

U.S. PUBLIC LANDS ROADLESS RULE SURVEY MEMO REPORT

Prepared for The Pew Charitable Trusts by SSRS - March 2019

OVERVIEW

The Pew Charitable Trusts contacted SSRS to conduct a survey on the support for (or opposition to) the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule, and whether the public thinks that states should be allowed to be exempt from the national policy. Findings are based on a nationally representative sample.

The 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule prohibited road construction and timber harvesting on 58.5 million acres of National Forest System lands. These federal lands are identified by the U.S. Forest Service as having no existing roads and being suitable for conservation.¹



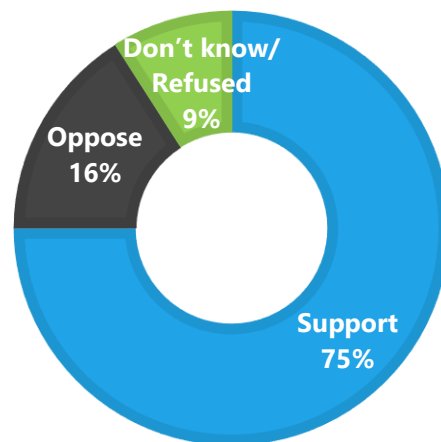
KEY FINDINGS

Three-fourths of the general public support the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule.

After being presented with a description of the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule, respondents were asked whether they supported or opposed the policy. Overall, three out of four respondents (75%) said they support it, while only 16% oppose it.

Interestingly, those in rural areas are just as likely to support the policy as those in non-rural areas (77% vs. 75%, respectively). Respondents' geographic region had little impact on their support for (or opposition to) the policy.

SUPPORT/OPPOSE 2001 ROADLESS AREA CONSERVATION RULE



LAND1. Eighteen years ago, the U.S. Forest Service created a conservation policy that protected the last one-third of America's undeveloped national forest lands from road-building and most forms of industrial activity. Supporters of the conservation policy say it is important to protect water quality, wildlife, and recreational opportunities. Opponents say that it is a one-size fits all policy that does not provide federal land management officials flexibility to conduct management activities or generate economic benefits through logging and other activities. Do you support or oppose this national conservation policy?

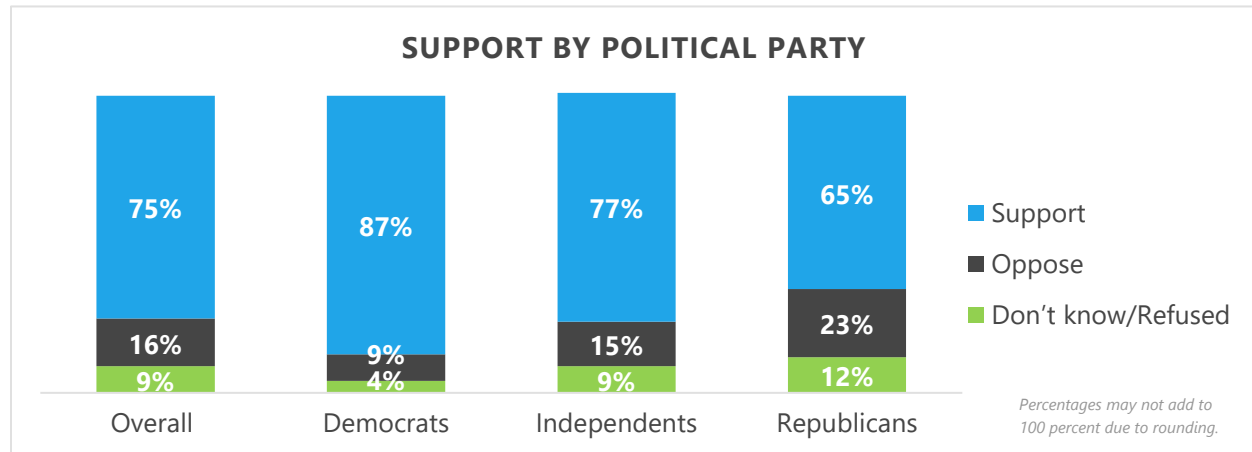
¹"Roadless Area Final Rule." United States Department of Agriculture – Forest Service, 21 January 2001, www.fs.usda.gov/roadmain/roadless/2001roadlessrule.

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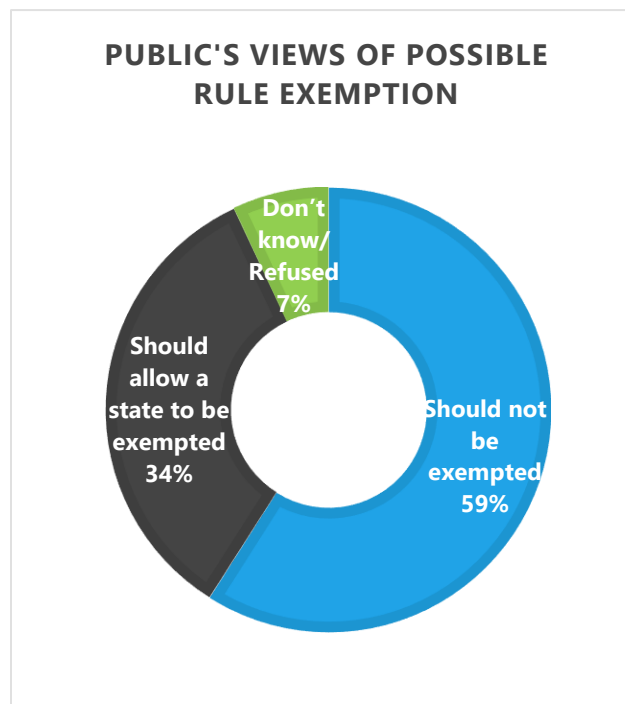
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There is majority support for the policy across both party and political views.

Democrats are the most likely to support the policy (87%), followed by Independents (77%). Two-thirds of Republicans (65%) also support the policy. Levels of support by political views (Liberal, Moderate, and Conservative) are very similar to levels of support by party.



LAND1. Do you support or oppose this national conservation policy?



LAND2. Some governors want exemptions from this conservation policy for the national forest lands in their state. I'm going to read you two statements on this and ask which of them comes closest to your view. First, some (people say that the US Forest Service should allow a state to be exempted from the policy because it harms a state's ability to manage and develop its natural resources. An exemption would allow a state to decide on its own whether to allow road-building, logging, forest improvement projects, and other development in national forests within its borders). Second, other (people say that the US Forest Service should not exempt a state from the conservation policy because these are national forests that benefit all Americans and do not belong to the state. If the policy is weakened it will allow states to prioritize the interests of logging and mining industries over tourism, fishing, and conservation).

The majority (59%) also believe that the federal government should not exempt states from the national rule.

More than half (59%) believe a state should not be exempted from the rule, while one-third (34%) believe they should be. Democrats are most likely to say that states should not be exempted (68%), though a majority of Republicans (51%) agree.

Methodology

This study was conducted for The Pew Charitable Trusts via telephone by SSRS on its Omnibus survey platform. The SSRS Omnibus is a national, weekly, dual-frame bilingual telephone survey. Interviews were conducted from February 19 – February 22, 2019 among a sample of 607 respondents in English (584) and Spanish (23). Telephone interviews were conducted by landline (241) and cell phone (366, including 225 without a landline phone). The SSRS Omnibus sample is designed to represent the adult U.S. population. The SSRS Omnibus uses a fully-replicated, stratified, single-stage, random-digit-dialing (RDD) sample of landline telephone households, and randomly generated cell phone numbers. Sample telephone numbers are computer-generated and loaded into on-line sample files accessed directly by the computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) system. The margin of error with design effect for total respondents is +/-4.89% at the 95% confidence level. All SSRS Omnibus data are weighted to represent the target population.