

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Overview

Voters in Gallatin County value the outdoors and scenic beauty of their area, and consider the recreational opportunities and clean environment an asset to the county. Further, voters place a high level of importance on funding programs to protect water quality, fish and wildlife habitat, manage growth and development, and protect and preserve ranches, farmlands and the agricultural economy.

A \$10 million bond measure to conserve farmland and open land is supported by a 67% to 23% margin today. However, a \$15 million measure is supported only 46% to 37% (among all voters). Yet surprisingly, when voters learn about the potential costs of the measure to the average homeowner, there is no difference in reactions to the two cost options of \$18 per year (\$10 million measure) or \$27 per year (\$15 million measure): 61% support both. Given reactions to these two potential proposals, the smaller, \$10 million measure has the best chance of passage.

Following are the details of the survey.

Quality of Life in Gallatin County

The outdoors and scenic beauty of Gallatin County continue to be regarded as the county's biggest asset by voters. Specifically, 23% of voters today and 27% in 2000 both consider the outdoors and scenic beauty the county's biggest asset. Perceptions of other Gallatin County assets also focus on the outdoors, including:

“recreation/camping/hiking/fishing/hunting” (16%), “clean environment” (7%), “open spaces” (7%), “friendly people” (4%) and “clean air” (4%). These responses are statistically unchanged since 2000.

Initial Ballot

After hearing the following potential ballot language of an open lands preservation bond measure, 67% of voters say they would vote “yes” to support the \$10 million measure, while 23% would vote “no” and 10% are undecided.

“Shall the board be authorized to issue and sell general obligation bonds of the county, in the amount of up to ten million dollars, for the purpose of preserving open space in Gallatin County by purchasing land and conservation easements from willing landowners for the following purposes: conserving farm and ranch lands, providing recreational access, protecting water quality of streams and rivers, managing growth, protecting wildlife areas and paying costs associated with the sale and issuance of general obligation bonds, with all expenditures based on recommendations of the Open Lands Board, after public comment, and subject to an independent audit?”

A majority of voters throughout the county support the measure, with Bozeman area voters and South Gallatin County residents among the most likely to do so. Though there is majority support for the measure among all age and length of residency subgroups, support for the measure declines among older voters and long-time residents.

Leading reasons for supporting the measure include a desire to preserve and maintain lands and stop development. Specific comments include: “maintain open space” (23%), “to stop development” (19%), “preserve lands” (17%), “save farms/ranches” (8%), and “preserve wildlife” (4%).

The main reason for opposing the measure is opposition to tax increases (25%), followed by opposition to government intervention (8%), perceptions that the land “wouldn’t be open to the public/lack of public access” (7%), and there are “more important priorities,” (7%). Another 5% each oppose the measure because they “oppose wasteful government spending,” or think there is “too much/enough open space now,” while 4% each oppose the measure because they “need more information,” or “can’t afford it.”

Looking back to the 2000 survey, again support for the proposal tested was driven by desires to maintain open space and stop development/rapid growth. The reasons for opposition in 2000 were also similar to opponents’ concerns today, including anti-tax sentiment and opposition to government interference. However, voters today are less likely to oppose the proposal based on government interference than they were four years ago.

Impact of Ballot Options and Details

After hearing that the final amount of the bond measure has not yet been determined, and that it could be \$15 million instead of \$10 million, support for the measure declines to 46% yes, 37% no and 18% don’t know (percentages include “no” voters from initial ballot). Based on these findings, the smaller, \$10 million measure has the greatest chance of passage.

On the other hand, when voters learn the specific costs of the measure – either \$18 per year (\$10 million measure) or \$27 per year (\$15 million measure) – both options generate similar levels of support, as reflected in the following table:

BOND MEASURE COST TO AVERAGE HOMEOWNER

	\$18 per year	\$27 per year
Yes	61%	61%
No	32%	35%
Don't know	7%	4%

Additionally, a 55% majority support the open lands bond measure after hearing agricultural property is exempt from any property tax increase. This information causes 16% of those who initially supported the \$10 million bond measure to oppose an open lands bond but at the same time, a third of undecided voters and some of those initially opposed, support the measure after learning agriculturally property is exempt from property tax increases. As a result, it appears this could cause some reduction in support of the open lands measure, but it would not be fatal to the \$10 million bond measure. Further, in the April 2000 survey of Gallatin County voters we found the benefits of the agricultural exemption to outweigh the drawbacks.

Among the voter subgroups least likely to support the measure after hearing about the agricultural property tax exemption are seniors, voters residing in the Manhattan/Three Forks area and voters who have been residents of the county for 20 years or more.

Project Funding Priorities

Voters were asked to rate the importance of funding 17 different projects that might be included in the potential bond measure. Of the seventeen projects tested, a majority of voters rated all seventeen extremely/fairly important to fund. However, a program that would protect water quality in rivers and streams earned the most intense reactions, with 69% rating it “extremely important” to fund.

A majority or plurality of voters rated eight projects as “extremely important” to fund, including:

- Protecting wildlife habitat (52% extremely important)
- Managing growth and development (51% extremely important)
- Protecting wildlife areas (49% extremely important)
- Protecting fish habitat in rivers and streams (48% extremely important)
- Protecting natural areas (48% extremely important)
- Limiting sprawl (44% extremely important)
- Protecting the farming and ranching economy (41% extremely important)
- Preserving ranches and farmland (41% extremely important)

Of lesser importance to fund are the following programs:

- Protecting the area’s rural lifestyle (37% extremely important)
- Increasing recreational access to public land (32% extremely important)
- Protecting scenic views in the county (33% extremely important)
- Including money for purchasing conservation easements (30% extremely important)
- Purchasing open space land (30% extremely important)

- Including money for acquiring areas for recreation (23% extremely important)
- Providing monetary incentive to local governments to do comprehensive planning (21% extremely important)
- Increasing recreational access to private land (17% extremely important)

Of the 17 projects tested, 10 were “split sampled” – where half of the sample was asked about a slightly different version of a project than the other half. In comparing results to these questions, we find some differences worth noting, as reflected in the following table:

SPLIT SAMPLE PROJECT PRIORITIES

<u>Project/ % extremely important</u>	<u>Result</u>	<u>Project/ % extremely important</u>
Protecting water quality in rivers and streams (69%)	←more important	Protecting fish habitat in rivers and streams (48%)
Protecting wildlife habitat (52%)	equally important	Protecting wildlife areas (49%)
Managing growth and development (51%)	←more important	Limiting sprawl (44%)
Protecting the farming and ranching economy of Gallatin County (41%)	equally important	Preserving ranches and farmland (41%)
Increasing access to public land (32%)	←more important	Increasing access to private land (17%)

In comparing the 2004 project funding priorities to the 2000 survey, while almost all of the projects rated the same in overall importance (extremely/fairly important), seven-of-thirteen projects declined in their “extremely important” to fund ratings, while the remaining projects maintained the same level of importance. Since 2000, none of the

projects increased in funding importance. Among the seven projects with declining “extremely important” ratings are: protecting wildlife habitat, protecting wildlife areas, protecting fish habitat, preserving ranches/farmland, protecting the area’s rural lifestyle, protecting farming/ranching economy and acquiring areas for recreation. **There is nothing in the data indicating a reason for these declines.**

Perceptions of Local Government Funding Needs

More than seven-in-ten voters say that five out of five local government programs have a “great need” or “some need” for additional funding, and education and schools are clearly the highest priority of the five. Specifically, 56% of voters say education and public schools have a “great need” for additional funding, followed by the county jail (42%), protection of open space and agricultural lands (35%), roads (33%) and public safety (29%).

Comparing these results to the 2000 survey, of the four areas tested in both surveys, there is no increase in the number of voters who say there is a “great need” for additional funding.

Message Testing

Of ten proponent bond measure messages tested, all ten generate support from more than six-in-ten voters. Among the most effective messages are:

- “All funds raised locally for open space will be matched by state and private funding” (77% more likely, 17% less likely);

- “At the current rate of growth, the population of Gallatin County will double in twenty years – we must act now to preserve rural lands before they are lost to development” (73% more likely, 20% less likely);
- “An independent citizen’s board will decide how to spend the money, and a public audit will be conducted to make sure the money is spent as promised” (71% more likely, 22% less likely); and
- “We must protect Gallatin County’s agricultural land and natural areas before they are gone forever. The longer we wait, the more expensive it will be” (70% more likely, 25% less likely).

Other messages generating support for the measure among more than six-in-ten voters include:

- “We owe it to our children and our grandchildren to protect Gallatin County’s agricultural land and natural areas. Unless we act now, these special places will be lost forever” (68% more likely, 25% less likely);
- “The preservation of Gallatin County’s rural lifestyle and agricultural economy is dependent on preserving farm and open space lands (68% more likely, 23% less likely);
- “The local government will purchase development rights from landowners who voluntarily restrict development on their property through conservation easements, leaving land in private hands and on the county tax rolls” (67% more likely, 24% less likely);
- “The preservation of Gallatin County’s rural lifestyle and agricultural economy is dependent on planned development” (66% more likely, 26% less likely);
- “Keeping land open and in agricultural production instead of developing it for new housing lowers long-term cost to the county because the county doesn’t have to provide the same level of fire protection and new roads to the agricultural land as it would to a new subdivision” (65% more likely, 26% less likely); and
- “Four years ago, Gallatin County voters passed a \$10 million open lands bond. With that money, the county has been able to protect more than 15,000 acres of prime agricultural land, river corridors and wildlife habitat. Now that money is gone, but there are still thousands of acres that need to be protected. We must pass another bond to keep the program going” (65% more likely, 28% less likely).

Informed Ballot

There was no significant change in support for the \$10 million bond measure in a second ballot test at the end of the survey, as reflected in the following table:

\$10 MILLION OPEN LANDS BOND MEASURE		
	First ballot	Informed ballot
Yes	67%	68%
Don't know	10%	7%
No	23%	25%

While there were some minor movements from the first to second ballot (27 respondents changed from “don’t know” or “no” to “yes,” and 21 respondents changed from “yes” or “don’t know” to “no”), none were statistically significant enough to draw any conclusions.

Public Use of Easements

After hearing the following two points of view about the public use of easements...

“Some people say that because the county is using public money to purchase conservation easements, the public ought to have the right to access the land for recreational purposes.”

“Other people say that even though public money is being used to purchase easements, it’s the landowners’ property and working farms and ranches shouldn’t have the public disrupting their operations.”

voters were more likely to agree with the farmers/ranchers point of view (53% say public shouldn’t disrupt farms/ranches, 38% say public should have access).

Looking at reactions by subgroup, we find that voters age 18-34 are more likely than older voters to say the public should have access and are divided between public access and not disrupting farms/ranches. Among the most likely to say that farms and ranches should not be disrupted are women, voters age 45 and older, farmers/ranchers and voters who reside outside the Bozeman city limits.

Other 2004 Measures

A potential \$20 million bond measure for a new county jail – which would cost the average homeowner about \$36 per year – earned majority support among voters (55% yes, 33% no and 12% undecided).

There is support for the county jail measure among almost all subgroups, with the exception of farmers/ranchers and voters residing in Manhattan/Three Forks or South Gallatin County, who were all statistically divided. Among the most likely to favor the measure are voters who reside in the City of Bozeman.

When asked about voting intentions if the open lands bond measure and the jail bond measure were both on the ballot in November 2004, 35% say they would vote for both measures, while 26% would vote only for the open lands measure and 20% would vote only for the jail bond measure. This translates into 61% who would vote for the open lands measure and 55% who would support the jails measure, which means both measures could pass on the same ballot.

GALLATIN COUNTY VOTERS (N=400)
March 26-27, 2004

Hello, this is (FIRST AND LAST NAME) of Moore Information, a public opinion research firm. Have I reached (PHONE #)? IF NO: TERMINATE

IF YES: Could I please speak to a member of the household who is registered to vote?
IF NA: SCHEDULE CALLBACK

IF YES: Could you spend a few minutes on the phone with me to discuss some issues in your area?

Looking ahead, how likely are you to vote in the general election in November 2004, very likely, fairly likely, not very likely or not likely at all? TERMINATE IF NOT VERY OR NOT LIKELY AT ALL

1. Next, how long have you lived in Gallatin County?

	%
1. 0-4 years	18
2. 5-9 years	16
3. 10-19 years	25
4. 20 or more years	41
5. (DON'T READ) don't know	1

2. Next, when it comes to quality of life, what do you think is the biggest asset of Gallatin County? (RECORD RESPONSE VERBATIM)

1. Outdoors/scenic beauty	23
2. Recreation/camping/hiking/fishing/hunting	16
3. Clean environment	7
4. Small town/low population	7
5. Open spaces	7
6. Friendly people/families	4
7. Clean air	4
8. Quality of life	2
9. Low crime rate/safe	2
10. Good place to live (general)	2
11. Laid back/low stress	2
12. Climate/weather	1
13. Location	1
14. Rural area	1
15. Farming	1
16. Economy	1

17.	Jobs	1
18.	Good schools	1
19.	Geography	1
20.	Quiet	1
21.	University	1
22.	Wildlife	1
23.	Shopping	1
24.	Values	1
25.	Art	*
26.	Family environment	*
27.	Diversity of people	*
28.	Little government interference	*
29.	Good level of county services	*
30.	Churches	*
31.	Gallatin National Forest	*
32.	Not overdeveloped	*
33.	Vibrancy	*
34.	Clean water	*
35.	Senior center	*
36.	Mental health program	*
37.	Opportunity for personal growth	*
38.	Less traffic	*
39.	Lived here all my life	*
40.	Chamber of Commerce	*
41.	Good roads	*
42.	None/nothing	1
43.	Don't know	8

* less than one-half of one percent

3. Now I would like to ask you a few questions about a ballot measure to provide funding to protect lands in Gallatin County that could appear in an upcoming election. The wording of the measure may be something like this:

“Shall the Board be authorized to issue and sell general obligation bonds of the County, in the amount of up to ten million dollars, for the purpose of preserving open space in Gallatin County by purchasing land and conservation easements from willing landowners for the following purposes: conserving farm and ranch lands, providing recreational access, protecting water quality of streams and rivers, managing growth, protecting wildlife areas and paying costs associated with the sale and issuance of general obligation bonds, with all expenditures based on recommendations of the Open Lands Board, after public comment, and subject to an independent audit?”

Do you think you would vote yes in favor of this measure or no to oppose it? IF YES/NO: Is that definitely yes/no or just probably yes/no?

1.	definitely yes	GO TO 4 THEN 6	32	
2.	probably yes	GO TO 4 THEN 6	34	(67)
3.	(DON'T READ) don't know	GO TO 6	10	
4.	probably no	GO TO 5	10	(23)
5.	definitely no	GO TO 5	13	

4. IF YES: What is the major reason you would vote for such a measure? (RECORD RESPONSE VERBATIM)

1.	Maintain open space	23
2.	To stop development	19
3.	Preserve lands	17
4.	Save farms/ranches	8
5.	Preserve wildlife	4
6.	Recreational opportunities	3
7.	To stop rapid growth	3
8.	Public access/public land	3
9.	Environmental concerns	2
10.	Maintain quality of life	2
11.	Getting crowded/too crowded	2
12.	It's needed/important	2
13.	Give people more say	2
14.	Sounds good/beneficial	2
15.	Need more public lands	1
16.	For our children/grandchildren	1
17.	Protect property rights	1

18.	Preserve our way of life	*
19.	Preserve hunting lands	*
20.	Preserve natural resources	*
21.	Protect water	*
22.	Balance conservation with public access	*
23.	Reimburses landowners	*
24.	More parks	*
25.	Land prices will be higher in the future	*
26.	Would use the land	*
27.	Don't know	2

5. IF NO: What is the major reason you would vote against such a measure?
(RECORD RESPONSE VERBATIM)

1.	Oppose tax increase	25
2.	Oppose government intervention	8
3.	Wouldn't be open to public/lack of public access	7
4.	More important priorities	7
5.	Too much/enough open space now	5
6.	Oppose wasteful government spending	5
7.	Amount/can't afford it	4
8.	Need more information	4
9.	Infringes on property rights	2
10.	Don't believe in easements	2
11.	Locks up land	2
12.	Want growth/development	2
13.	Oppose citizens advisory board	2
14.	Don't trust government to maintain lands	2
15.	Need to be sure last one is working properly	1
16.	Not best use of the land	1
17.	County should own the land	1
18.	Board is out of control	1
19.	Bureaucracy	1
20.	Shouldn't be paying farmers	1
21.	Board doesn't work as it should	1
22.	Don't trust their intentions	1
23.	Federal government should pay costs	1
24.	Special interest groups influence Open Lands Board	1
25.	Can't guarantee land won't be used	1
26.	Takes land off tax rolls	1
27.	Not best solution	1
28.	Don't know	8

* less than one-half of one percent

6. IF YES/DON'T KNOW Q4: The final amount of a county open lands bond measure has not yet been determined. Please tell me if you think you would vote yes or no on the measure if the total amount of the bond was \$15 million, instead of \$10 million? IF YES/NO: Is that definitely yes/no, or probably yes/no?

1.	definitely yes	26	
2.	probably yes	33	(59)
3.	(DON'T READ) don't know	23	
4.	probably no	13	(18)
5.	definitely no	5	

SPLIT SAMPLE 7A AND 7B

7A. Passing this open lands bond measure would result in an increase in your property taxes. Please tell me whether you think you would vote yes in favor or no to oppose a property tax increase to pay for an open lands bond if you knew that it would cost the average homeowner about \$18 dollars per year over the 20-year life of the bond. WAIT AND ASK: Is that definitely yes/no, or probably yes/no?

1.	definitely yes	41	
2.	probably yes	19	(61)
3.	(DON'T READ) don't know	7	
4.	probably no	8	(32)
5.	definitely no	24	

7B. Passing this open lands bond measure would result in an increase in your property taxes. Please tell me whether you think you would vote yes in favor or no to oppose a property tax increase to pay for an open lands bond if you knew that it would cost the average homeowner about \$27 dollars per year over the 20-year life of the bond. WAIT AND ASK: Is that definitely yes/no, or probably yes/no?

1.	definitely yes	34	
2.	probably yes	27	(61)
3.	(DON'T READ) don't know	4	
4.	probably no	9	(35)
5.	definitely no	26	

8. Now let me ask you whether you think you would vote yes in favor or no to oppose an open lands bond to pay for conserving farm and ranch lands, providing recreational access, protecting water quality of streams and rivers, managing growth, and protecting wildlife areas if you knew that agricultural property was exempt from any property tax increase associated with the open lands bond? WAIT AND ASK: Is that definitely yes/no, or probably yes/no?

1.	definitely yes	24	
2.	probably yes	31	(55)
3.	(DON'T READ) don't know	12	
4.	probably no	13	(33)
5.	definitely no	20	

9. Another measure that might be on the November 2004 ballot would ask county voters to approve a bond measure of up to \$20 million to pay for a new county jail. This measure would cost the average homeowner about \$36 per year over the life of the bond. Do you think you would vote yes in favor of this measure or no to oppose it? IF YES/NO: Is that definitely yes/no or just probably yes/no?

1.	definitely yes	26	
2.	probably yes	29	(55)
3.	(DON'T READ) don't know	12	
4.	probably no	12	(33)
5.	definitely no	20	

10. If both the open lands bond measure and the jail bond measure were on the November 2004 ballot, would you vote for, (ROTATE 1-3)

1.	the open lands bond measure	26	
2.	the jail bond measure	20	
3.	both the open lands and the jail bond measures	35	
4.	(DON'T READ) none	12	
5.	(DON'T READ) don't know	8	

I am now going to read you a list of possible projects that money from the open lands bond might pay for. Regardless of how you think you would vote on such a measure, please tell me if it would be extremely important to you that money for the project be included in the measure, fairly important, not too important or not at all important. ROTATE 11-22

	<u>--IMPORTANT--</u>	<u>Don't</u>	<u>- IMPORTANT-</u>		
	<u>Extremely</u>	<u>Fairly</u>	<u>Know</u>	<u>Not too</u>	<u>Not at all</u>
SPLIT SAMPLE 11A/B-15A/B					
	(90)			(9)	
11A. Protecting wildlife areas	49	40	2	4	4
	(85)			(13)	
11B. Protecting wildlife habitat	52	33	2	7	6
	(82)			(15)	
12A. Managing growth and development	51	31	3	7	8
	(73)			(20)	
12B. Limiting sprawl	44	30	7	10	9
	(88)			(10)	
13A. Protecting fish habitat in rivers and streams	48	40	2	6	4
	(91)			(8)	
13B. Protecting water quality in rivers and streams	69	21	2	2	6
	(86)			(12)	
14A. Protecting the farming and ranching economy of Gallatin County	41	45	1	8	4
	(83)			(15)	
14B. Preserving ranches and farmland	41	42	2	9	6
	(74)			(24)	
15A. Increasing recreational access to public land	32	42	2	16	8
	(54)			(40)	
15B. Increasing recreational access to private lands	17	37	5	23	17
	(65)			(27)	
16. Purchasing open space land	29	36	8	15	12
	(69)			(24)	
17. Purchasing conservation easements	30	38	7	12	12
	(72)			(25)	
18. Protecting scenic views in the county	33	39	4	15	10
	(64)			(30)	
19. Acquiring areas for recreation	23	41	6	18	12
	(85)			(12)	
20. Protecting natural areas	48	37	3	6	6
	(59)			(34)	
21. Providing monetary incentive to local governments to do comprehensive planning	21	38	6	21	13
	(77)			(19)	
22. Protecting the area's rural lifestyle	37	40	5	12	7

Now let me read you a list of some of the programs local government is responsible for funding. For each one, please tell me if you think it has a great need for additional funding, some need, a little need or no real need for additional funding. ROTATE 23-27

		<u>---NEED---</u>		<u>Don't</u>	<u>--NEED--</u>	
		<u>Great</u>	<u>Some</u>	<u>know</u>	<u>Little</u>	<u>None</u>
23.	education and public schools	(85)			(13)	
		56	29	2	6	7
24.	public safety	(77)			(21)	
		29	47	3	14	7
25.	roads	(83)			(15)	
		33	50	2	11	4
26.	protection of open space and agricultural lands	(74)			(24)	
		35	39	3	11	12
27.	new county jail	(72)			(23)	
		42	30	5	9	14

Now I am going to read some statements made by people who favor an open lands bond measure. After hearing each statement, please tell me if it makes you more likely or less likely to support the measure. IF MORE LIKELY/LESS LIKELY: Is that much more/less likely or somewhat more/less likely? ROTATE 28-37

		<u>--MORE LIKELY--</u>		<u>Don't</u>	<u>--LESS LIKELY--</u>	
		<u>Much</u>	<u>Smwht.</u>	<u>Know</u>	<u>Smwht.</u>	<u>Much</u>
28.	We owe it to our children and our grandchildren to protect Gallatin County's agricultural land and natural areas. Unless we act now, these special places will be lost forever	(68)			(25)	
		37	31	7	13	12
29.	We must protect Gallatin County's agricultural land and natural areas before they are gone forever. The longer we wait, the more expensive it will be	(70)			(25)	
		37	33	5	12	13

		--MORE LIKELY--		Don't	--LESS LIKELY--	
		<u>Much</u>	<u>Smwht.</u>	<u>Know</u>	<u>Smwht.</u>	<u>Much</u>
30.	An independent citizen's board will decide how to spend the money, and a public audit will be conducted to make sure the money is spent as promised	(71) 32	39	7	(22) 10	12
31.	All funds raised locally for open space will be matched by state and private funding	(77) 43	34	6	(17) 8	9
32.	At the current rate of growth, the population of Gallatin County will double in twenty years - we must act now to preserve rural lands before they are lost to development	(73) 48	25	7	(20) 10	10
33.	The local government will purchase development rights from landowners who voluntarily restrict development on their property through conservation easements, leaving land in private hands and on the county tax rolls	(67) 28	40	8	(24) 13	11
34.	Keeping land open and in agricultural production instead of developing it for new housing lowers the long-term costs to the county because the county doesn't have to provide the same level of fire protection and new roads to the agricultural land as it would to a new subdivision	(65) 30	35	9	(26) 13	13
35.	The preservation of Gallatin County's rural lifestyle and agricultural economy is dependent on planned development	(66) 26	40	8	(26) 15	12
36.	The preservation of Gallatin County's rural lifestyle and agricultural economy is dependent on preserving farm and open space lands	(68) 27	40	10	(23) 13	9

	--MORE LIKELY--		Don't	--LESS LIKELY--	
	<u>Much</u>	<u>Smwht.</u>	<u>Know</u>	<u>Smwht.</u>	<u>Much</u>
37. Four years ago, Gallatin County voters passed a \$10 million open lands bond. With that money, the county has been able to protect more than 15,000 acres of prime agricultural land, river corridors, and wildlife habitat. Now that money is gone, but there are still thousands of acres of land that need to be protected. We must pass another bond to keep the program going		(65)		(28)	
	31	33	7	10	18

38. Now once again I would like to ask you about a ballot measure to provide funding to protect lands in Gallatin County that could appear in an upcoming election. The wording of the measure may be something like this:

“Shall the Board be authorized to issue and sell general obligation bonds of the County, in the amount of up to ten million dollars, for the purpose of preserving open space in Gallatin County by purchasing land and conservation easements from willing landowners for the following purposes: conserving farm and ranch lands, providing recreational access, protecting water quality of streams and rivers, managing growth, protecting wildlife areas and paying costs associated with the sale and issuance of general obligation bonds, with all expenditures based on recommendations of the Open Lands Board, after public comment, and subject to an independent audit?”

Do you think you would vote yes in favor of this measure or no to oppose it? IF YES/NO: Is that definitely yes/no or just probably yes/no?

1. definitely yes	35	
2. probably yes	34	(68)
3. (DON'T READ) don't know	7	
4. probably no	8	(25)
5. definitely no	17	

39. Now I am going to read you two points of view. After hearing each, please tell me which one comes closest to your own view.

Some people say that because the county is using public money to purchase conservation easements, the public ought to have the right to access the land for recreational purposes.

Other people say that even though public money is being used to purchase easements, it's the landowners' property and working farms and ranches shouldn't have the public disrupting their operations.

Which of these views comes closest to your own view? WAIT AND ASK: Do you feel strongly about that?

1.	strongly public should have access	26	
2.	public should have access	13	(38)
3.	(DON'T READ) don't know	8	
4.	public shouldn't disrupt farms/ranches	16	(53)
5.	strongly public shouldn't disrupt farms/ranches	38	

Now a few questions for statistical purposes.

40. What is your age, please?

1.	18-29	10
2.	30-34	9
3.	35-44	23
4.	45-54	23
5.	55-59	9
6.	60-64	8
7.	65+	19

41. What is the last grade of education you have completed?

1.	0-11 (less than high school)	2
2.	12 (high school graduate)	19
3.	13-15 (some college/trade school)	27
4.	16 (college graduate)	28
5.	17+ (post graduate education)	24

42.	Do you live inside or outside the city limits of Bozeman?		
	1. inside		39
	2. outside		61
43.	Do you own or operate a farm or ranch in Gallatin County?		
	1. yes		10
	2. no		89
	3. (DON'T READ) refused		*
44.	Which one of the following best describes how you usually vote? (READ 1-2, 4-5, 5-4, 2-1)		
	1. mostly or only for Republicans		34
	2. a few more Republicans than Democrats		15 (49)
	3. (DON'T READ) the person/Independent		15
	4. a few more Democrats than Republicans		12 (34)
	5. mostly or only for Democrats		22
	6. (DON'T READ) don't know		2
45.	Gender (BY OBSERVATION)		
	1. male		49
	2. female		51
46.	Telephone prefix (FROM LIST)		
47.	Zip code (FROM LIST)		
48.	Sample		
	1. A		49
	2. B		51

* less than one-half of one percent



MOORE INFORMATION

PUBLIC OPINION RESEARCH

Gallatin County Voters

March 2004



Survey Methodology

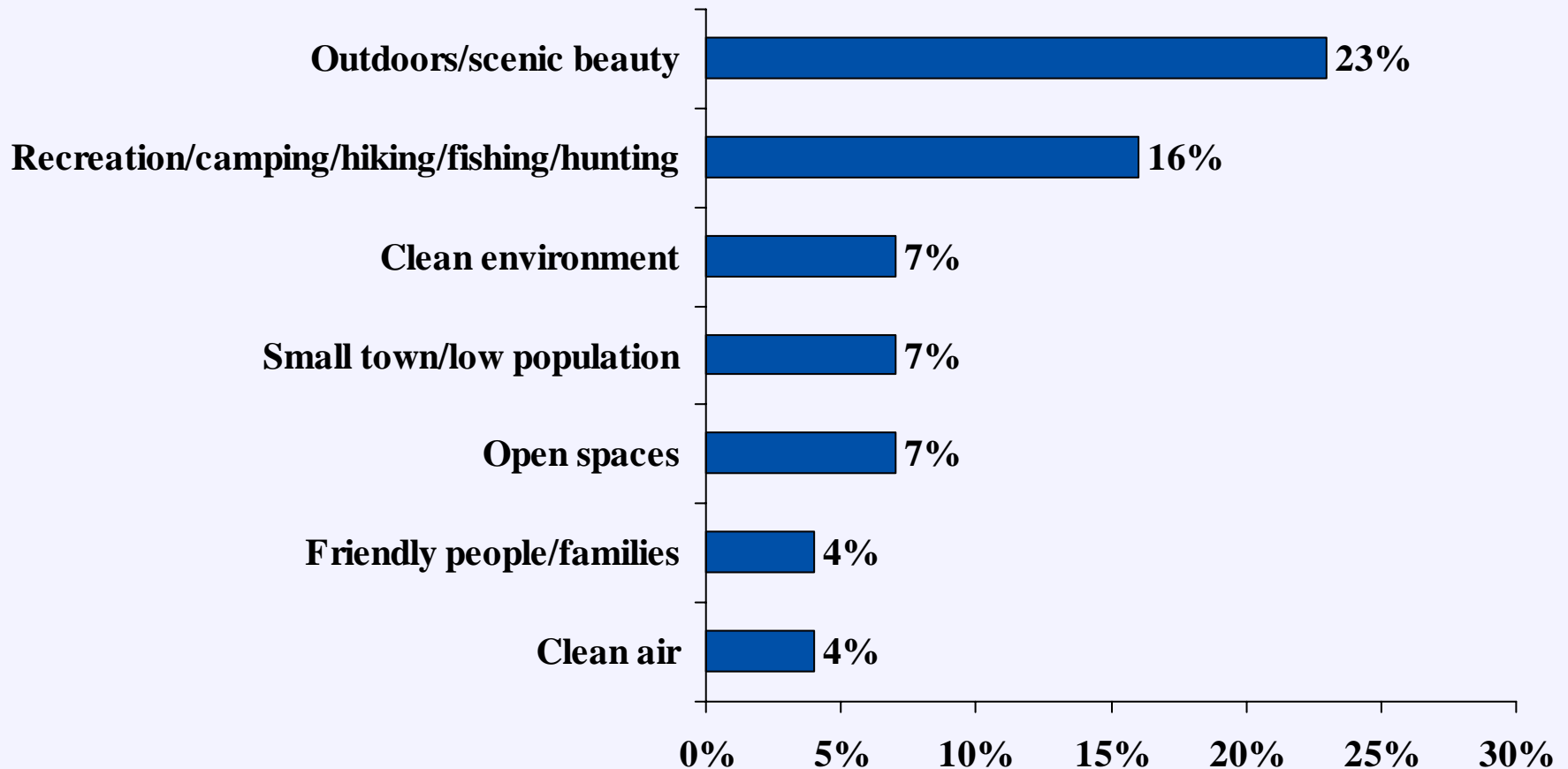
- Sample
 - 400 interviews among a representative sample of likely voters in Gallatin County, Montana
- Methodology
 - Telephone interviews conducted March 26-27, 2004
- Sampling error
 - Plus or minus 5% at the 95% confidence level

Quality of Life in Gallatin County

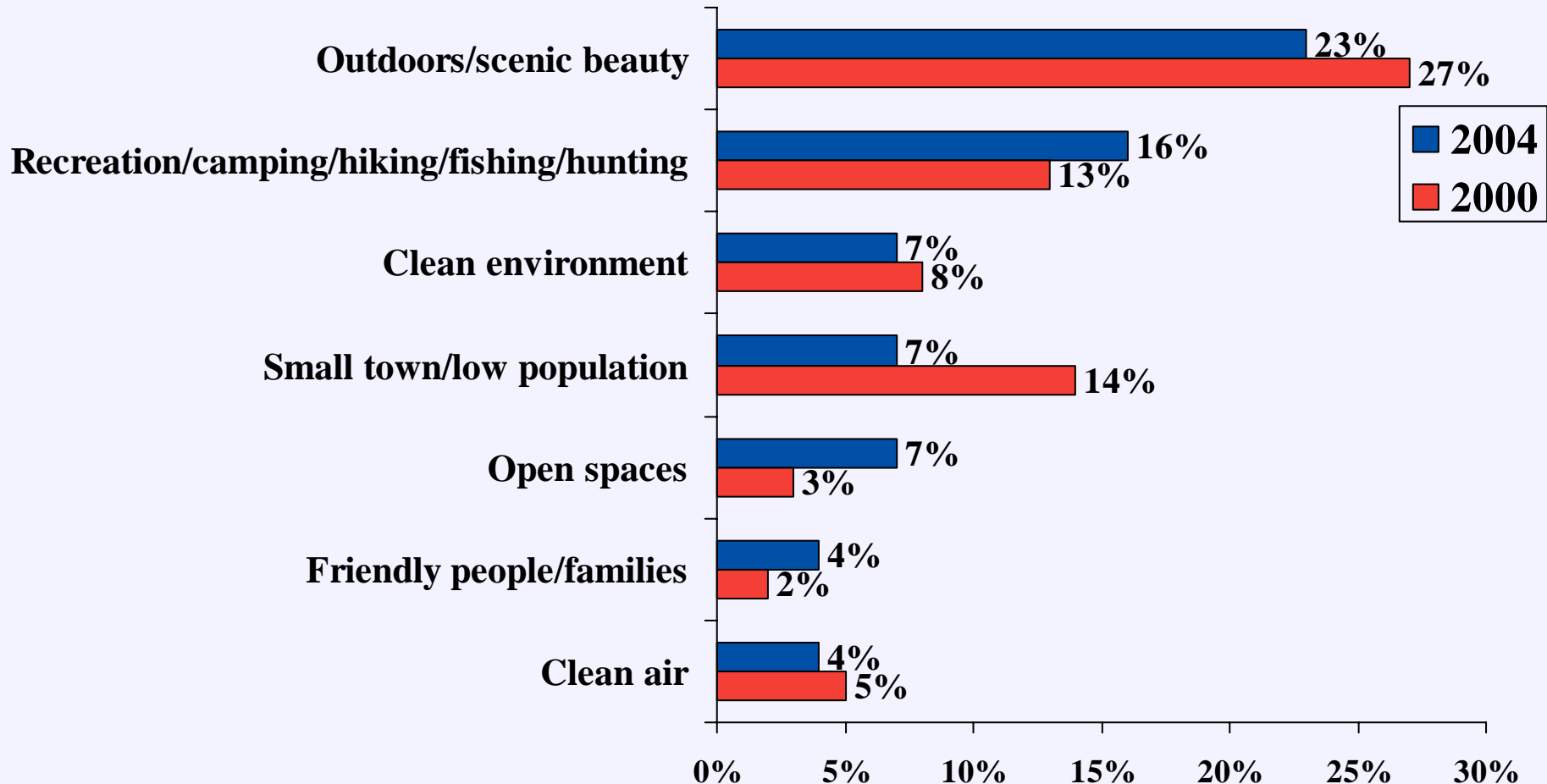


County's Biggest Asset: *The Outdoors*

“When it comes to quality of life, what do you think is the biggest asset of Gallatin County?”
(Q2)



The Outdoors Continue to Be the County's Biggest Asset: *Historic Trends*



Open Lands Preservation Bond Measure



\$10 Million Bond Measure

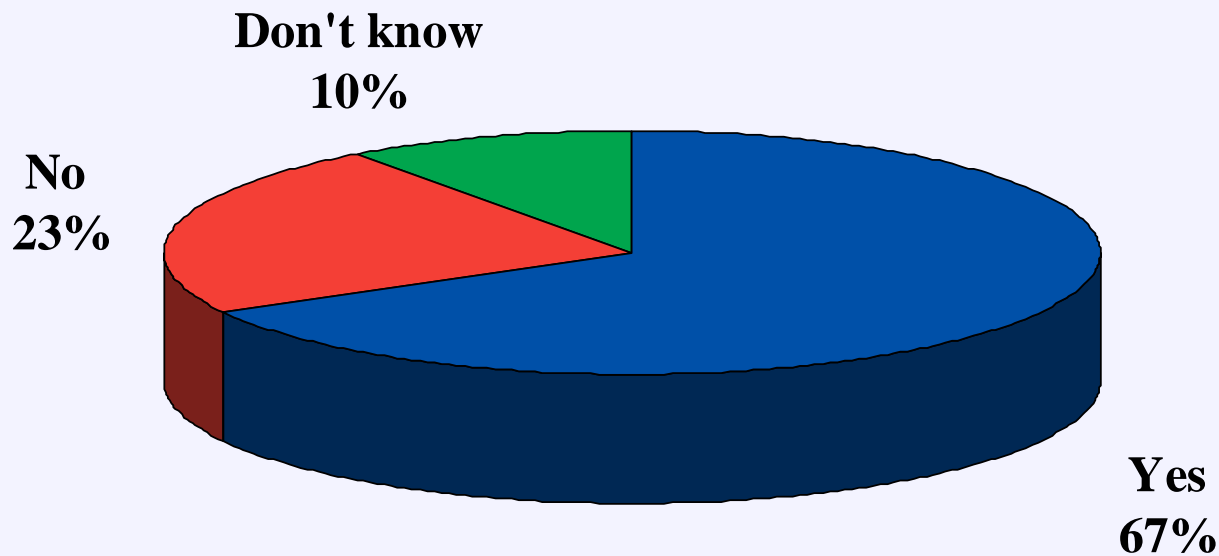
“Now I would like to ask you a few questions about a ballot measure to provide funding to protect lands in Gallatin County that could appear in an upcoming election.

The wording of the measure may be something like this:

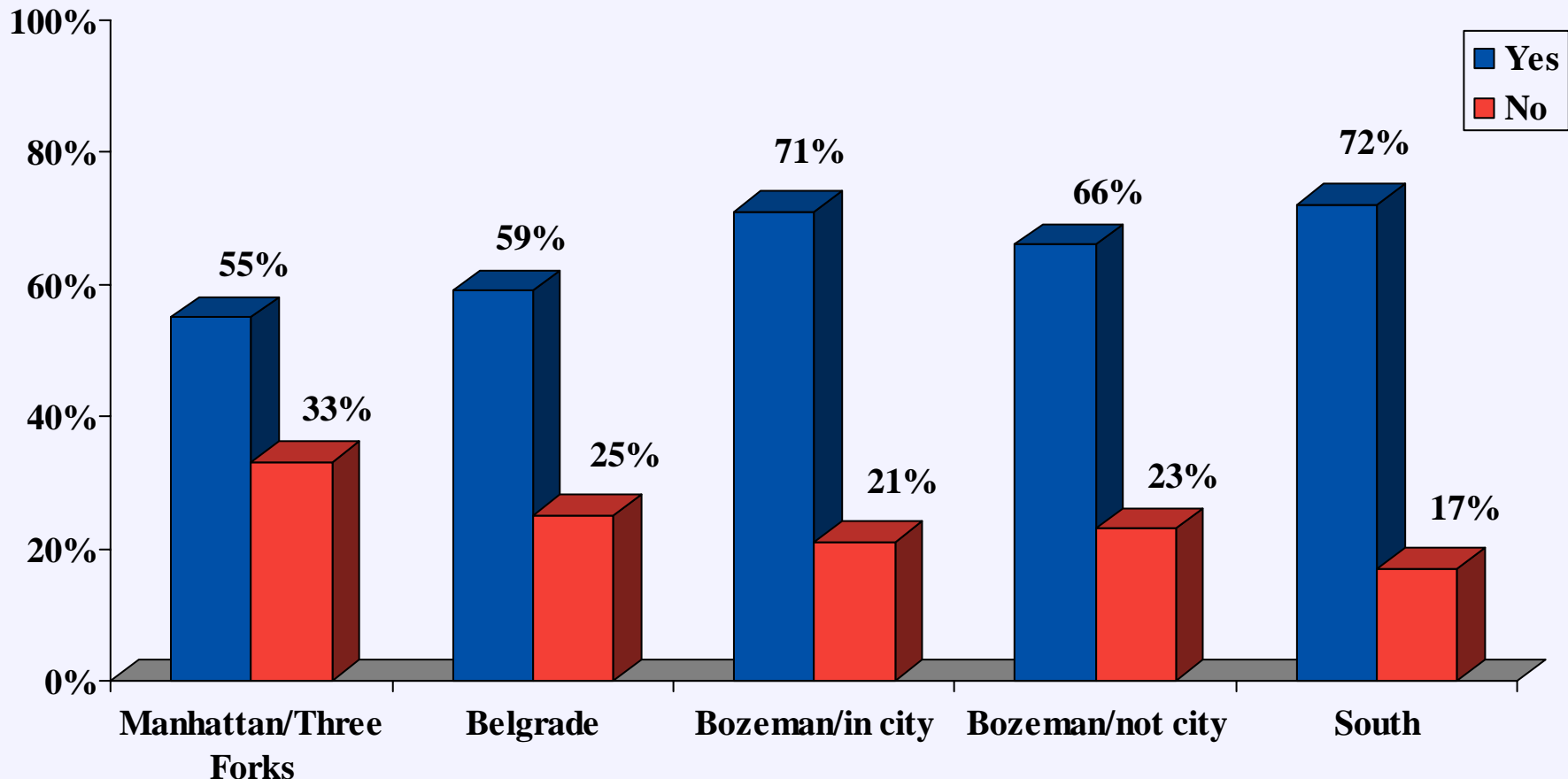
‘Shall the board be authorized to issue and sell general obligation bonds of the county, in the amount of up to ten million dollars, for the purpose of preserving open space in Gallatin County by purchasing land and conservation easements from willing landowners for the following purposes: conserving farm and ranch lands, providing recreational access, protecting water quality of streams and rivers, managing growth, protecting wildlife areas and paying costs associated with the sale and issuance of general obligation bonds, with all expenditures based on recommendations of the Open Lands Board, after public comment, and subject to an independent audit?’

Do you think you would vote yes in favor of this measure or no to oppose it?” (Q3)

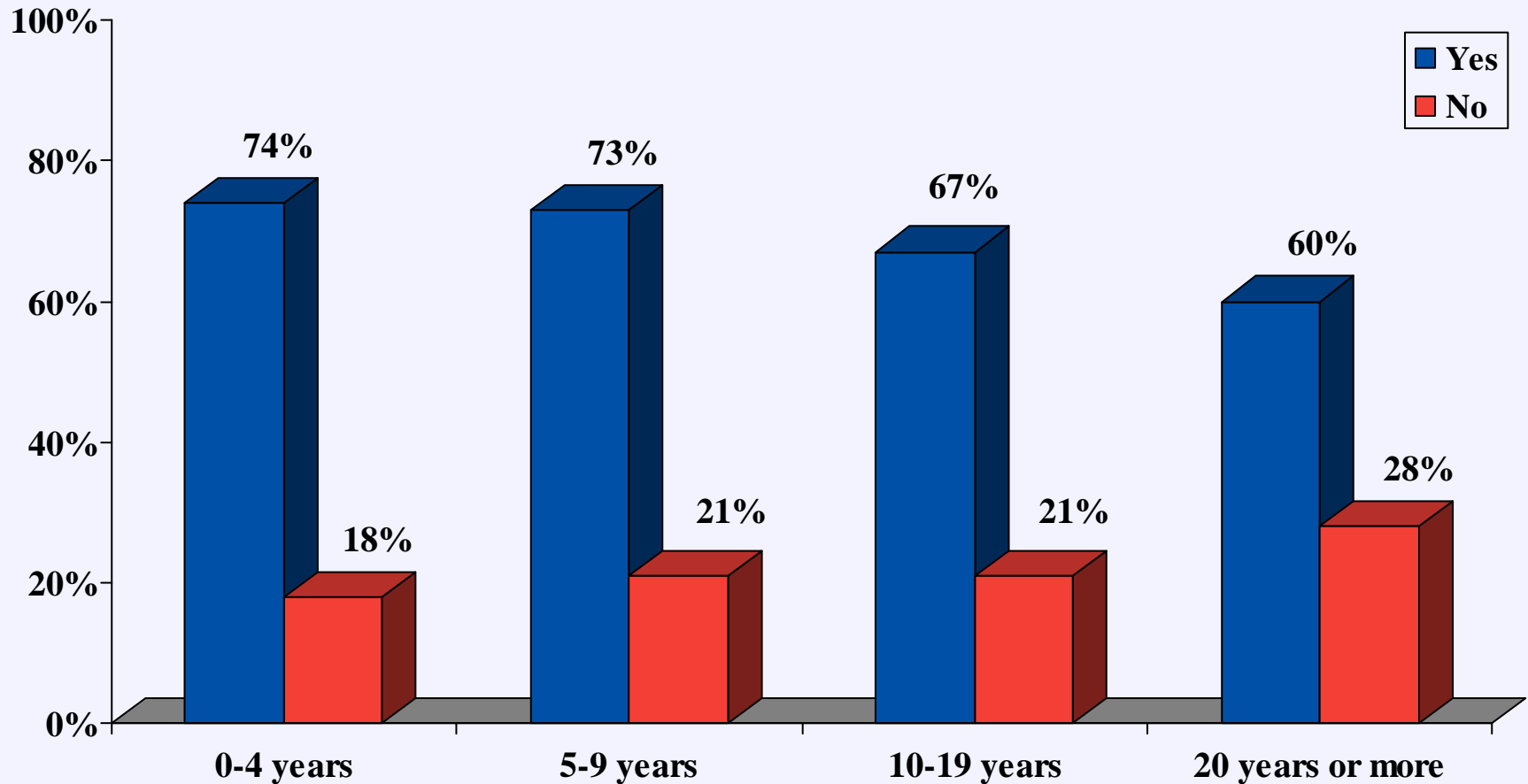
Two-in-Three Voters Initially Favor a \$10 Million Bond Measure to Conserve Open Lands



\$10 Million Bond Measure: *Majority Support Throughout the County*

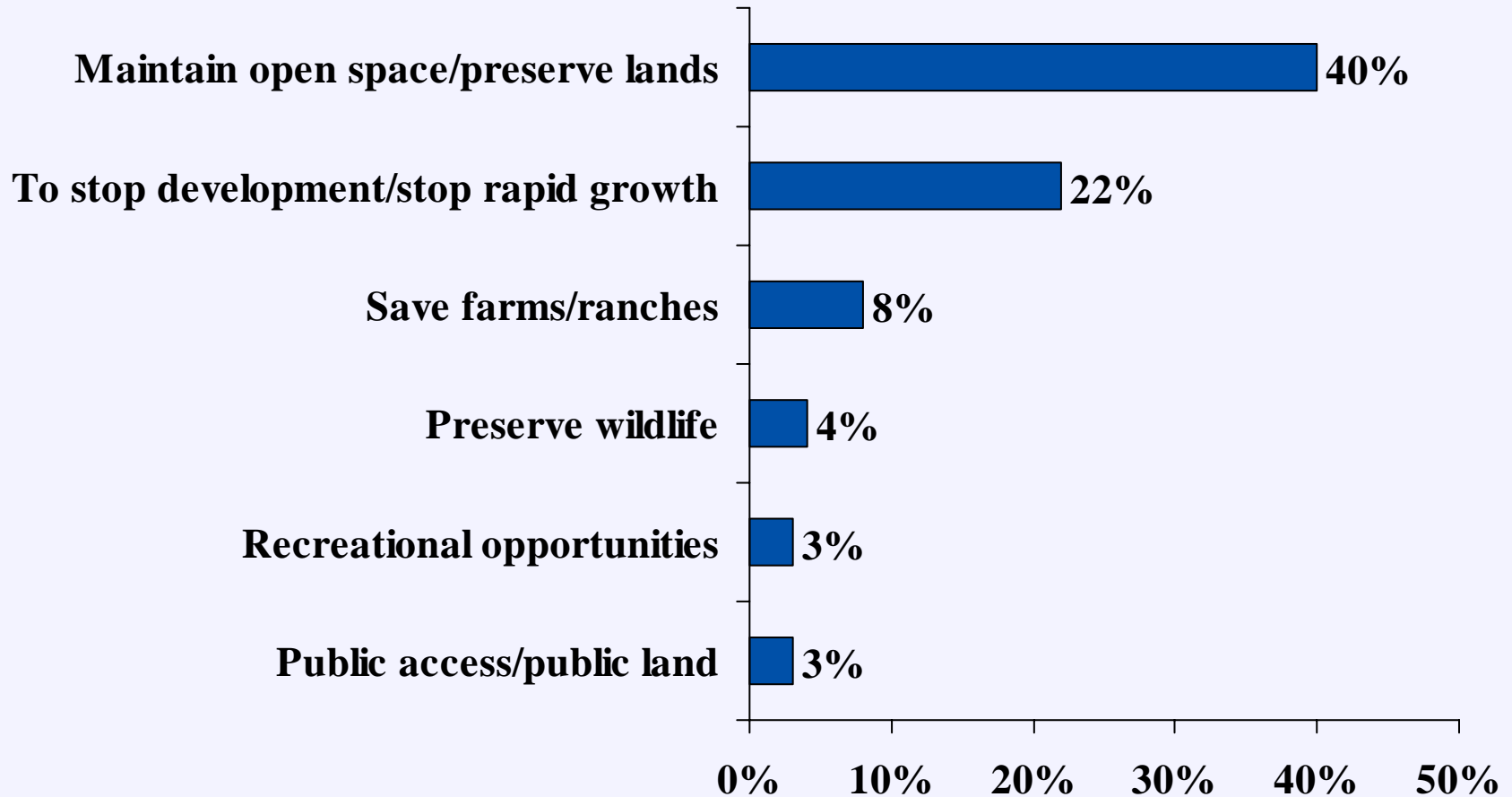


\$10 Million Bond Measure: *Support* *Decreases with Length of Residence*



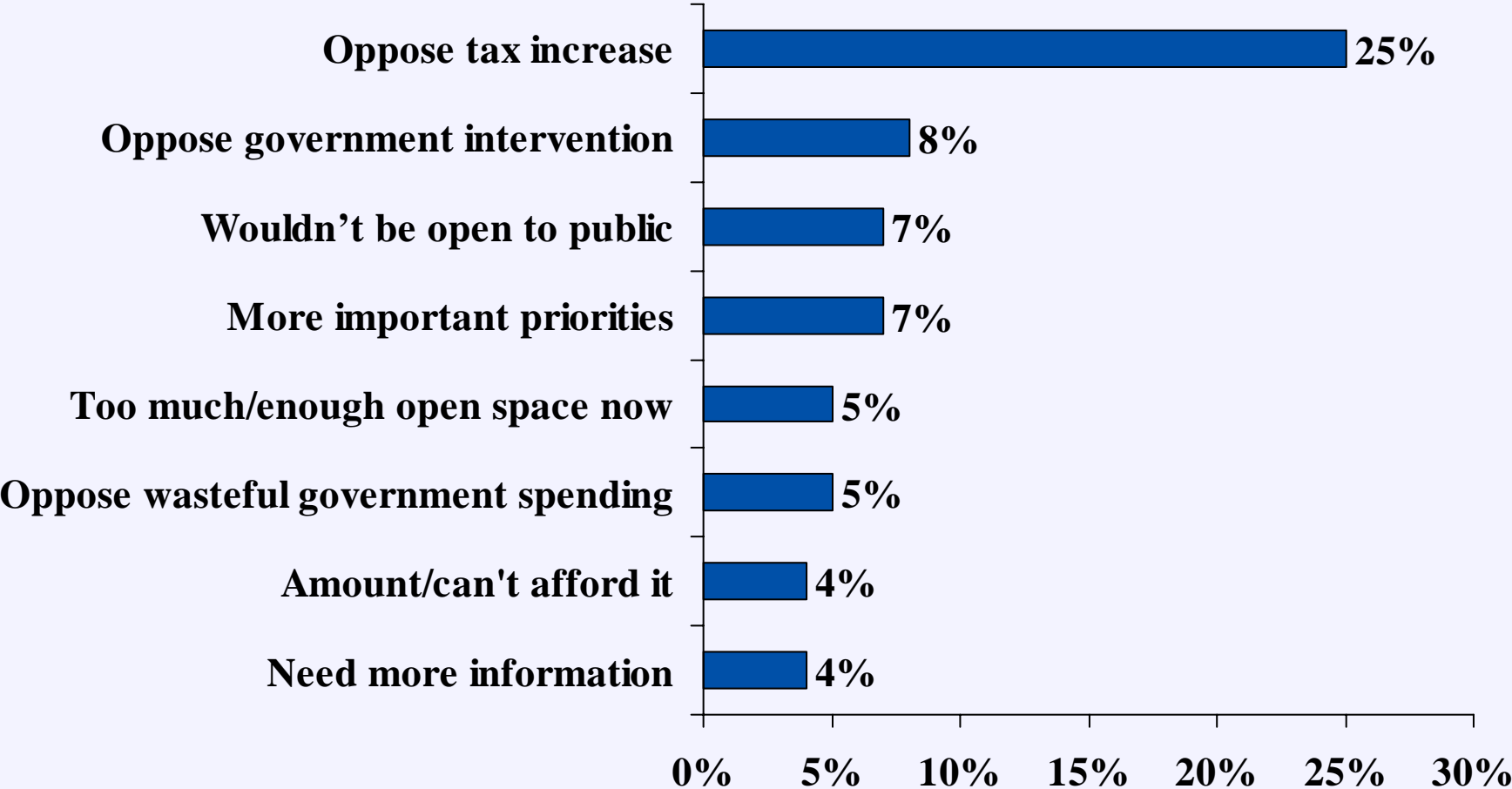
Supporters Want to Preserve/Maintain Lands and Stop Development

IF YES: “What is the major reason you would vote for such a measure?” (Q4, N=266)



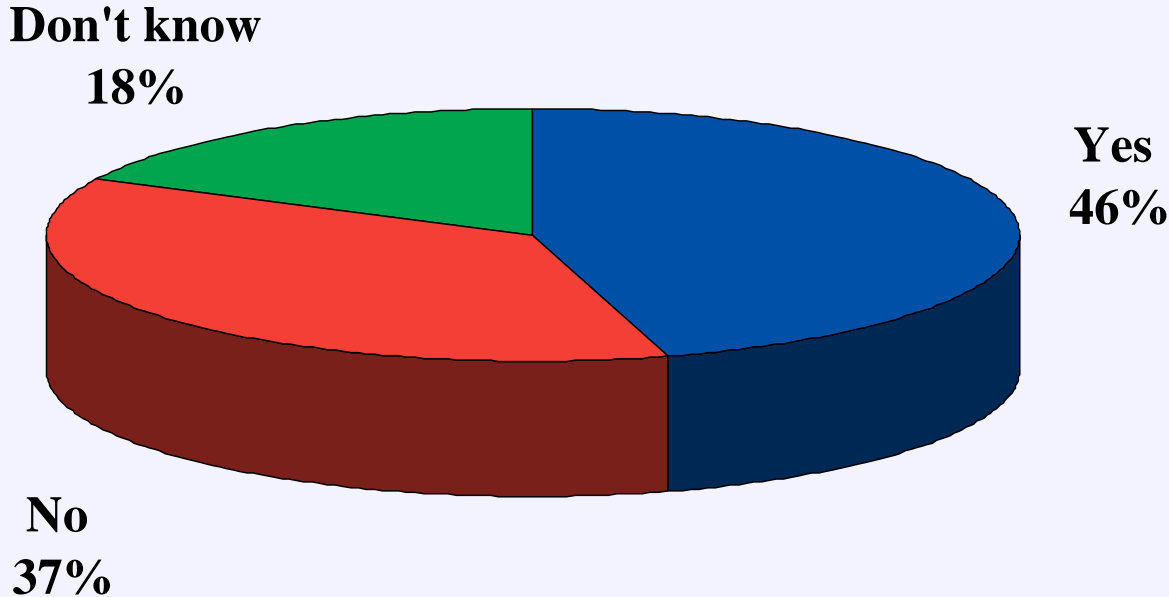
Opponents Object Most to Tax Increase

IF NO: “What is the major reason you would vote against such a measure?” (Q5, N=92)



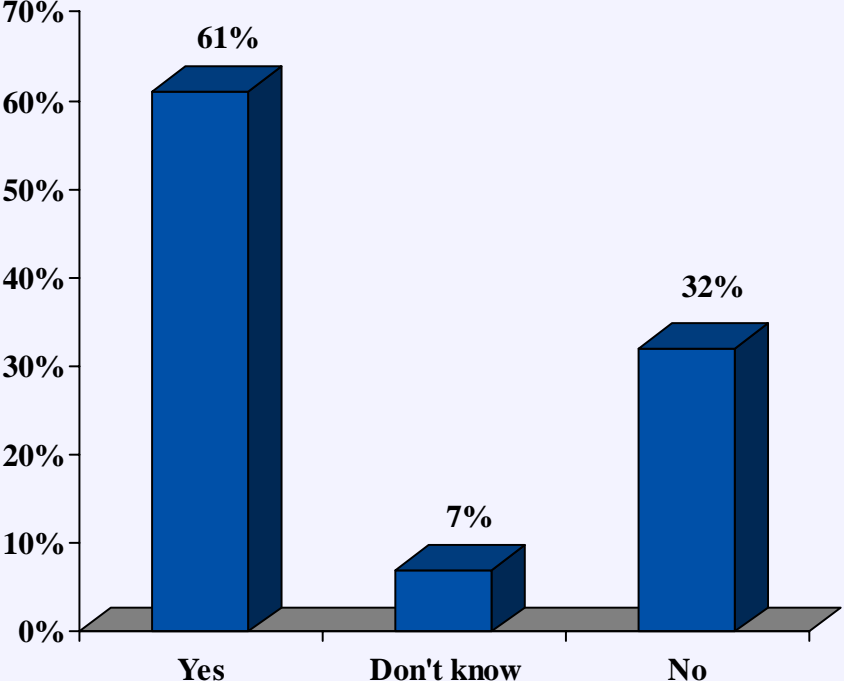
\$15 Million Bond Measure Finds Only Plurality Support

IF YES/DON'T KNOW Q4: "The final amount of a county open space lands bond measure has not yet been determined. Please tell me if you think you would vote yes or no on the measure if the total amount of the bond was \$15 million, instead of \$10 million." (Q6, % among all voters)

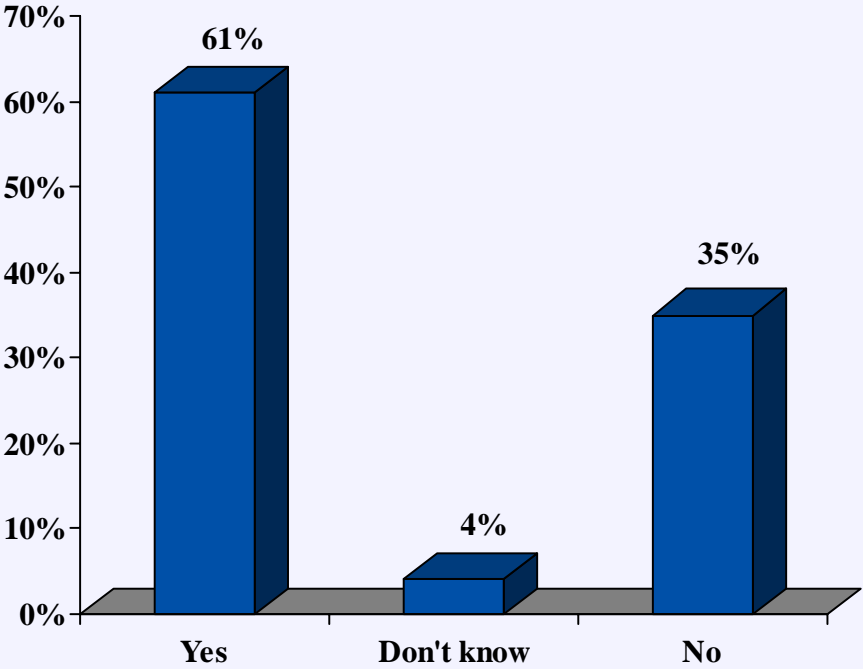


More than Six-in-Ten Support Both Proposals when Told of the Costs to Individual Homeowners

“Passing this open lands bond measure would result in an increase in your property taxes ... would you vote yes in favor or no to oppose a property tax increase to pay for an open lands bond if you knew that it would cost the average homeowner about **\$18 dollars** per year over the 20-year life of the bond.” (Q7A, N=195)

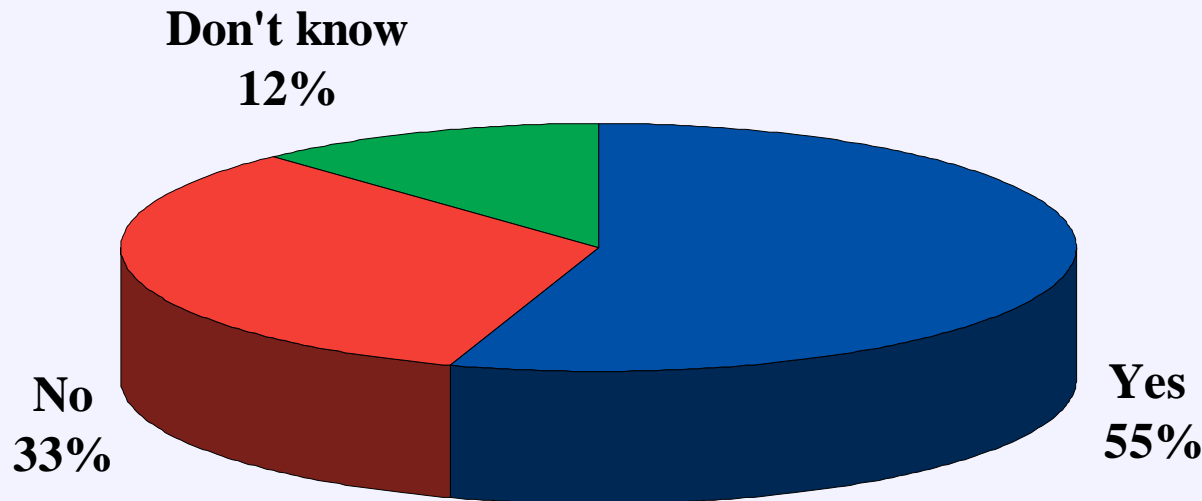


“Passing this open lands bond measure would result in an increase in your property taxes ... would you vote yes in favor or no to oppose a property tax increase to pay for an open lands bond if you knew that it would cost the average homeowner about **\$27 dollars** per year over the 20-year life of the bond.” (Q7B, N=205)



Exemption of Farm/Agricultural Property Generates Majority Support for Open Land Bond Measure

“Now let me ask you whether you think you would vote yes in favor or no to oppose an open lands bond to pay for conserving farm and ranch lands, providing recreational access, protecting water quality of streams and rivers, managing growth, and protecting wildlife areas if you knew that agricultural property was exempt from any property tax increase associated with the open lands bond?” (Q8)



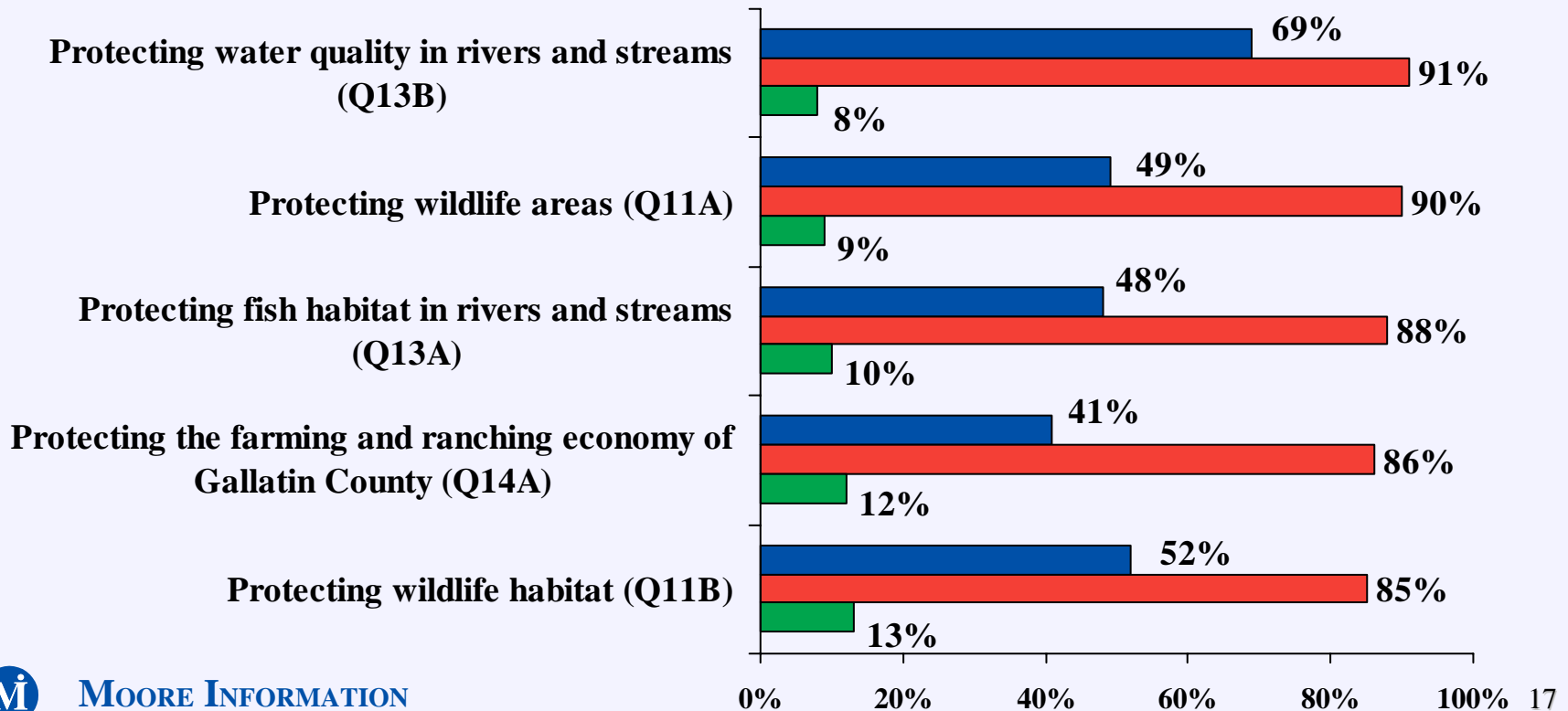
Project Funding Priorities



Protecting Water Quality, Fish & Wildlife Habitat are Highest Priorities

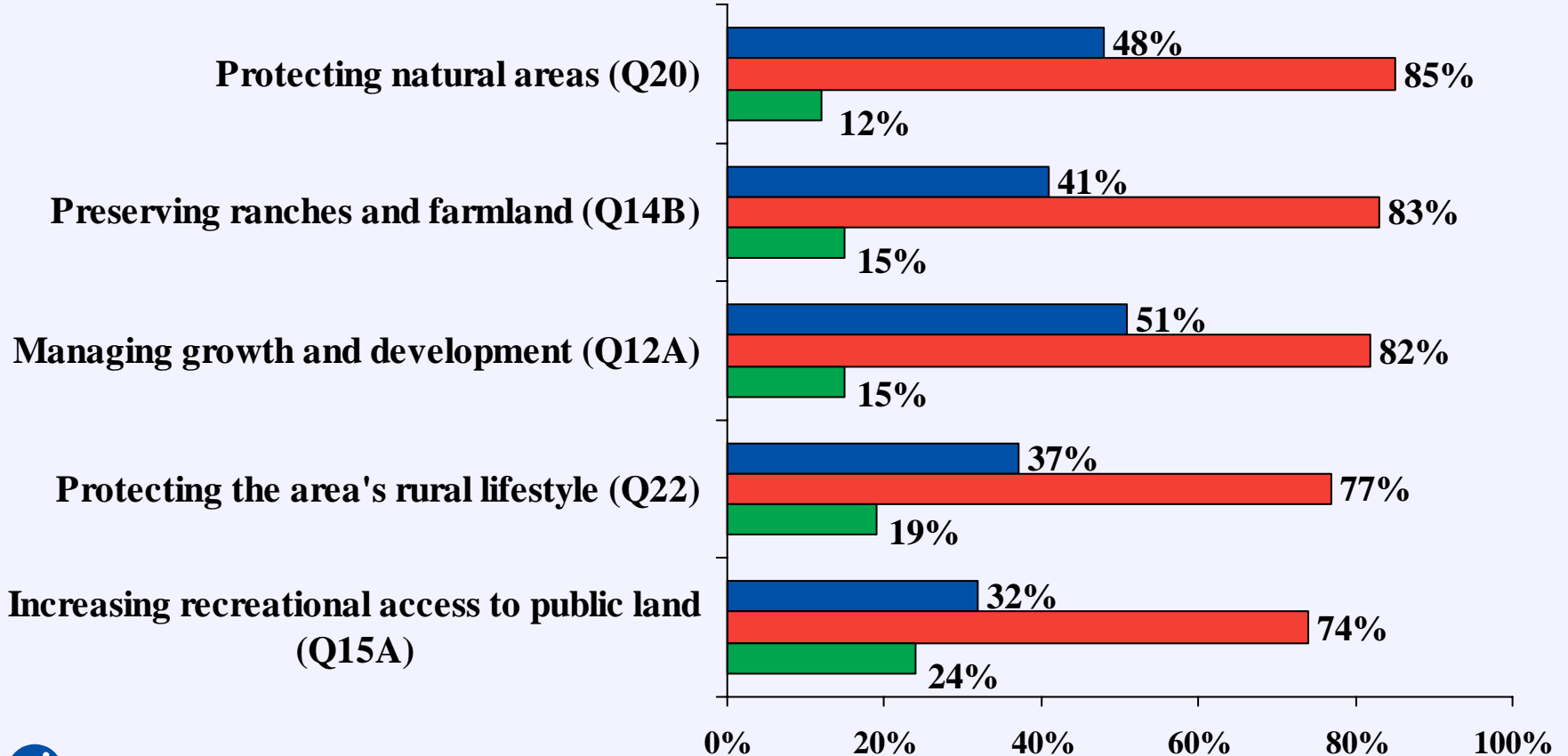
“I am now going to read you a list of possible projects that money from the open lands bond might pay for. Regardless of how you think you would vote on such a measure, please tell me if it would be extremely important to you that money for the project be included in the measure, fairly important, not too important or not at all important.”

■ Extremely important ■ Extremely/fairly important ■ Not too/not at all important



Other Open Space Funding Priorities

■ Extremely important ■ Extremely/fairly important ■ Not too/not at all important

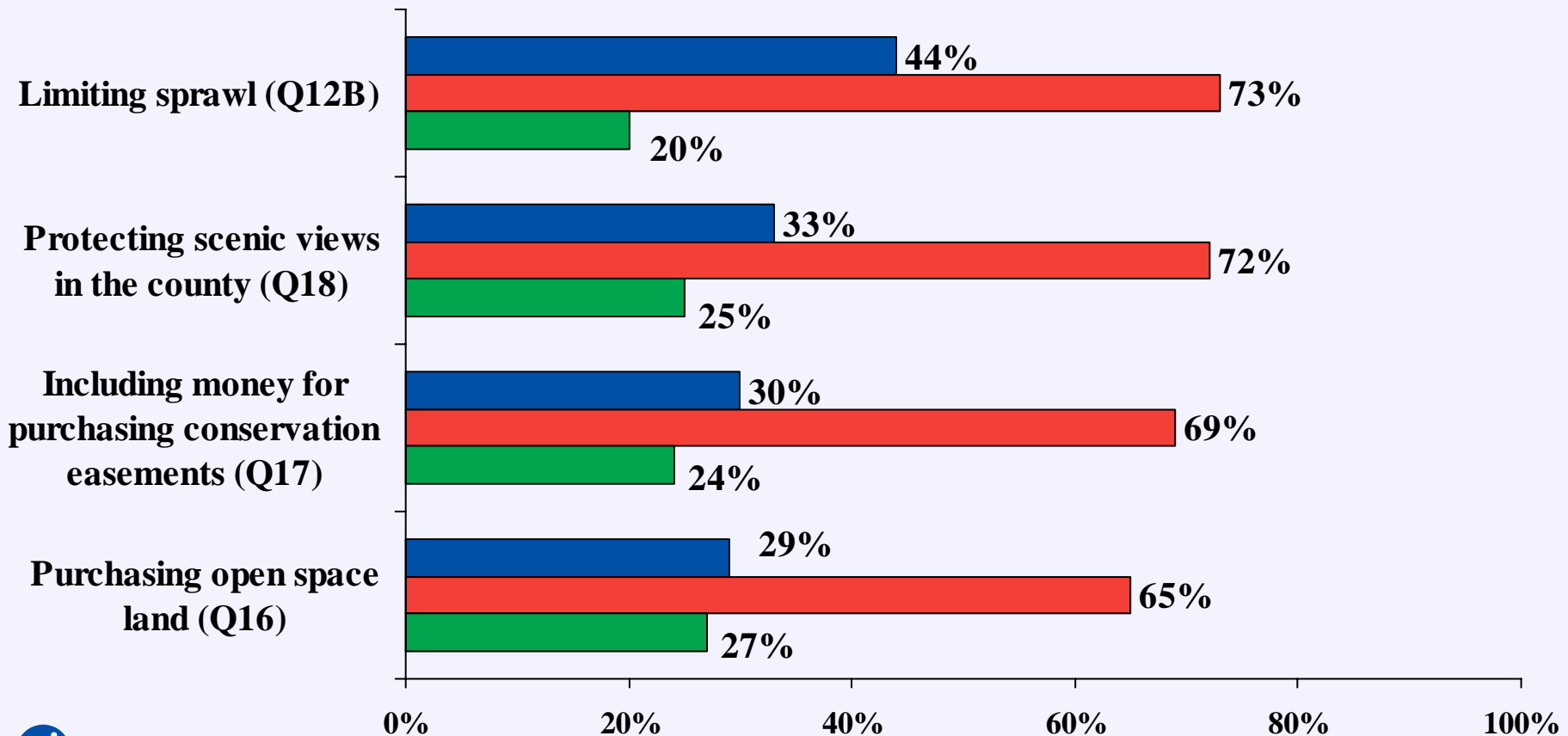


More Open Space Funding Priorities

■ Extremely important

■ Extremely/fairly important

■ Not too/not at all important

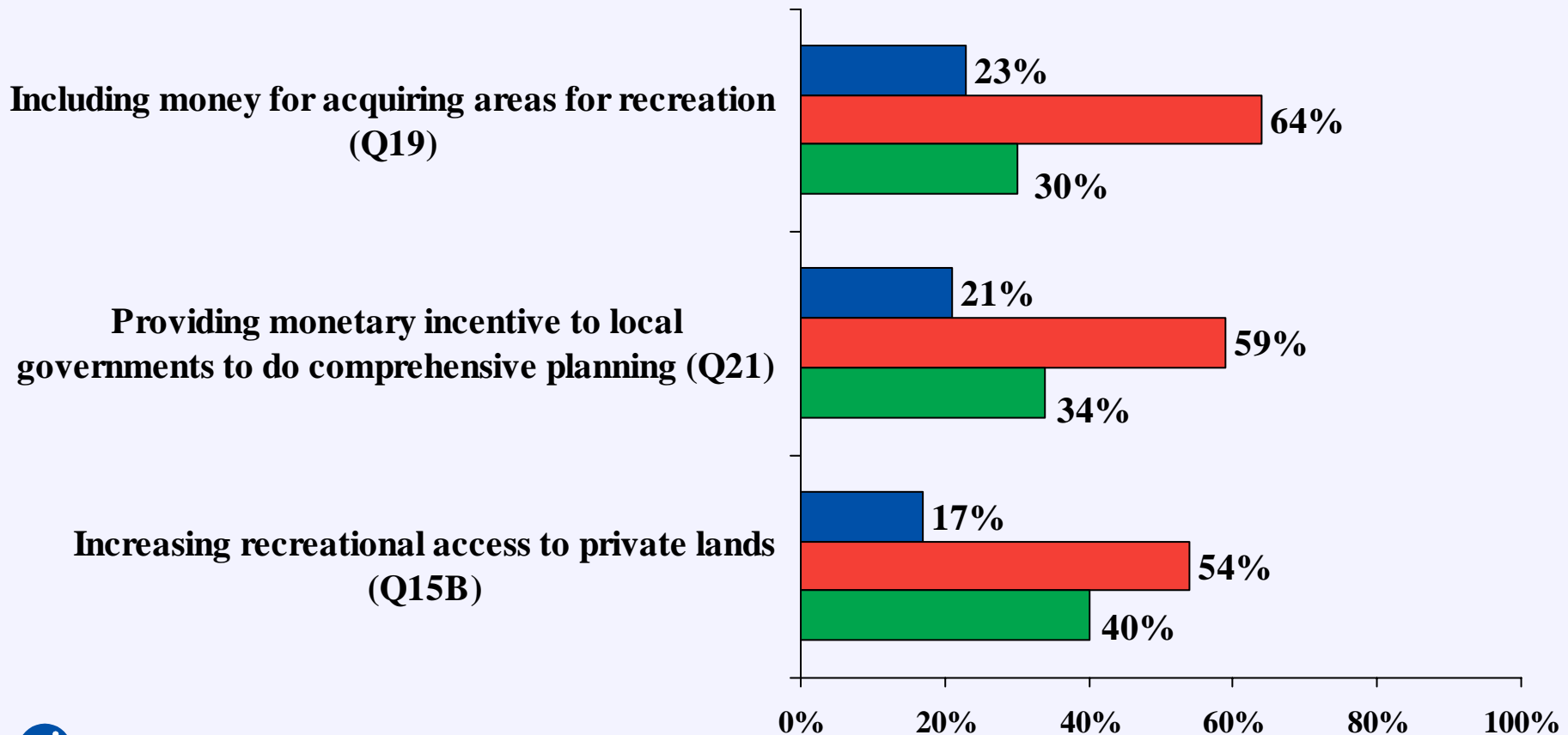


More Open Space Funding Priorities

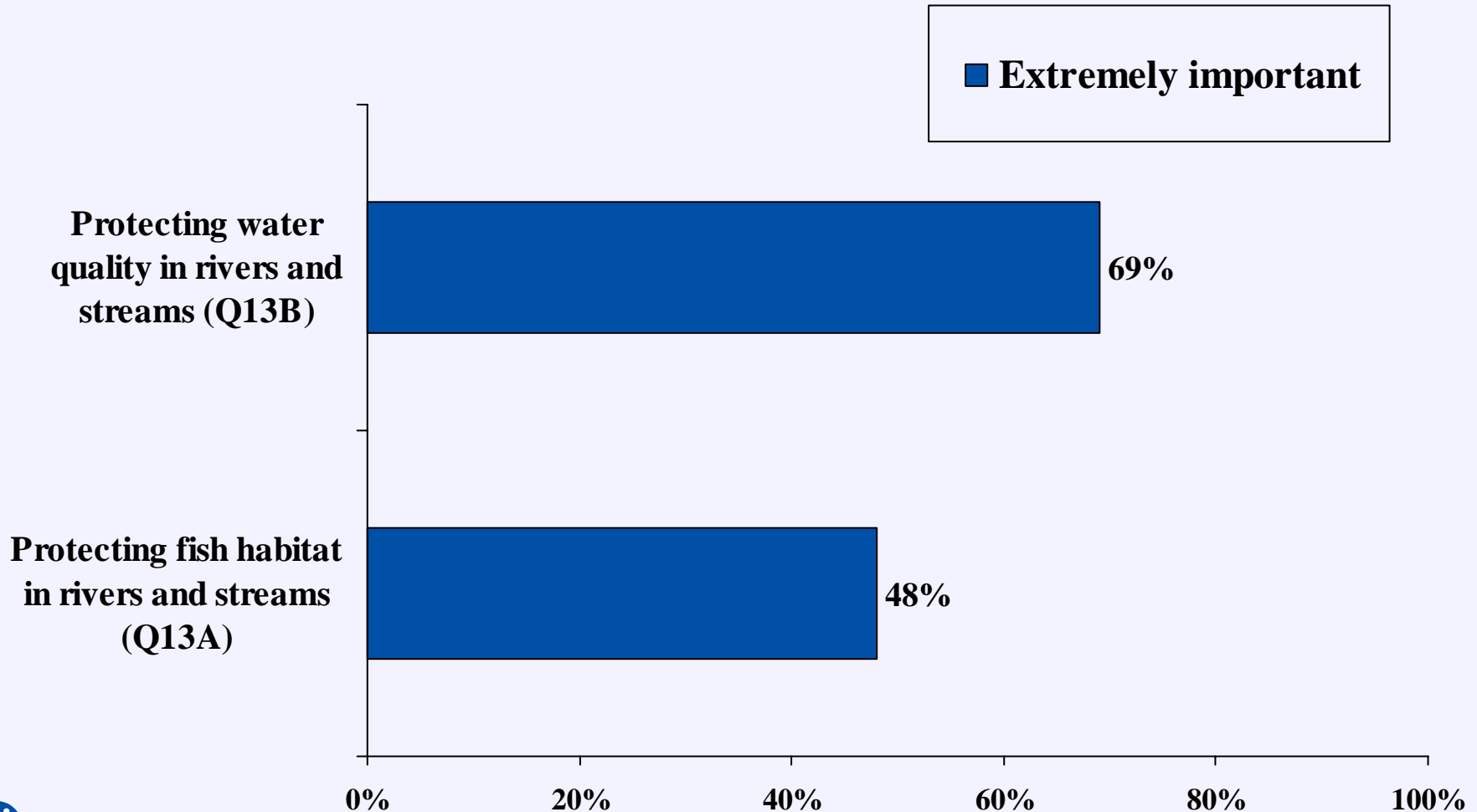
■ Extremely important

■ Extremely/fairly important

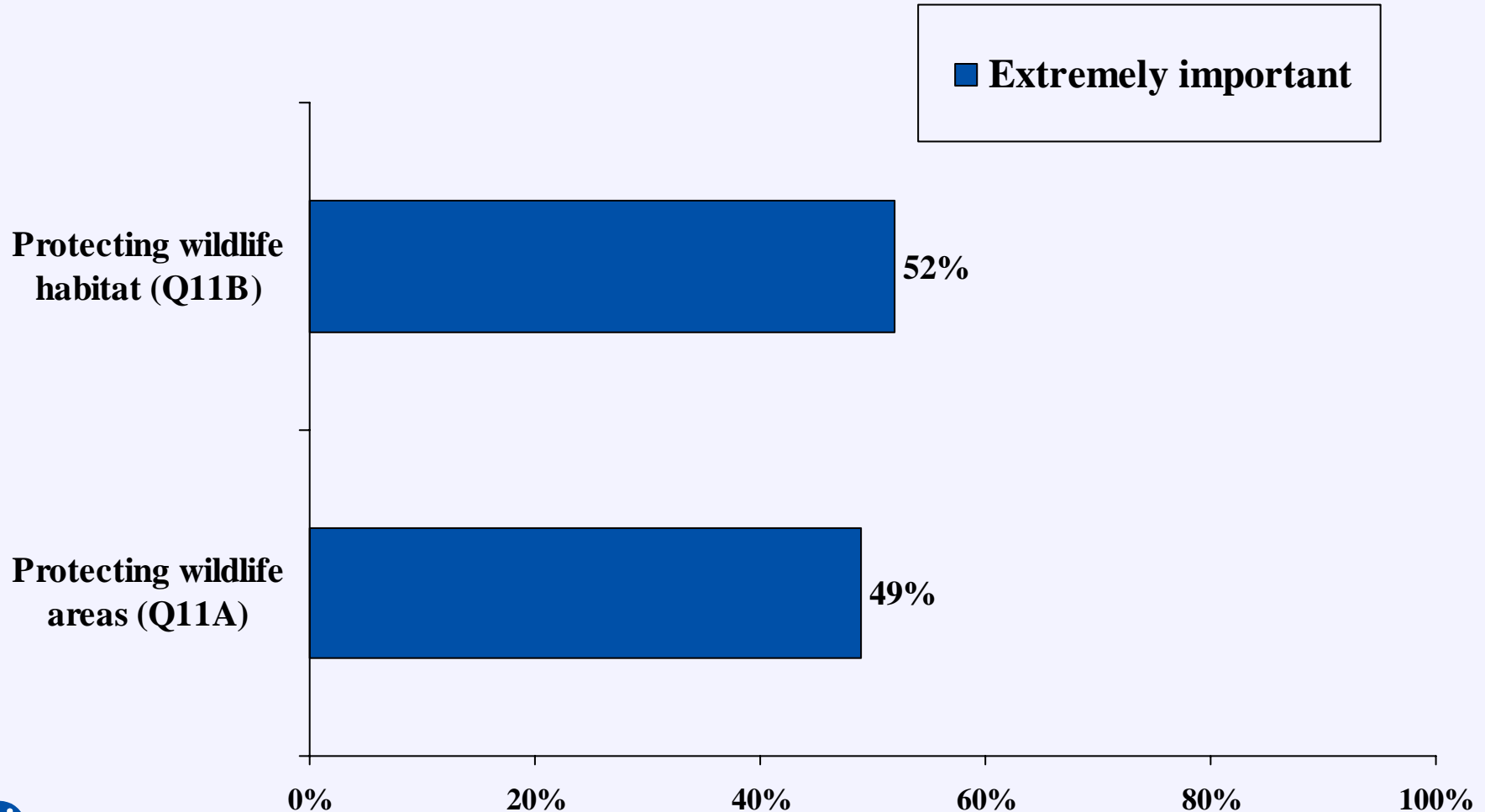
■ Not too/not at all important



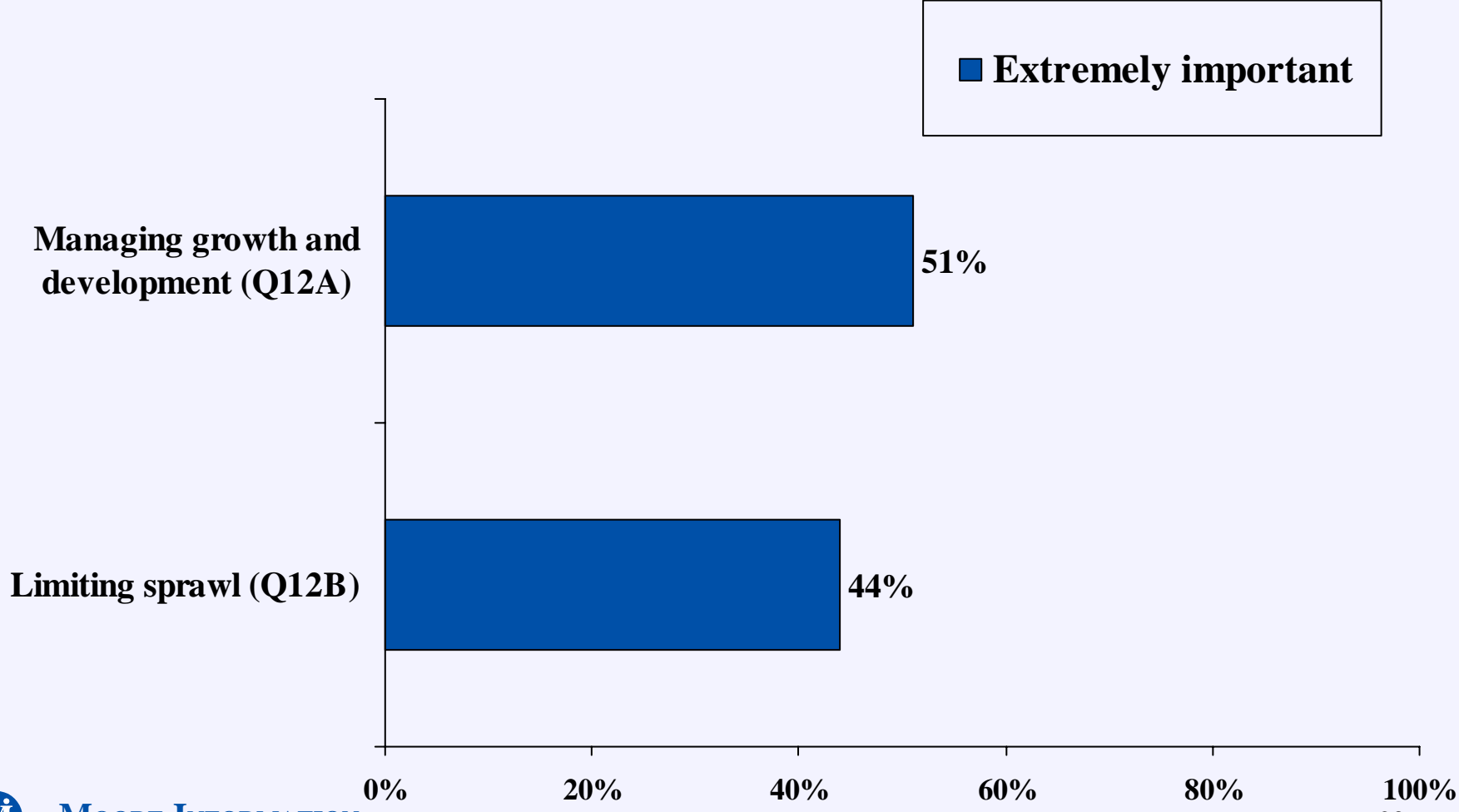
Funding Priorities: *“Protecting Water Quality” is More Important than “Protecting Fish Habitat”*



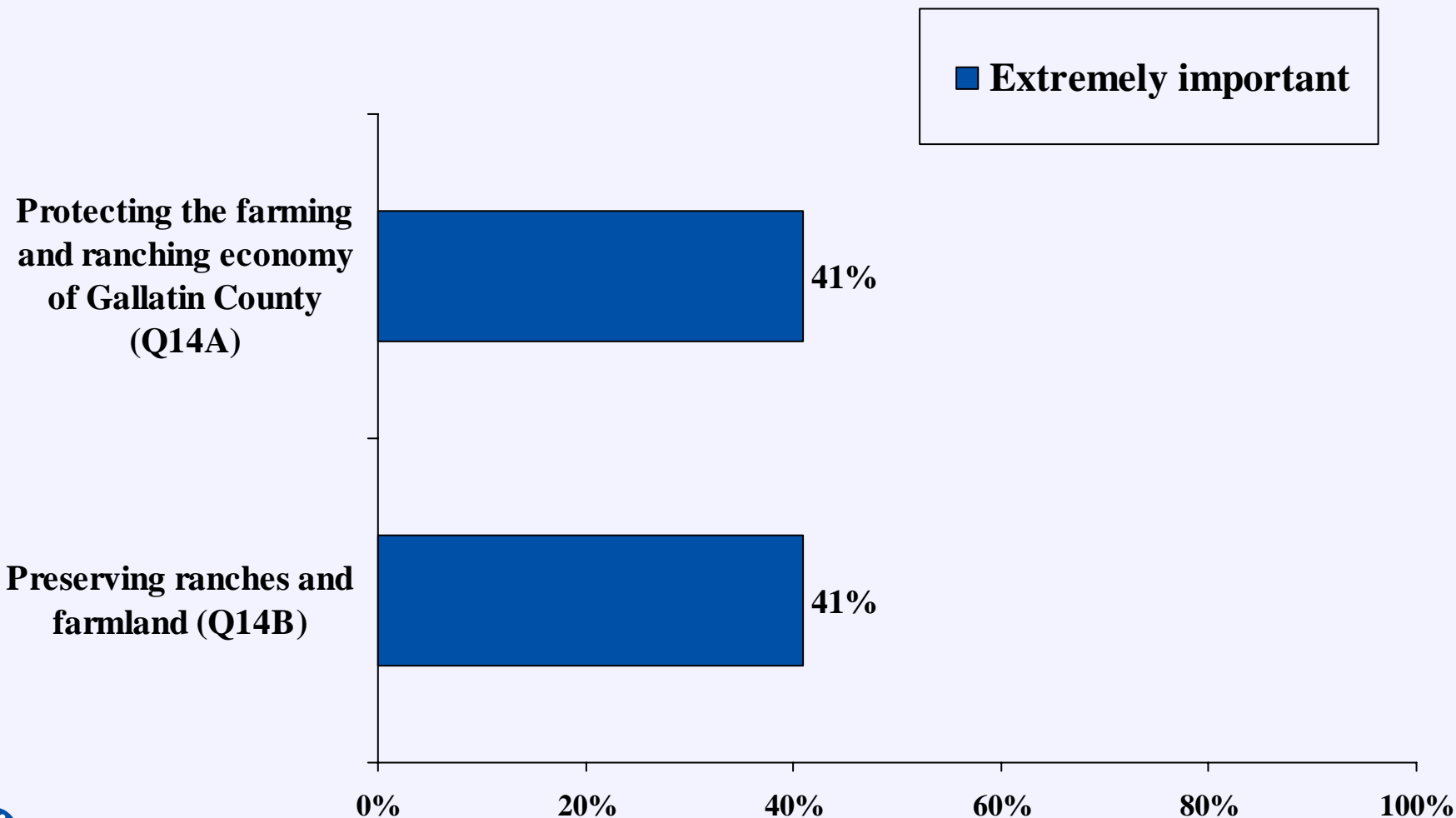
Funding Priorities: *“Protecting Wildlife Habitat” is Equally Important as “Protecting Wildlife Areas”*



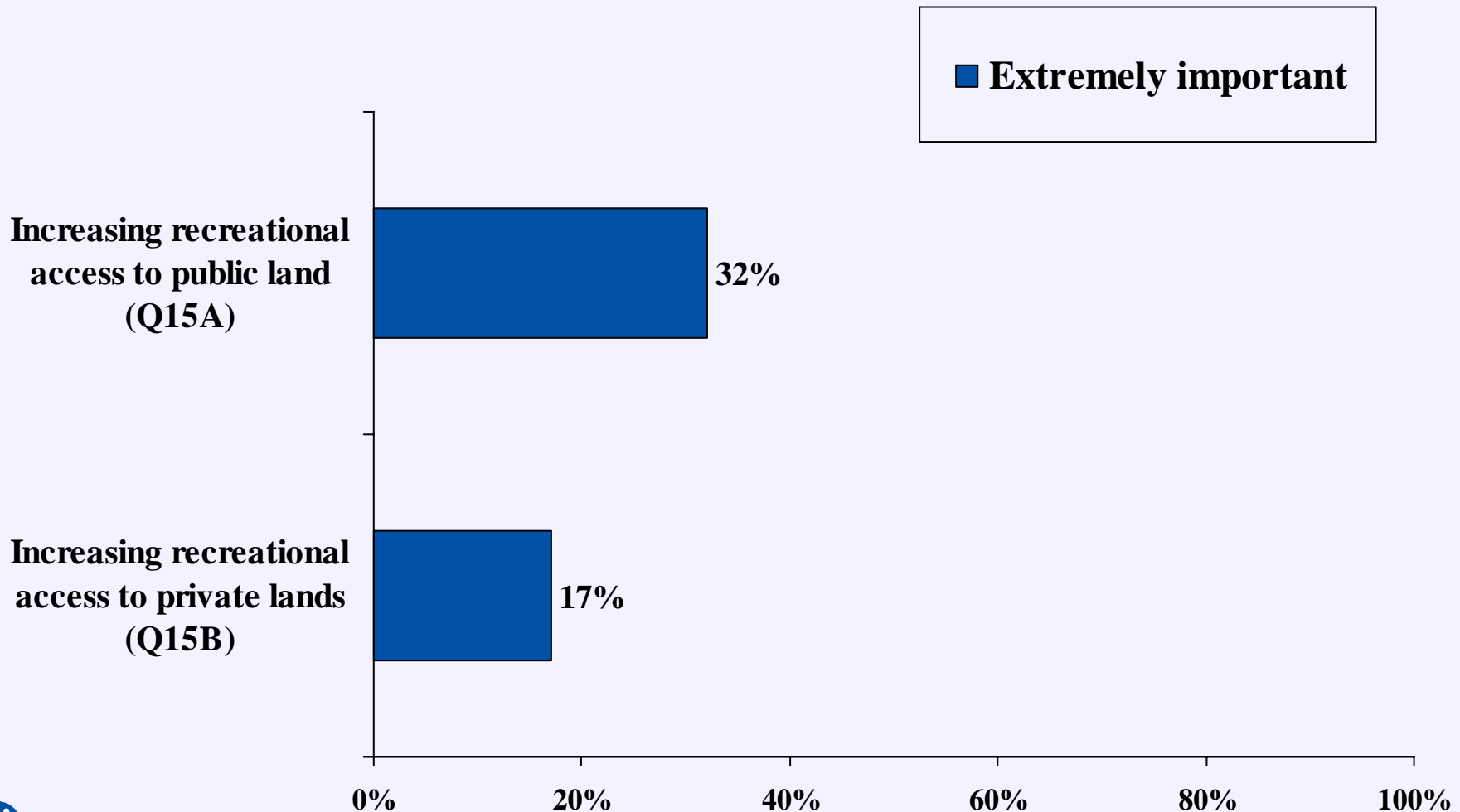
Funding Priorities: *“Managing Growth and Development” is More Important than “Limiting Sprawl”*



Funding Priorities: *“Protecting the Farming Economy” is Just as Important as “Preserving Ranches and Farmland”*



Funding Priorities: *“Increasing Access to Public Land” is More Important than “Increasing Access to Private Land”*



Funding Priorities:

Historic Trends -1

--Ranked by % extremely important--

	<u>Extremely important</u>	<u>Extremely/ fairly important</u>
Protecting water quality in rivers/streams		
2004	69%	91%
2000	78%	94%
Protecting wildlife habitat		
2004	52%	85%
2000	67%	90%
Managing growth/development		
2004	51%	82%
2000	56%	84%

Funding Priorities:

Historic Trends -2

--Ranked by % extremely important--

Extremely
important

Extremely/
fairly important

Protecting wildlife areas

2004 49% 90%

2000 60% 88%

Protecting fish habitat in rivers/streams

2004 48% 88%

2000 62% 91%

Limiting sprawl

2004 44% 73%

2000 45% 72%

Funding Priorities:

Historic Trends -3

--Ranked by % extremely important--

Extremely
important

Extremely/
fairly important

Protecting the farming/ranching economy

2004 41% 86%

2000 57% 91%

Preserving ranches/farmland

2004 41% 83%

2000 59% 86%

Protecting the area's rural lifestyle

2004 37% 77%

2000 51% 82%

Funding Priorities:

Historic Trends -4

--Ranked by % extremely important--

Extremely
important

Extremely/
fairly important

Protecting scenic views in the county

2004 33% 72%

2000 42% 79%

Purchasing conservation easements

2004 30% 69%

2000 36% 67%

Purchasing open space land

2004 29% 65%

2000 31% 67%

Acquiring areas for recreation

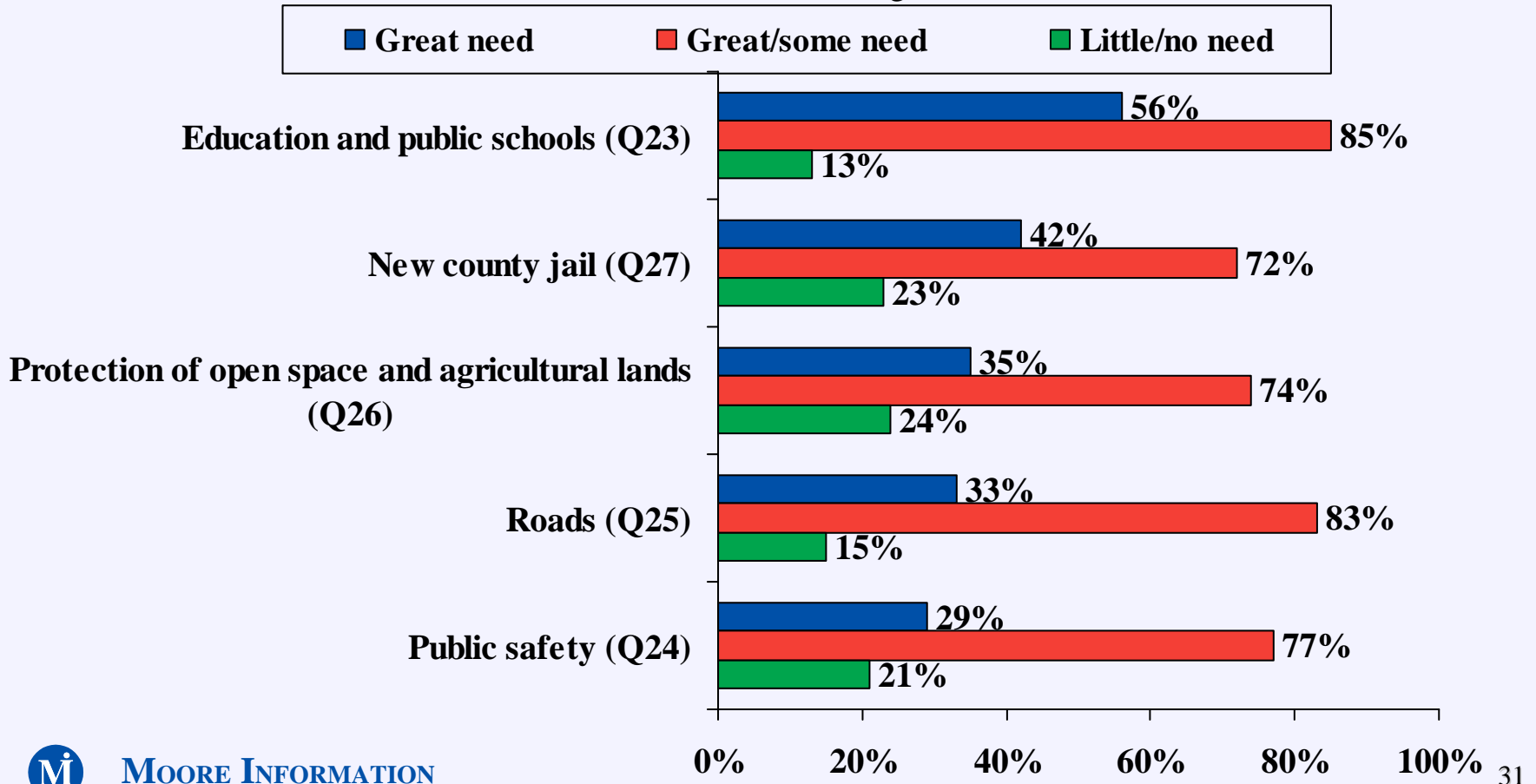
2004 23% 64%

2000 33% 78%

Perceptions of Local Government Program Funding Needs

Local Government: *Education is the Highest Priority*

“Now let me read you a list of some of the programs local government is responsible for funding. For each one, please tell me if you think it has a great need for additional funding, some need, a little need or no real need for additional funding.”



Local Government Priorities: *Historic Trends*

	<u>Great need</u>
Education and public schools	
2004	56%
2000	51%
Protection of open space and agricultural lands	
2004	35%
2000	39%
Roads	
2004	33%
2000	35%
Public safety	
2004	29%
2000	25%

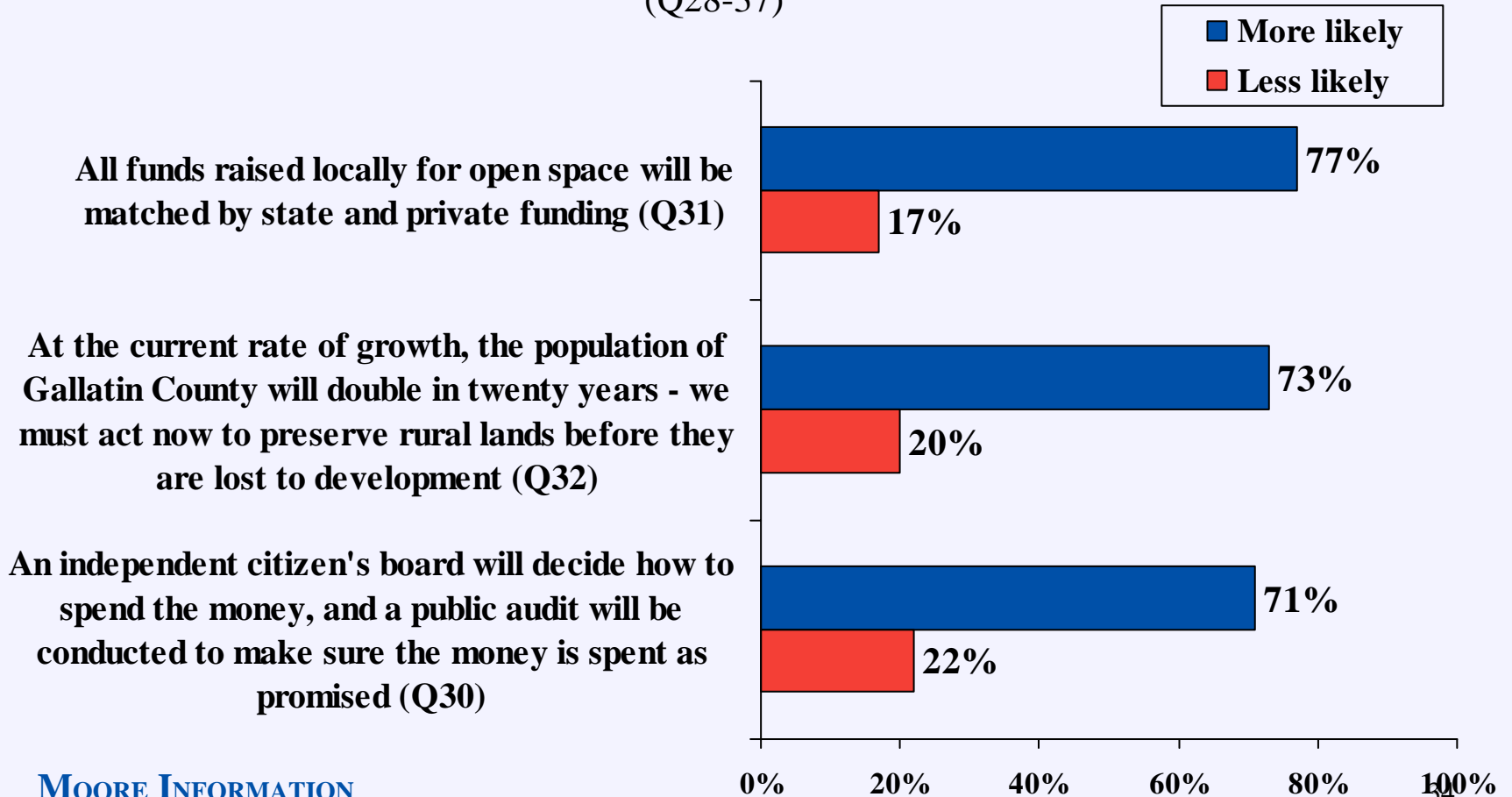
Message Testing



Bond Measure Message Testing - 1

“Now I am going to read some statements made by people who favor an open lands bond measure. After hearing each statement, please tell me if it makes you more likely or less likely to support the measure.”

(Q28-37)

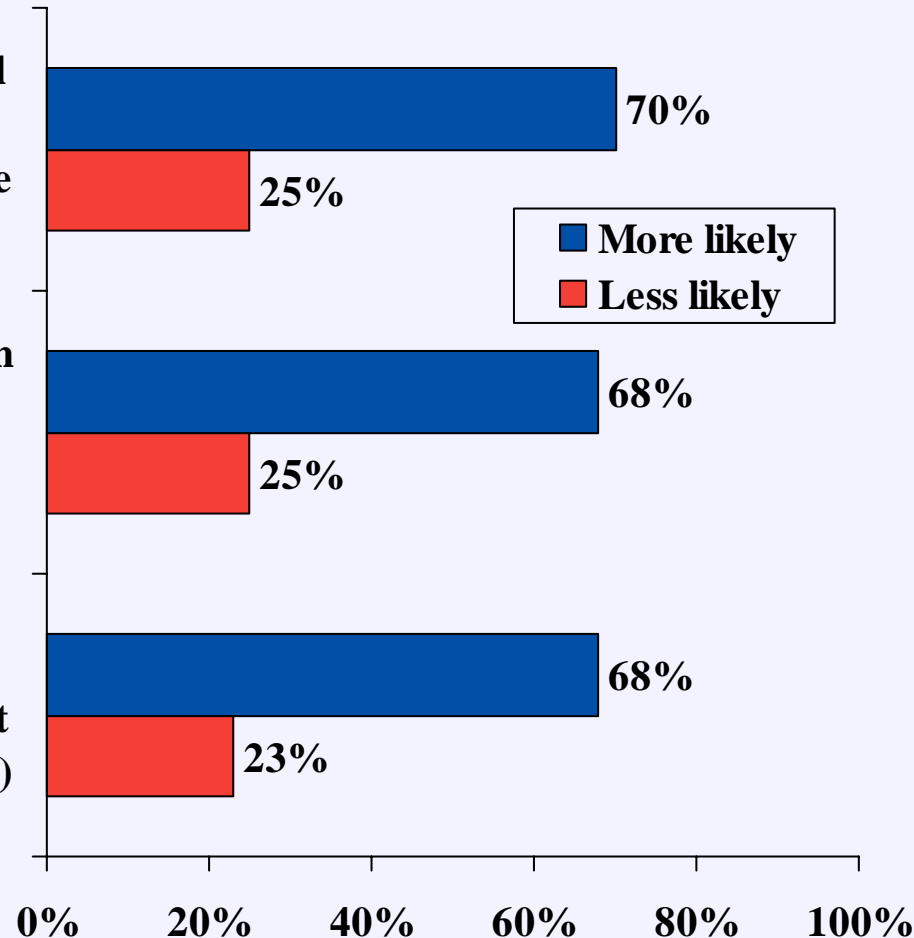


Bond Measure Message Testing - 2

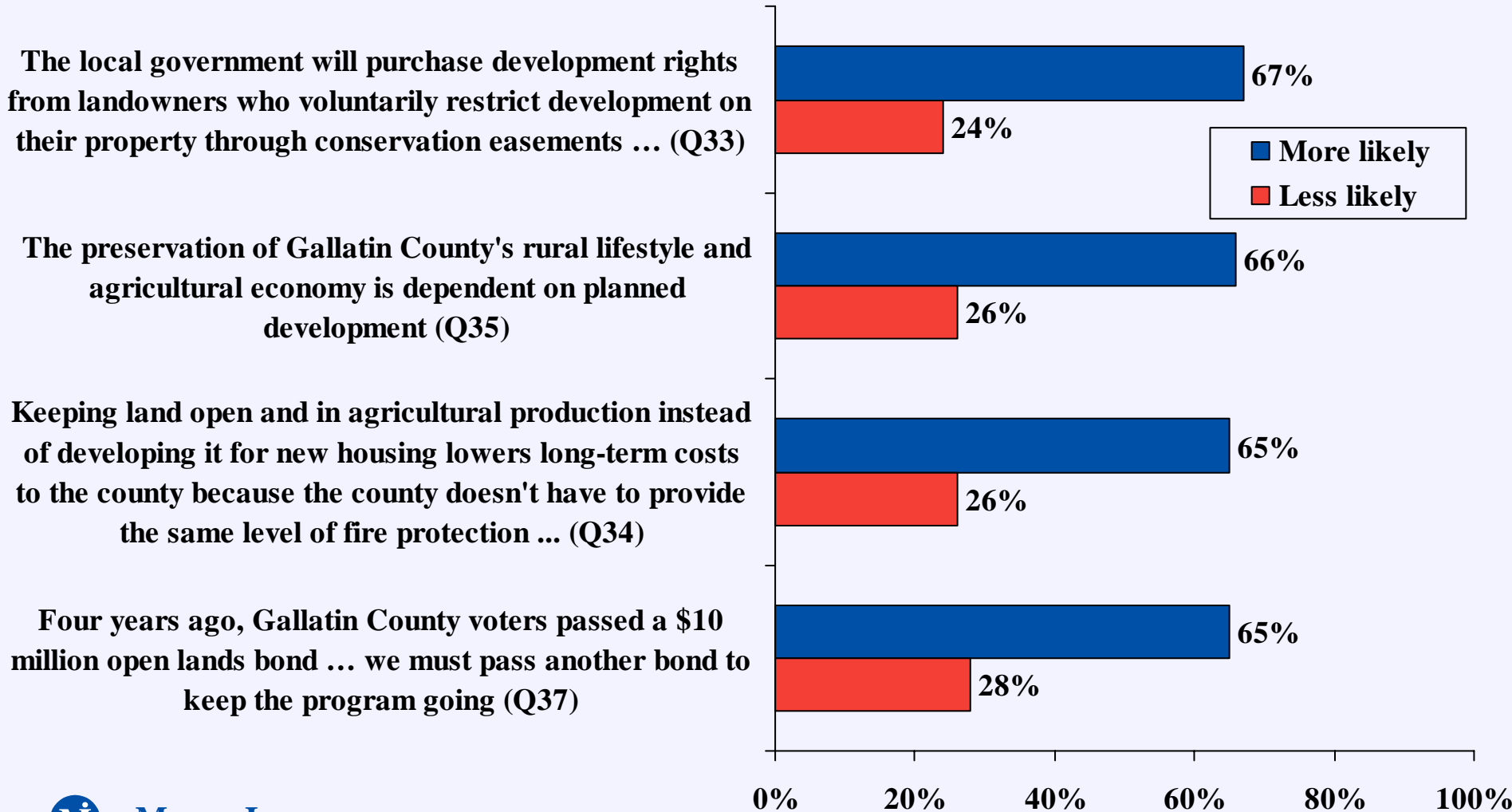
We must protect Gallatin County's agricultural land and natural areas before they are gone forever. The longer we wait, the more expensive it will be (Q29)

We owe it to our children and our grandchildren to protect Gallatin County's agricultural land and natural areas. Unless we act now, these special places will be lost forever (Q28)

The preservation of Gallatin County's rural lifestyle and agricultural economy is dependent on preserving farm and open space lands (Q36)



Bond Measure Message Testing - 3

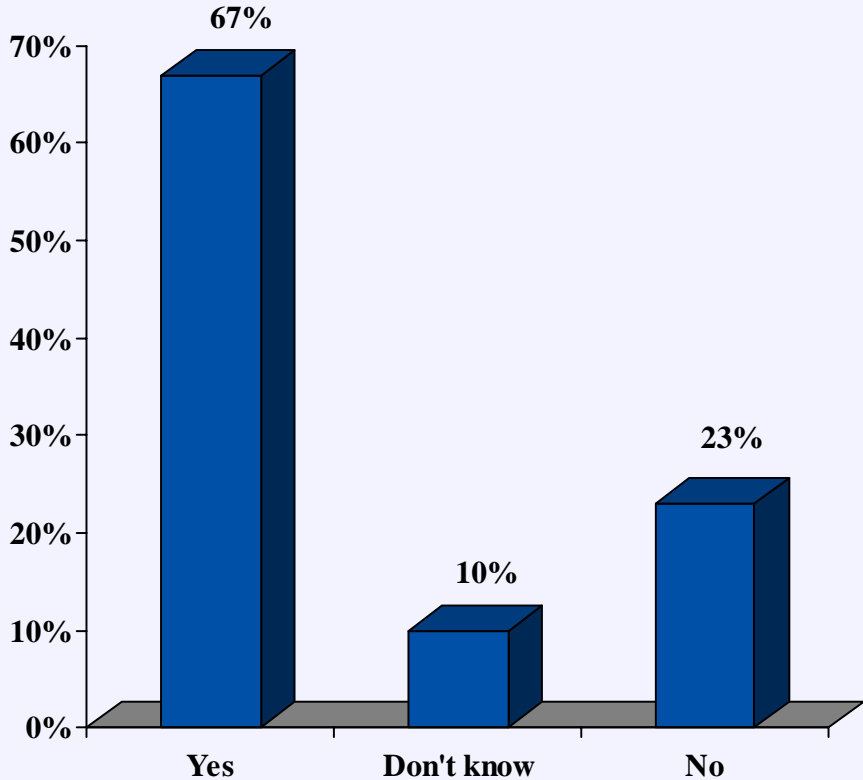


Informed Ballot

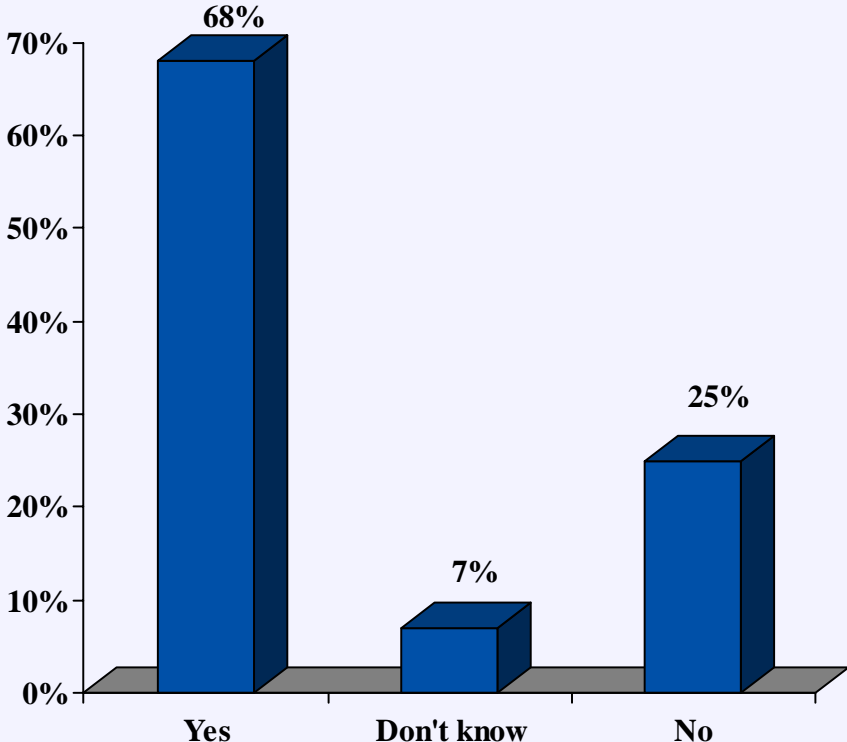


Not Much Shift in Support for \$10 Million Bond Measure

Initial \$10 million ballot (Q3)

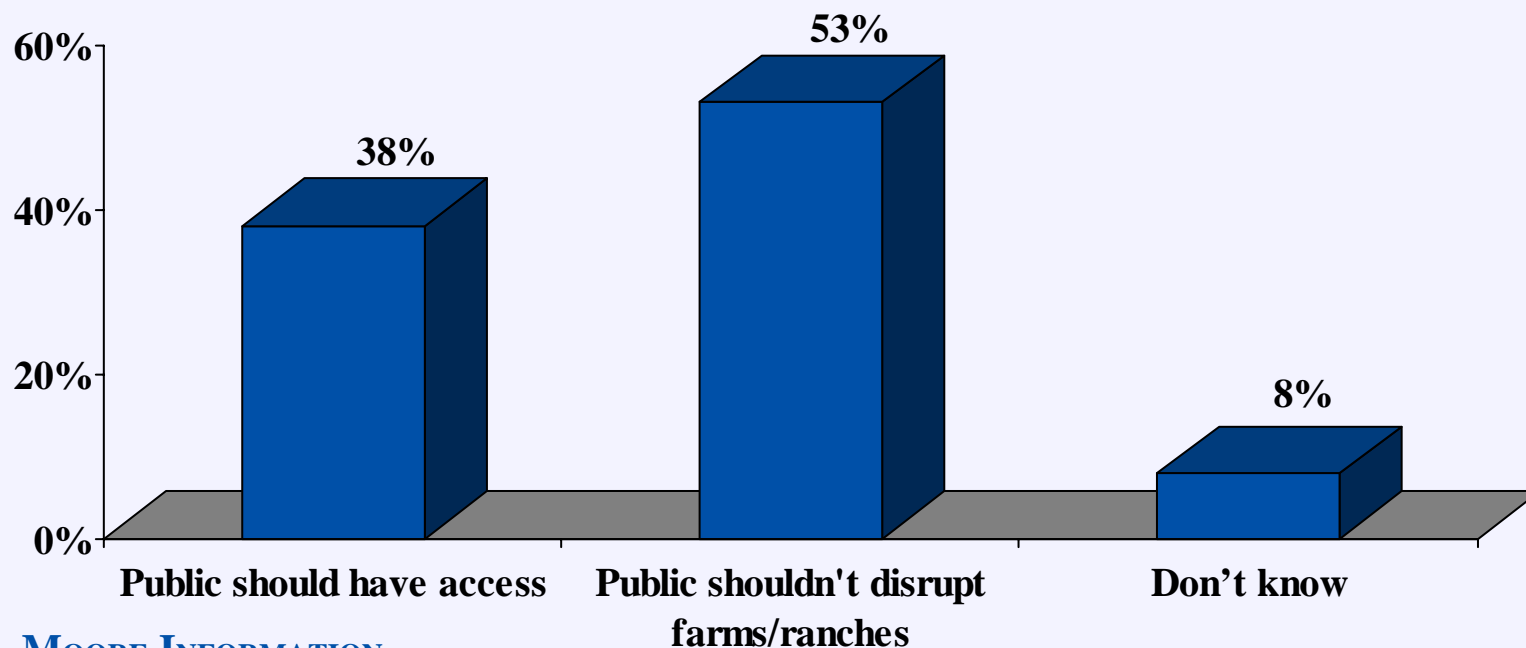


Informed \$10 million ballot (Q38)



Public Use of Easements: *Majority Share Farmers/Ranchers Viewpoint*

“Now I am going to read you two points of view. After hearing each, please tell me which one comes closest to your own view. Some people say that because the county is using public money to purchase conservation easements, the public ought to have the right to access the land for recreational purposes. Other people say that even though public money is being used to purchase easements, it’s the landowners’ property and working farms and ranches shouldn’t have the public disrupting their operations. Which of these views comes closest to your own view?” (Q39)



Public Use of Easements

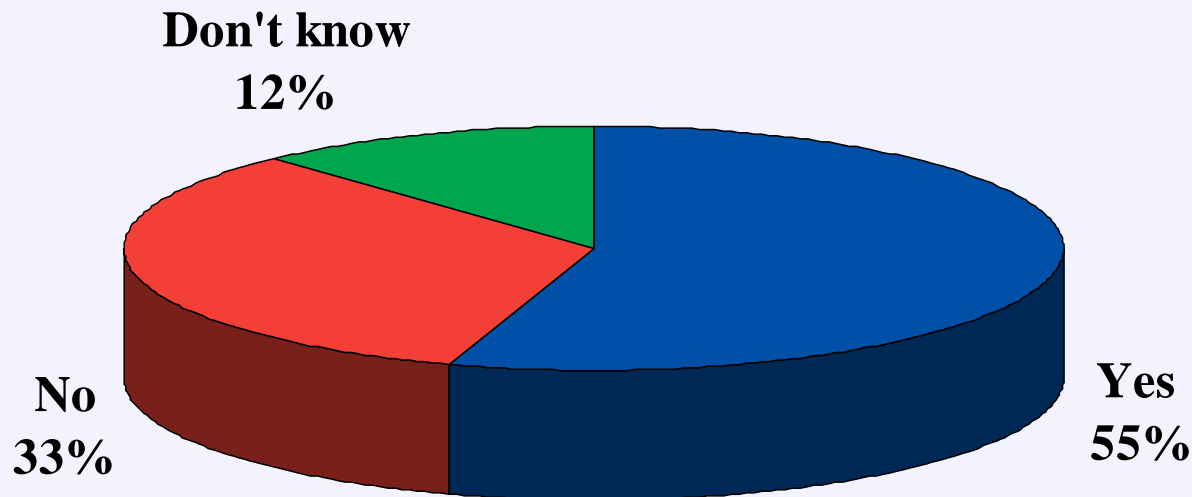
- Most likely to say public should have access to easements
 - Voters age 18-34
 - Divided between public access/not disrupting farms/ranches
- Most likely to say public shouldn't disrupt farms/ranches
 - Women
 - Voters age 45+
 - Farmers/ranchers
 - Voters outside Bozeman city limits

Other Potential Bond Measures in 2004



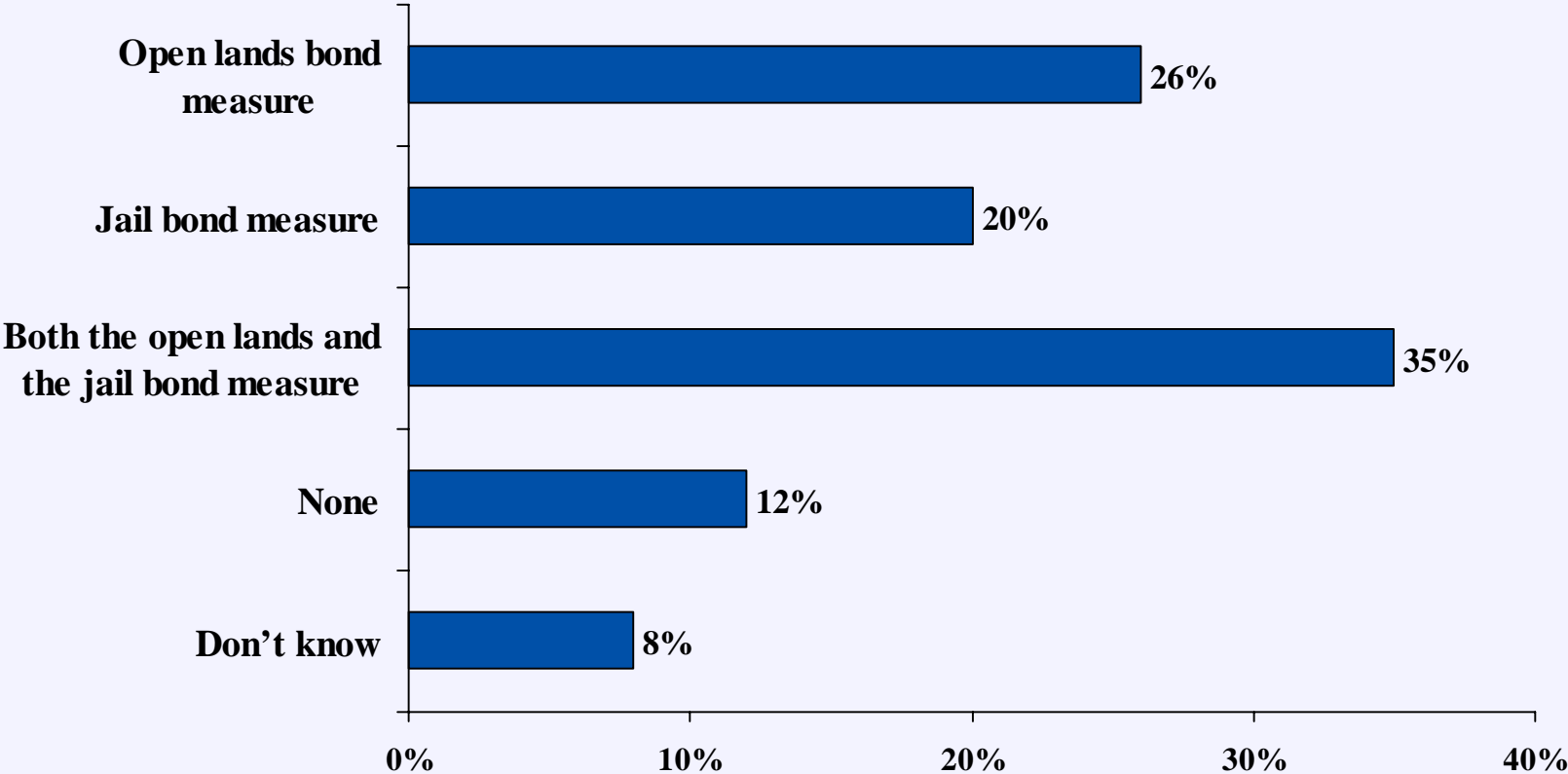
Majority Support \$20 Million Measure for New County Jail

“Another measure that might be on the November 2004 ballot would ask county voters to approve a bond measure of up to \$20 million to pay for a new county jail. This measure would cost the average homeowner about \$36 per year over the life of the bond. Do you think you would vote yes in favor of this measure or no to oppose it?” (Q9)

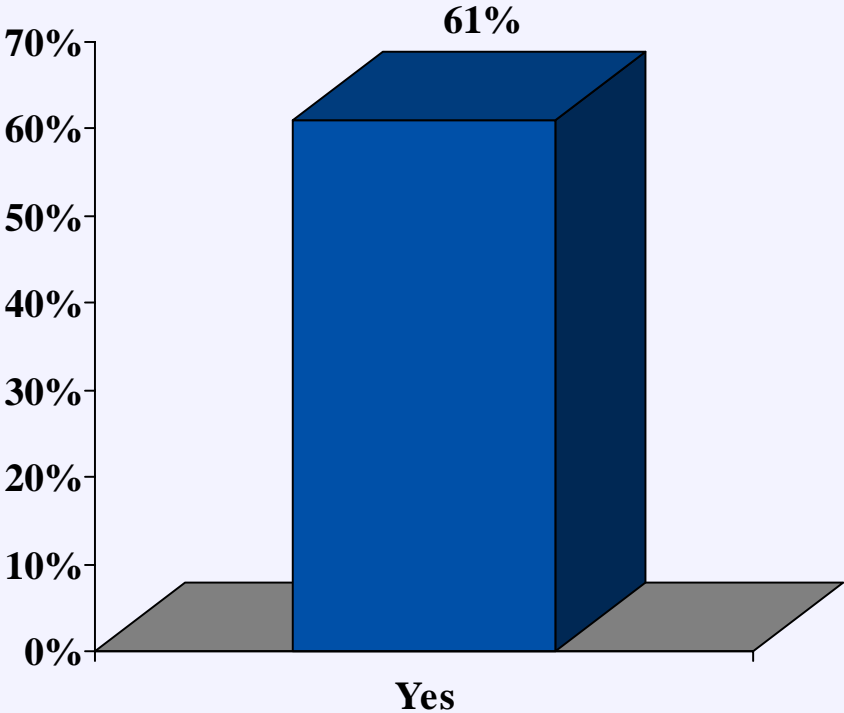


If Open Land and Jail Measures are Both on the Ballot ...

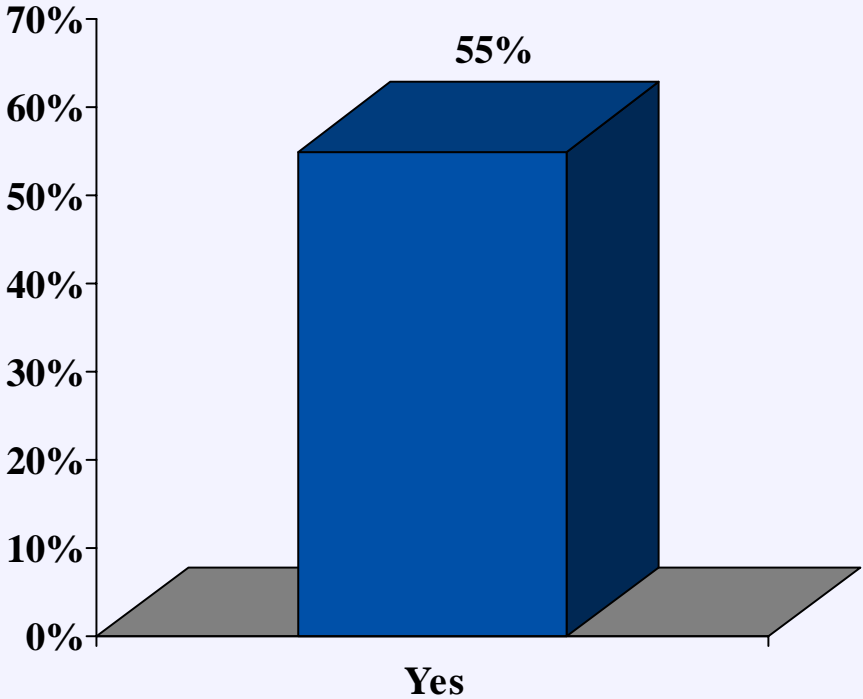
“If both the open lands bond measure and the jail bond measure were on the November 2004 ballot, would you vote for ... ” (Q10)



Both Measures Could Pass



--Vote for open lands measure/both--



--Vote for jail measure/both--



MEMORANDUM

To: Gallatin County Open Lands Board
From: Adam Eichberg, Trust for Public Land
Date: February 20, 2004
Re: Bond Costs for Gallatin County, Montana

Gallatin County may issue general obligations bonds for land acquisition or the purchase of conservation easements. County debt, however, is limited to 1.4 percent of the total assessed value of taxable property, although this limitation does not apply to the acquisition of conservation easements.¹ For 2004, the limit is \$57,822,737. Any indebtedness for a single purpose greater than \$1 million requires the approval of the voters.²

As of February 1, 2004, the county presently has \$8,230,000 in outstanding general obligation bond indebtedness.³ As such, Gallatin County presently has \$49,592,737 remaining in debt capacity.

Property taxes levied to pay the principal and interest for general obligations bonds issued for open space may not be levied against agricultural land or forest land.⁴

¹ Mont. Code. Ann. §7-7-2101 (2003).

² §7-7-2402.

³ The \$8,230,000 in general obligation bond indebtedness is comprised of a \$705,000 rest home bond; a \$3,525,000 open space bond from 2001; and a \$4 million open space bond from 2003. Telephone interview with Elissa Moffat, Gallatin County Assessor's Office (Feb. 20, 2004).

⁴ §76-6-109.

The chart below contains the hypothetical household costs of various bond issues if there were no residential exemptions in place.

Gallatin County Bond Financing Costs

Assumes 20-year bond issues at 5.0% Interest Rate

Taxable Value = \$144.9 million

Bond Issue	Annual Debt Svce	Mill Increase	Cost/ Year/ \$100K House*	Cost/ Ave./ Household**
\$5,000,000	\$401,213	0.002770	\$9.14	\$13.07
\$10,000,000	\$802,246	0.005539	\$18.28	\$26.14
\$15,000,000	\$1,203,639	0.008309	\$27.42	\$39.21
\$20,000,000	\$1,604,852	0.011079	\$36.56	\$52.28

*Based on taxable value \$3,300.

**Based on 2000 median home value of \$143,000 (taxable value \$4,719).

For the years 2003 through 2008, a homestead residential exemption exists to alleviate the impact of the 2003 reappraised values of properties (reappraisal conducted by the state). The residential homestead exemption reflects the phase-in values for residential properties at rates beginning at 31.4 percent in 2004 to 34 percent in 2008.⁵ Therefore, the cost of bonds will be lower for the median residence valued at \$143,000 for the next six years, as depicted below.

Gallatin County Bond Financing Costs With Residential Exemption

(Based on median home value of \$143,000)

Bond Issue	2004		2005		2006		2007		2008	
	Rez Exemption	Rez Exemption	Rez Exemption	Rez Exemption	Rez Exemption	Rez Exemption	Rez Exemption	Rez Exemption	Rez Exemption	Rez Exemption
	31.4%/ 3.3%	32%/ 3.22%	32.6%/ 3.14%	33.2%/ 3.07%	34%/ 3.01%					
\$5,000,000	\$8.97	\$8.67	\$8.38	\$8.12	\$7.87					
\$10,000,000	\$17.93	\$17.34	\$16.76	\$16.24	\$15.74					
\$15,000,000	\$26.90	\$26.02	\$25.15	\$24.37	\$23.60					
\$20,000,000	\$35.87	\$34.69	\$33.53	\$32.49	\$31.47					

⁵ The “phase-in” of value resulted from legislative efforts to mitigate the effect of property value increases due to mandated reappraisals of property every five years in Montana. The effect of the “phase-in” is to create a partial exemption and reduce the tax rate.

The chart below contains the hypothetical household costs of various bond issues if there were no residential exemptions in place.

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Gallatin County Bond Financing Costs With Residential Exemption

(Based on median home value of \$143,000)

Bond Issue	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
	Rez Exemption	Rez Exemption	Rez Exemption	Rez Exemption	Rez Exemption
	31.4%/ 3.3%	32%/ 3.22%	32.6%/ 3.14%	33.2%/ 3.07%	34%/ 3.01%
\$5,000,000	\$8.97	\$8.67	\$8.38	\$8.12	\$7.87
\$10,000,000	\$17.93	\$17.34	\$16.76	\$16.24	\$15.74
\$15,000,000	\$26.90	\$26.02	\$25.15	\$24.37	\$23.60
\$20,000,000	\$35.87	\$34.69	\$33.53	\$32.49	\$31.47

⁵ The “phase-in” of value resulted from legislative efforts to mitigate the effect of property value increases due to mandated reappraisals of property every five years in Montana. The effect of the “phase-in” is to create a partial exemption and reduce the tax rate.

Montana Classes of Property

The property classification system is as follows (Tax Year 2004 taxable value percentages are in parenthesis):

- **Class 1**
Net proceeds of mines and mining claims, except coal and metal mines (100%)
- **Class 2**
Gross proceeds of metal mines (3%)
- **Class 3**
Agricultural land (3.30%)
Nonproductive patented mining claims (3.30%)
Nonagricultural land 20 acres or more but under 160 acres (23.10%)
- **Class 4**
Residential, commercial, and industrial land and improvements (3.30%)
Golf courses (1.65%)
Mobile homes/Manufactured homes (3.30%)
- **Class 5**
Air and water pollution control equipment (3%)
Rural electric and telephone cooperatives (3%)
Real and personal property of "new industry" (3%)
Machinery and equipment used in electrolytic reduction facilities (3%)
Real and personal property of research and development firms (3%)
Real and personal property used to produce gasohol (3%)
- **Class 6**
Repealed. Secs. 27,31, Chapter 285, L.1999 (Now Exempt)
- **Class 7**
Qualifying rural electric associations (8%)
- **Class 8**
Business personal property (3%, possible phase-down beginning in 2004, MCA 15-6-138)
- **Class 9**
Real & personal property of pipelines and the non-electric generating properties of electric utilities (12%)
- **Class 10**
Forest land (0.35%)
- **Class 11**
Repealed. Sec. 9, Chapter 267, L. 1993
- **Class 12**
Real and personal property of railroads, railroad car companies, and airlines recalculated each year (3.88% for tax year 2003) MCA 15-6-145
- **Class 13**
Real & personal property of telecommunication utilities and the electric generating property of electric utilities (6%)