



MEMORANDUM

TO: Interested Parties
FROM: Lori Weigel & Karoline McGrail / New Bridge Strategy
DATE: August 28, 2026
RE: Statewide Survey Shows Utah Voters Support Restoring Protections to All Areas of Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monuments

A recent statewide survey of Utah voters¹ conducted by New Bridge Strategy demonstrates overwhelming support for national monuments generally and Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante national monuments specifically. Voters are generally aware of the monument reductions that were recently announced, and two-thirds of voters statewide feel greater protections should be restored to all areas of the monuments. This sentiment holds true across party lines and all areas of the state. A majority of voters also say it is very important for Native American tribes to have a strong role in helping to manage these public lands that they consider to be sacred or culturally important.

The survey found that:

- **Two thirds of voters tell us greater protections should be restored to all of the area that was previously included in Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante.** Survey respondents were first asked if they had seen, read or heard anything about *"Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante, two federally protected public land areas in Utah, which contain fossils, petroglyphs, cliff dwellings, and wildlife habitat - Recently, the boundaries of Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante were reduced by more than 90 percent, so that there are now fewer protections for wildlife, water, and the historic sites in those two areas."* Nearly three-quarters (74 percent) of voters said they had heard "a lot" or "some." Only one-in-ten has heard "nothing."

More significantly, when given two competing viewpoints about the future of these areas, two-thirds say that the protections should be restored to all of these lands within the monuments:

66 percent Greater protections should be restored to all of Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante

33 percent Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante should only have greater protections in a smaller area

¹ New Bridge Strategy conducted a survey among N=500 registered voters throughout Utah from August 10-17, 2026. Interviews were distributed proportionally throughout the state and conducted via live telephone interviews (both cell phones and landlines) and online. Quotas were set for key demographic sub-groups, such as gender and age. The margin of error is $\pm 4.38\%$ for the overall sample. The margin of error will vary for sub-groups.

The view that protections should be restored to all of the lands within the monuments is evident across all major segments of the electorate, including:

- 57 percent of men and 75 percent of women;
 - 83 percent of voters aged 18-34, 71 percent of 35-44 year olds, 63 percent of 45-54 year olds, 56 percent of 55-64 year olds, and 55 percent of voters aged 65+; and,
 - 95 percent of Democrats, 77 percent of independents, and 52 percent of Republicans;
 - 77 percent of those in the Salt Lake region of the state, 67 percent of voters in other areas of the Wasatch Front, 64 percent in Utah County, and 54 percent of voters across the rest of the state.
- **When thinking about Bears Ears and Grand Staircase, voters rank conservation and protecting Native American places as the most important factors to be considered regarding these National Monuments; oil/gas and mining rank lowest.** Voters across party lines place increasing the amount of land open for energy and mining as least important.

	Total	Republican	Indep/Else	Democrat
Conserving natural areas, water, and wildlife habitat	53%	42%	60%	78%
Protecting Native American sacred and culturally important places	49%	38%	58%	66%
Protecting fossils, archaeological, and historic places	32%	29%	36%	36%
Supporting outdoor recreation such as hunting, fishing, and camping	29%	39%	22%	12%
Allowing local economic opportunities	14%	20%	10%	5%
Increasing the amount of land that is open to oil, gas, and mining development	12%	18%	6%	2%

- **Seven-in-ten voters side with a statement from supporters of restoring greater protections in all of these areas over a criticism of taking that action.** When asked which statement comes closer to their point of view, a strong majority sided with supporters of restoring greater protections to all areas.

Supporters of restoring greater protections in all of these areas say it safeguards historic lands and wildlife habitat from industrial development so future generations can enjoy them. It will better protect Native American sacred places, some of which had been destroyed by grave robbing and vandalism. Plus, it helps the economies of rural Utah when people visit these areas for hiking, camping, fishing, hunting, and other recreation.

70%

Opponents of restoring greater protections in all of these areas say that the monuments locked up too much land and should have focused in on the smallest area possible. They restricted too much public land from energy development like oil and gas drilling and mining. This change provides sufficient protection and greater certainty to local livelihoods.

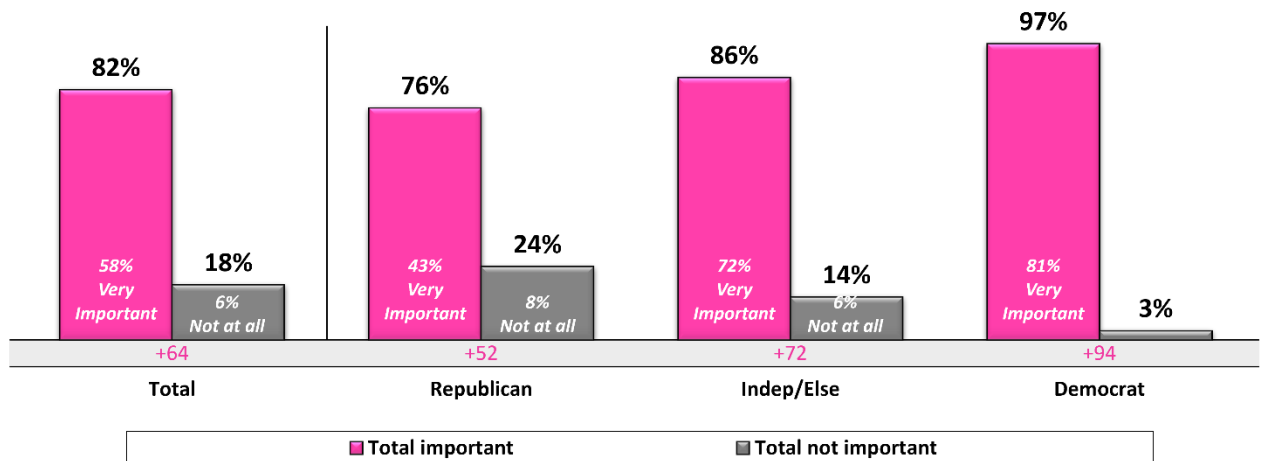
30%

Which comes closer to your point of view -

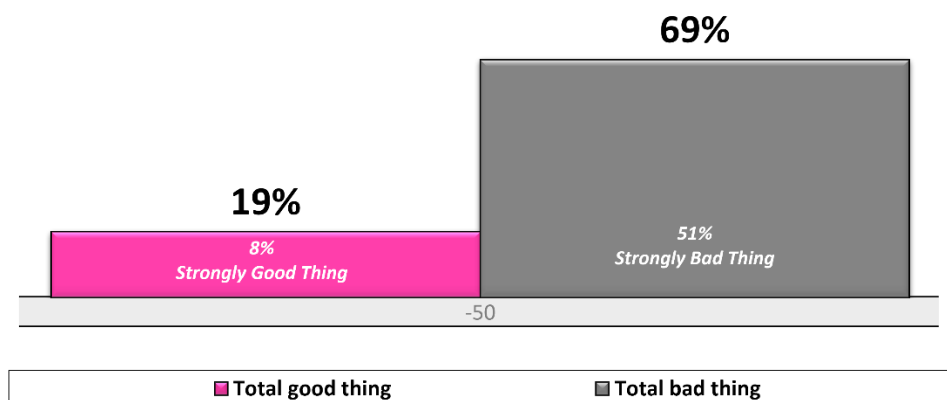
Majorities of voters across all key sub-groups agree with the supporters' argument, including 97 percent of Democrats, 81 percent of independents, and 55 percent of Republicans.

- **More than four-in-five Utahans say it is important for Native American tribes to have a strong role in managing public lands containing sacred or culturally significant sites.** Respondents read or heard the following statement, *"Native American tribes entered into an agreement with the U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management to collaboratively manage Bears Ears National Monument. The tribes were not consulted about the change in protections prior to the decision."*

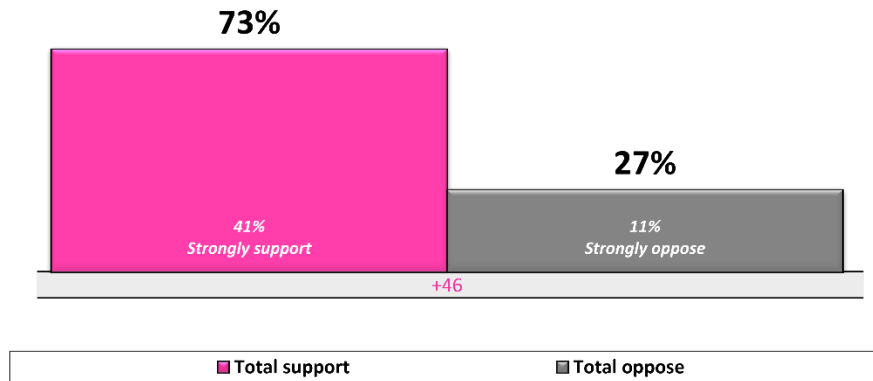
When respondents were then asked how important it is for the tribes to have a strong role in managing public lands containing these sites, the vast majority (82 percent) say it is either "very" (58 percent) or "somewhat" (24 percent) important. This includes majorities across party lines as the following graph depicts:



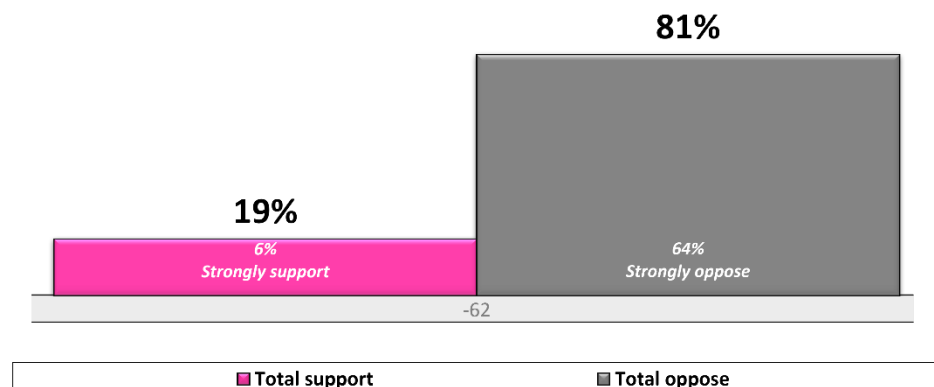
- **More than two-thirds of voters say the federal government terminating the commission of tribal leaders was a bad idea.** Respondents were informed that "The change to Bears Ears Monument terminated the commission of tribal leaders that provided input on how to manage these public lands over the last four years." As seen below, by more than a three-to-one margin voters say this was a bad thing, including majorities across the partisan spectrum and in every region of the state.



- **Nearly three-quarters of Utah voters support a presidents' ability to designate National Monuments.** Seventy-three percent say that they support this ability, and 41 percent say they strongly support presidents using this power. This is consistent with what we heard from Utah voters in a previous survey conducted in late 2024.



- **More broadly, voters are strongly opposed to the sale of Utah public lands to private interests.** Eight-in-ten voters statewide tell us they oppose the sale of public lands, and 64 percent say they strongly oppose it.



The vast majority of every key sub-group opposes the sale of public lands, including:

- 86 percent of those in the Salt Lake region of the state, 78 percent of voters in other areas of the Wasatch Front, 77 percent in Utah County, and 82 percent of voters across the rest of the state.
- 97 percent of Democrats, 86 percent of independents, and 74 percent of Republicans;
- 81 percent of men age 18-64, 66 percent of men age 65+, 93 percent of women age 18-64, and 86 percent of women age 65+; and,
- 72 percent of sportsmen and 87 percent of non-sportsmen.

In conclusion, Utah voters want to see protections restored to all areas of Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monuments. They say that Native American tribes should play a strong role in managing lands that have sacred or cultural importance to them and view termination of the Bears Ears Commission of tribal leaders negatively. Voters also strongly oppose the sale of public lands to private interests.