



MEMORANDUM

TO: INTERESTED PARTIES

FROM: LORI WEIGEL, PUBLIC OPINION STRATEGIES

DATE: August 18, 2014

RE: KEY FINDINGS FROM A SURVEY OF LOS ANGELES COUNTY VOTERS REGARDING SUPPORT FOR PERMANATELY PROTECTING THE SAN GABRIEL MOUNTAINS AND RIVERS

Public Opinion Strategies recently completed a survey of 400 voters throughout Los Angeles County with an oversample of Latino voters regarding their perceptions of a proposal to permanently protect the San Gabriel Mountains and rivers.¹ The survey finds strong and widespread support for the proposal as detailed in the survey.

In fact, a majority say the President should take action now on this proposal.

Voters perceive that protecting the San Gabriel Mountains and rivers offers many benefits for themselves personally and the community, with particular importance on clean water, air, wildlife, and ensuring there are places for children to recreate and experience nature. Specifically, the survey found:

- **Four-in-five Los Angeles County voters (80 percent) support protecting the San Gabriel Mountains and rivers.** Survey respondents received a brief explanation of the proposal in order to ensure all respondents had the same level of information on the topic:

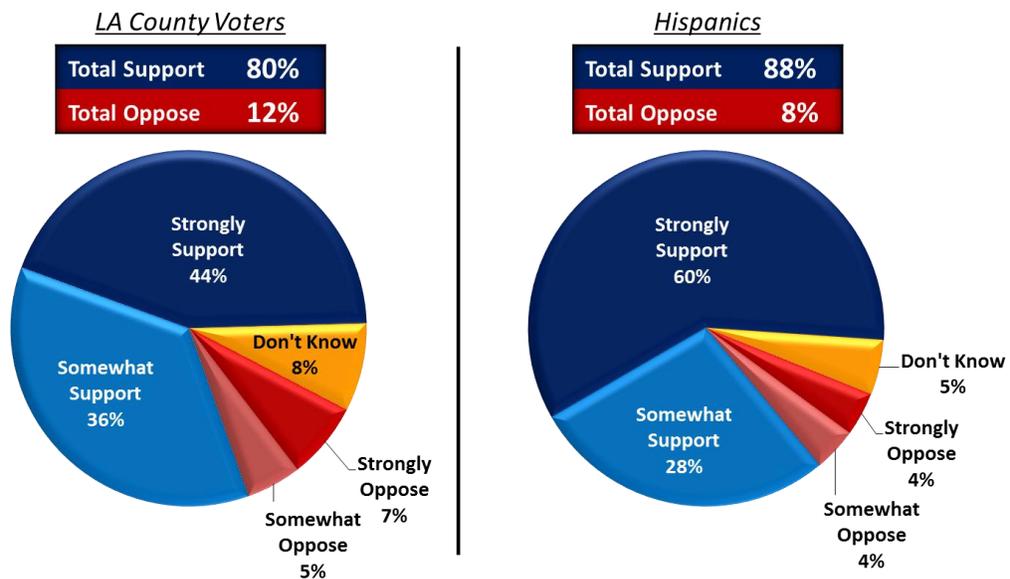
As you may know, the San Gabriel proposal would enhance protections for significant portions of the San Gabriel Mountains in the Angeles National Forest and provide close to home recreational opportunities for communities throughout Los Angeles County. The proposal, developed with community input, would bring greater resources to the area for maintaining and enhancing the public lands, with improved parking, improved rest rooms, better trash collection, and new recreation opportunities that extend into the San Gabriel

¹ **Methodology:** Public Opinion Strategies conducted a telephone survey of N=500 voters throughout Los Angeles County, California. The survey was conducted May 27-31, 2014 and has an overall margin of error of +4.38%. Sampling error for subgroups within the sample will be larger. The sample is proportional throughout the state and demographically representative of the electorate. Interviews were conducted both on traditional land lines and cell phones.

Valley. Recreational activities could include hiking, biking, picnicking, fishing, boating, and camping. Hunting would also be allowed in this area.

Fully 80 percent of Los Angeles County voters support the proposed protection of the San Gabriel Mountains and rivers, with almost universal support (88 percent) among Hispanic voters in the county. Opposition is in the single digits among Hispanics and only slightly higher overall.

Support for protecting the San Gabriel Mountains and rivers



The intensity of support for this proposal is also striking, as voters broadly are more likely to be strongly in support than strongly opposed by a **six-to-one margin**. **Among Hispanic voters, that ratio is a significant twelve-to-one.**

- **Support for protecting the San Gabriel Mountains and rivers is widespread and broad-based.** Majorities of all key subgroups of the electorate express this sentiment, including:
 - 82 percent of women and 76 percent of men;
 - 88 percent of Latinos, 82 percent of Asian Americans, 76 percent of African Americans, and 76 percent of White/Anglos;
 - 90 percent of voters under age 35, 85 percent of 35-44 year olds, 76 percent of 45-64 year olds, and 72 percent of seniors;
 - 90 percent of moms/women with a child in the household, 76 percent of dads/men with a child in the household, and 79 percent of those without a child under the age of 18 living at home;
 - 87 percent of self-described liberal voters, 81 percent of moderates and 74 percent of conservatives;

- 84 percent of Democrats, 82 percent of independents/Decline to State voters, and 68 percent of GOP voters; and
- 73 percent of those who hunt or fish.

Notably, support is strongest among the one-in-five residents who indicate having heard something about the proposed National Recreation Area prior to the survey. Among those already aware of the proposal, fully 84 percent express support for the idea.

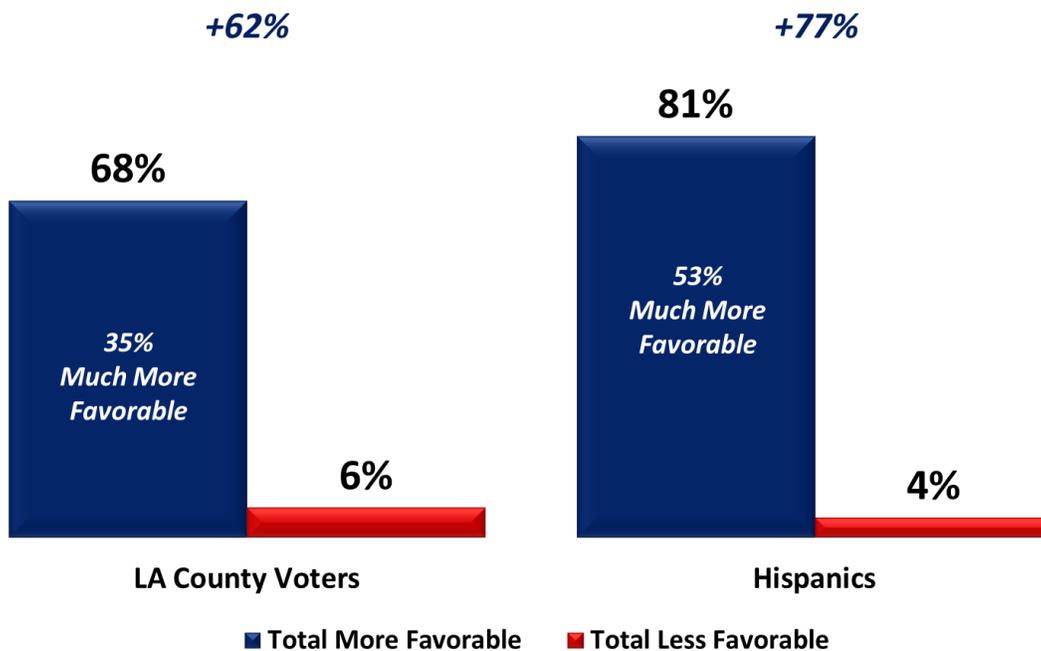
- **Virtually every potential benefit of protections for the San Gabriel Mountains is perceived to be important by Los Angeles County voters.** Respondents were asked to rate a randomized list of potential benefits of this proposal and asked to rate each one as either extremely, very, somewhat or not that important to them personally. As the following graph illustrates, virtually all of the potential benefits are ones that County residents deem to be at least somewhat important. And, 13 of the 17 potential benefits tested are viewed as extremely or very important by a solid majority of County voters.

Summary of Benefits - Ranked by % Extremely/Very Important

Benefits	% Extremely/ Very Important	% Total Important
Provide clean water for drinking	90%	95%
Protect clean air	83%	92%
Protect open space and natural areas that are threatened by development	78%	90%
Provide opportunities for children to get outside and explore nature	77%	91%
Protect habitat for threatened animals, such as the California condor and mountain lions	76%	90%
Reducing the amounts of trash, graffiti and user-created dams in and along the San Gabriel River	74%	93%
Provide greater education experiences so children can learn about nature	73%	95%
Preserve and enhance the natural, historic and scenic resources of the San Gabriel Mountains and the rivers that flow through the San Gabriel Valley.	73%	93%
Provide better maintenance and cleaning of trails, restrooms and parking areas, as currently the Forest Service relies on volunteers to pick up litter	67%	92%
Provide families with affordable places to spend time together, and relax	66%	93%
Providing better recreational opportunities for those who come to swim, hike, camp, and recreate here	62%	90%
Provide spaces for exercise and outdoor recreation to help address Los Angeles County's childhood obesity and diabetes health problems	61%	88%
Provide more restrooms, access trails, picnic sites, and educational signs to enhance visitor experiences	56%	89%
Provide opportunities for quiet and spiritual reflection	49%	81%
Increase the number of multi-lingual staff and rangers	43%	77%
Preserve opportunities for fishing	35%	76%
Preserve opportunities for hunting	15%	42%

- **Elected officials and those running for public office would be wise to note that voters’ positive associations with proposal extend to officials who support it.** More than two-thirds of Los Angeles County voters say they would have a more favorable impression of a “candidate for public office if he or she supported this proposal regarding providing greater protection and attention to the San Gabriel Mountains and rivers.”
- In fact, more than one-in-three say they would have a much more favorable impression (35 percent) reaching a level of intensity that signals this issue is a true motivator. Among Hispanics, as the below chart indicates, positive associations are extremely high (81 percent more favorable) and intense – a solid majority of 53 percent say they would be much more favorable toward a candidate who supports protections for the San Gabriel Mountains.

**Impact of Support for San Gabriel Mountains and Rivers
On Views of a Candidate for Public Office**



- **In fact, a majority say they would tell the President to take action on this proposal now.** A majority of 55 percent of all County voters and fully 70 percent of Hispanic voters say they would tell President Obama to take action on this proposal now.