



**TO** Interested Parties

**FROM** Dave Metz and Miranda Everitt  
FM3 Research

**RE:** Nevada Voter Views of Wildlife Migration Policy

**DATE** February 22, 2020

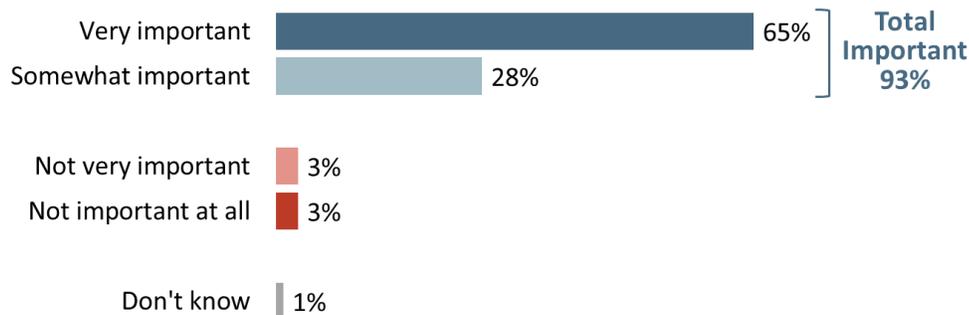
Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates (FM3) recently completed a survey of registered voters in Nevada to assess their views of policies having to do with wildlife migration routes.<sup>1</sup> The study found that **voters broadly agree that protecting wildlife migration routes in Nevada is important, and they support specific policies to build wildlife bridges and underpasses to support animal migrations while reducing collisions with vehicles.** They are also broadly supportive of restrictions on energy development in order to protect wildlife migration, and explicitly value wildlife protection over oil and gas production.

Key findings include:

- **Nevada voters broadly agree that policies to protect wildlife migration routes in the state are important.** As shown in Figure 1 below, more than nine in ten (93%) Nevada voters characterize these policies as "somewhat" important -- including nearly two-thirds (65%) who say it is "very important."

**Figure 1: Importance of Wildlife Migration Routes**

*Every year, wildlife including bighorn sheep, mule deer, pronghorn antelope, and elk migrate between summer and winter habitat and feeding grounds in Nevada. These species depend on this movement for better food, water, weather, and even survival. However, their migrations are often cut off by highways, fences, and development. Given this information, how important do you think it is for the state of Nevada to adopt policies that protect wildlife migration routes in Nevada: very important, somewhat important, not very important, or not important at all?*

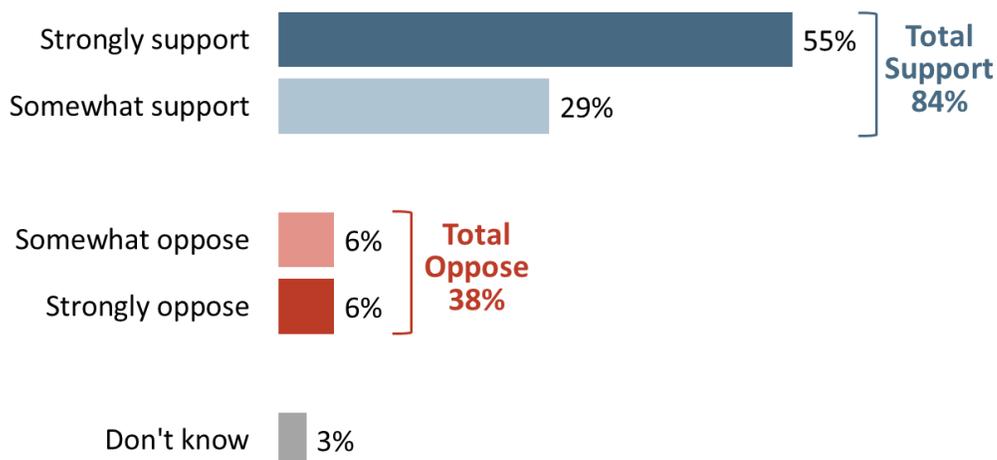


This support is shared across urban (92% "very" or "somewhat important"), suburban (94%), small-town (96%) and rural (93%) communities.

- **Voters strongly support increasing public funding to meet this goal.** Specifically, 84% back increasing public funding for the construction of wildlife crossing structures (Figure 2).

**Figure 2: Support for Increasing Public Funding for Wildlife Crossing Structures**

*Would you support or oppose increasing public funding for the construction of wildlife crossing structures, such as overpasses and underpasses across major highways that intersect with known, concentrated wildlife migration routes?*



Put another way, the concept has even broader backing -- fully 92% support "building more overpasses and underpasses for wildlife in concentrated migration areas so animals can safely cross highways and major roads, decreasing car accidents and animal deaths," and 75% do so "strongly."

- **Nevada voters see major roles for both state and federal government in addressing the issue.** As shown in Figure 3 on the next page, three-quarters of Nevada voters believe that federal and state agencies should have "major responsibility" for wildlife migration in Nevada -- and nearly all say they have at least "some responsibility."

**Figure 3: Perceived Responsibility for Wildlife Migration in Nevada**

*Next, taking a step back, a number of different people and organizations may have some part to play in addressing wildlife migration in Nevada. Please tell me whether you believe each of the following should have a major responsibility for addressing the issue, some responsibility, or no responsibility.*

Proposal	Major Responsibility	Major/Some Responsibility
Federal government agencies like the Forest Service or Bureau of Land Management	76%	97%
State government agencies like the Department of Transportation and Department of Wildlife	74%	97%

- **Nevadans broadly back a variety of federal actions to protect wildlife migration.** As shown in Figure 4 below, nine in ten (90%) support federal action to maintain open corridors for wildlife migration on public lands, including using special habitat designations to protect those spaces in the long term.

**Figure 4: Support for Federal Wildlife Migration Policies**

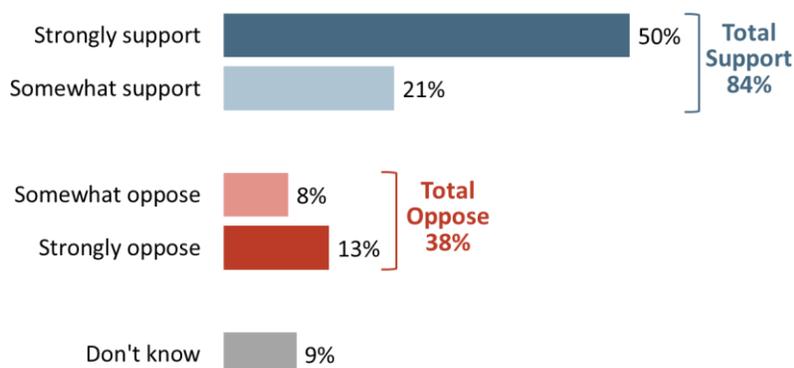
*Next, I am going to read you a list of various solutions that have been proposed to protect wildlife migration in Nevada. Please tell me whether you support or oppose each proposal.*

Proposal	Total Support	Total Oppose	Don't Know
Ensuring federal land managers maintain open corridors for wildlife to migrate on public lands	90%	7%	3%
Using special habitat designations to ensure that large blocks of existing, high-quality public land habitat would be managed and protected, with an emphasis on protecting migration corridors for the long-term	90%	6%	4%

- **More than four in five voters support restrictions on drilling to protect a large migrating deer herd in the Ruby Mountains.** A majority (50%) "strongly" supports this proposal, while just two in five (38%) oppose it (as shown in Figure 5).

**Figure 5: Support for Prohibiting Oil and Gas Drilling in the Ruby Mountains**

*Let me ask you about a current proposal before the US Congress. This would prohibit oil and gas drilling in certain parts of the Ruby Mountains to protect a large migrating mule deer herd. Does this sound like something you would support or oppose?*



In addition, voters chose "ensuring wildlife have migration routes throughout the Ruby Mountains" (77%) as more important to them than "allowing oil and gas drilling in the Ruby Mountains" (10%) by a 67-point margin when those two statements were framed as a trade-off.

Support for establishing wildlife migration routes is not restricted to the Ruby Mountains -- for example, the idea of "ensuring that national forests, such as the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest, protect known wildlife migration routes" is supported by 95% of Nevada voters.

In sum, the poll shows that Nevada voters strongly value free movement of wildlife in the state, and support policies at the state and federal level to invest in easing wildlife migration. By wide margins, they also back restrictions to oil and gas drilling that threaten migration.

<sup>i</sup> **Methodology:** From Jan. 29-Feb. 6, 2020, FM3 conducted 708 live telephone (cell and landline) interviews with registered voters in Nevada -- 608 statewide, with an oversample of 100 self-identified hunters and anglers. The margin of sampling error is +/-4.0% at the 95% confidence interval. Due to rounding, some percentages do not add up to 100%.