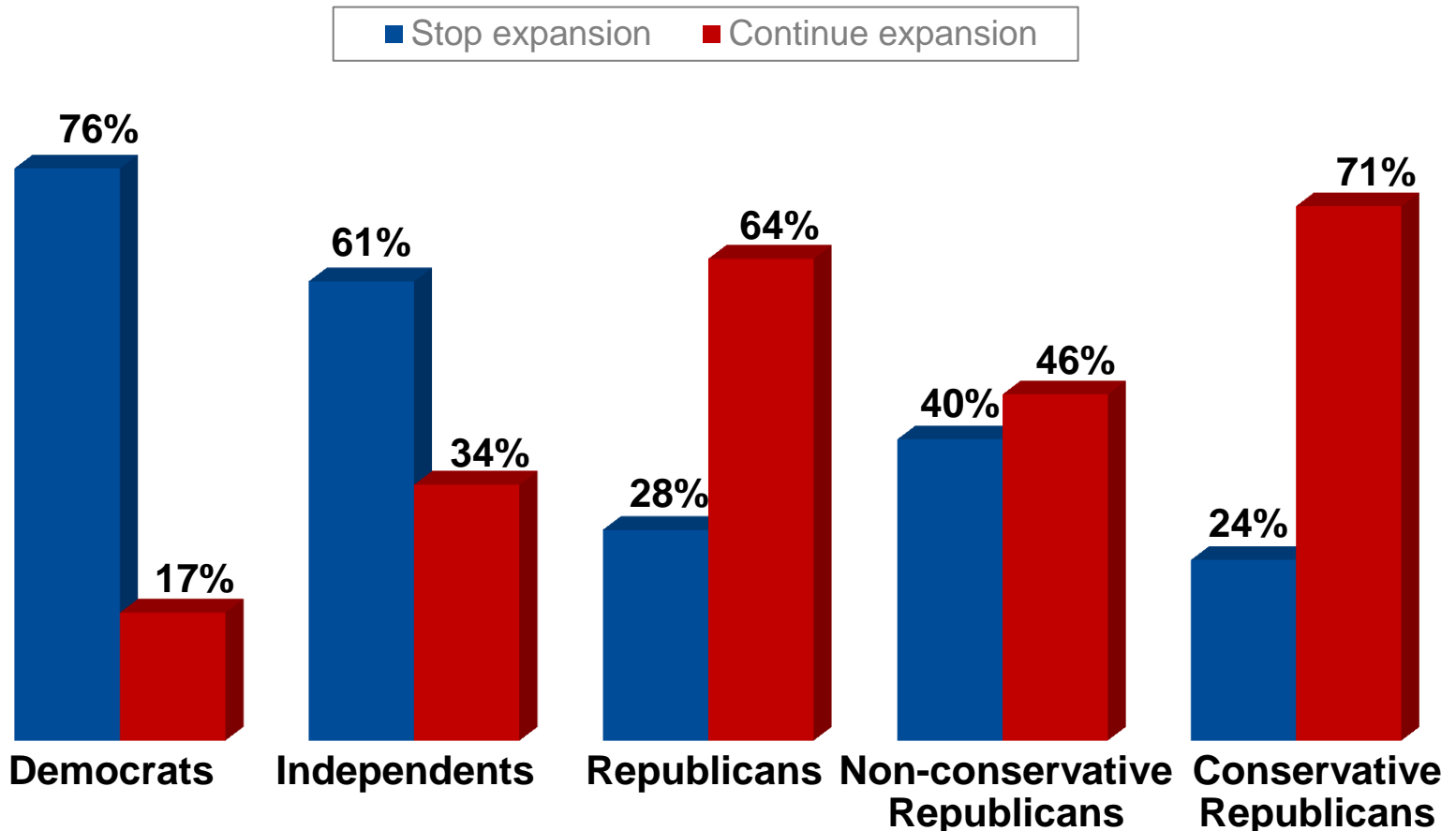
SUPPORTERS (of stopping expansion) say that we must stop expanding oil, gas, and coal development on public lands and in our oceans because these lands and waters are held in the public trust, and our leaders should use them in the public's best interest. We have many decades' worth of oil, gas, and coal available already, but we must make smarter energy choices for the future by investing more in renewable sources, such as wind and solar power, that are clean and provide good jobs, rather than dirty sources such as oil, gas, and coal that harm our environment, worsen climate change, and cause air and water pollution that harm our health.

OPPONENTS (of stopping expansion) say that the United States must take advantage of all the resources we have available to us, including oil, coal, and gas on public lands and in public waters. These energy projects can provide lots of good jobs in areas of the country that badly need economic development, while also reducing our reliance on energy sources from other countries, such as oil from the Middle East, which would be good for our economic and national security.



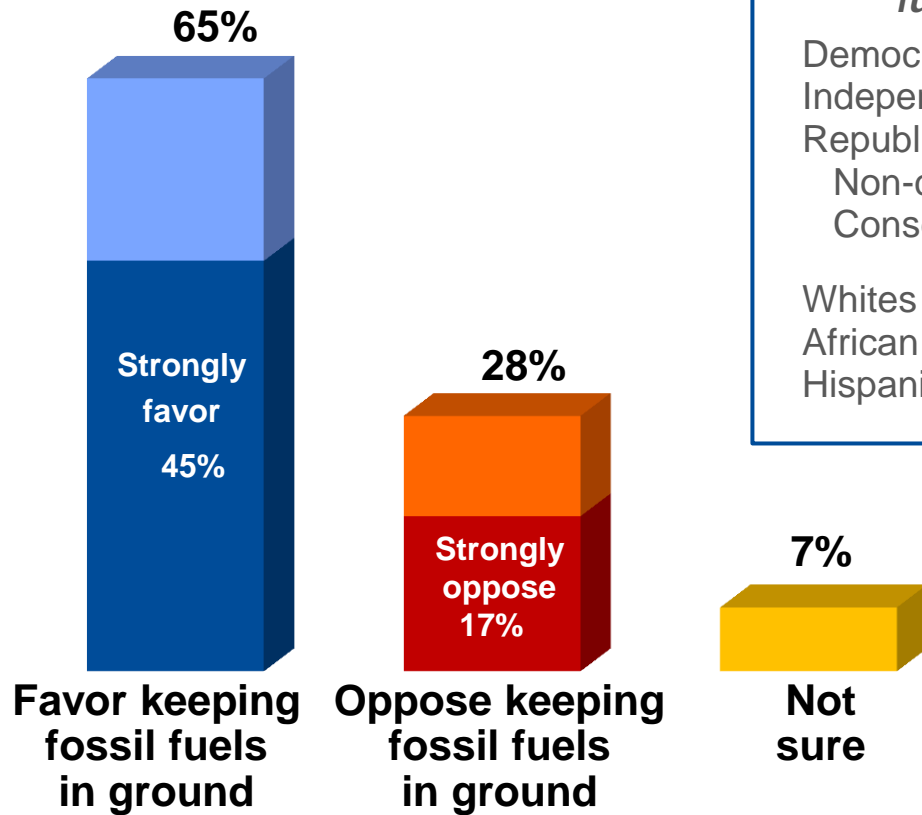
With this information in mind, only the most conservative Republicans fully favor continued expansion of leasing.

After hearing both sides, do you think we should continue or stop expanding oil, gas, and coal development on America's public lands and waters?



Two in three Americans say we should keep fossil fuels in the ground to help address climate change.

Do you favor or oppose keeping 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?



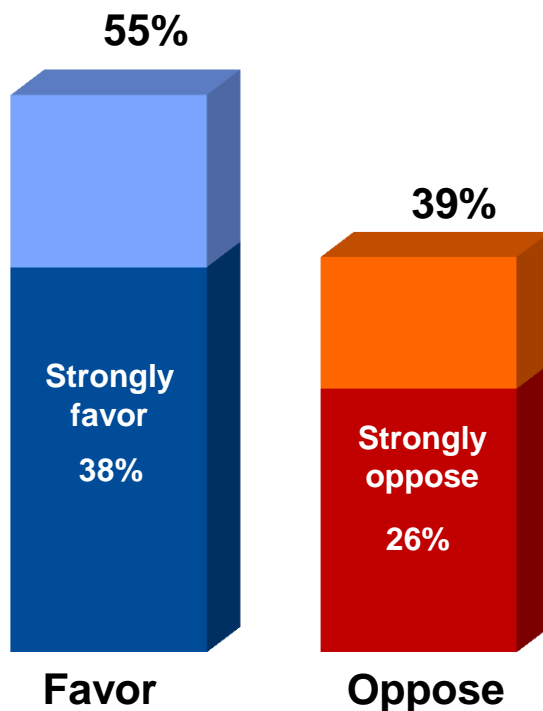
<i>Favor keeping fossil fuels in ground</i>	
Democrats	87%
Independents	65%
Republicans:	
Non-conservatives	54%
Conservatives	33%
Whites	59%
African Americans	82%
Hispanics	81%

Solid majorities would support the Obama administration's halting new leasing.

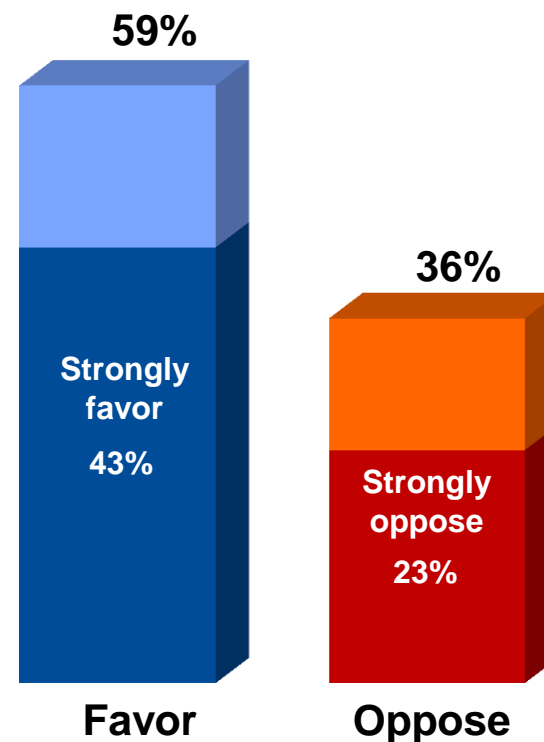


Reaction to Possible Obama Admin Actions to Protect Public Lands/Water

Stopping expansion of oil, gas, and coal development on public lands and waters



Permanently protecting the publicly owned portions of Arctic and Atlantic Oceans from oil drilling



Support is driven by Democrats, independents, and Millennials.



Reaction to Possible Obama Admin Actions to Protect Public Lands/Water

Stopping expansion of oil, gas, and coal development on public lands and waters

	Favor	Oppose
Age 18 to 34	64%	31%
Age 35 to 49	53%	41%
Age 50 to 65	55%	39%
Age 65/older	48%	46%
Democrats	80%	15%
Independents	61%	33%
Republicans	24%	70%

Permanently protecting the publicly owned portions of Arctic and Atlantic Oceans from oil drilling

	Favor	Oppose
Age 18 to 34	67%	30%
Age 35 to 49	56%	39%
Age 50 to 65	60%	36%
Age 65/older	51%	42%
Democrats	84%	12%
Independents	63%	35%
Republicans	28%	67%

