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New Opinion Poll Highlights New Mexico Small Businesses' Support for Balanced Energy Policy That Ensures Protection of State's Natural Assets

With Great Outdoors Month in full swing, Small Business Majority releases opinion poll revealing public lands are important part of why New Mexico entrepreneurs live and do business in the state; majority find the president's all-of-the-above energy policy most attractive if it balances protection of public lands

June is Great Outdoors Month, and polling released today shows that New Mexico small business owners believe the preservation of the state's natural assets is essential to their financial success and that of local economies, and they support the president's 'all-of-the-above' strategy to develop new energy resources, particularly if it includes provisions to protect public lands.

The poll, commissioned by Small Business Majority and conducted by Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research, found that two out of five New Mexico small business owners agree that access to parks, public lands and other outdoor opportunities is a large part of the reason they live and do business in New Mexico. More than a third (36 percent) agree that New Mexico's national parks, forests, monuments and wildlife habitats are not only an essential part of the outdoor culture and quality of life, but also one of the reasons they do business there.

"Two decades ago, I hopped on my motorcycle and headed from Chicago to the Southwest because I wanted to be near open spaces," said Carol Rose, owner of Amanda's Flowers in Santa Fe. "I believe most of the people who move to New Mexico choose this state because of its outdoor opportunities. And many of them end up starting businesses, because they quickly realize they don't want to live anywhere else. Most everyone who moves here just seems to stay, so we've built up really stable local economies. Santa Fe, where I opened my business in 2004, is a huge destination area—including for weddings. As a flower shop, that's how we get a lot of our business. New Mexico could lose its appeal if public lands aren't protected, and a lot of businesses could suffer."

Seventy-three percent of entrepreneurs polled support the president's all-of-the-above energy strategy, which promotes development of various energy sources including solar, wind, natural gas, oil, coal and more. But they find this policy even more attractive if it takes steps to ensure some areas remain accessible to visitors and free of development: 62 percent would be more likely to support an all-of-the-above strategy that takes that extra step. That's three times the percentage of owners who would be less likely (21 percent).

Additionally, 81 percent support designating more of New Mexico's existing public lands as national monuments. Doing so would ensure natural areas and water in these regions would enjoy protections similar to those of the El Malpais, Bandelier and Tent Rocks national monuments.

Small business owners agree, by a 5:1 ratio, that protecting public lands by designating new national monuments and national parks would positively rather than negatively impact local jobs and the economy. Another 54 percent feel such efforts would positively impact small business opportunities tied to public lands.

“Our nation’s most prolific job creators are asking that smart steps are taken to preserve New Mexico’s natural assets because they believe it’s good for business,” said John Arensmeyer, founder & CEO of Small Business Majority. “It’s evident public lands play an important role in entrepreneurs’ decisions to open businesses in New Mexico. And they’ve seen firsthand that protecting those areas can attract business, which is why they’d like to see national monuments established to preserve them, and it’s why they are asking lawmakers to balance public lands protection as they develop new energy policies.”

This was not just a poll of owners whose income is related to outdoor activities. In fact, 90 percent report their revenue is *not* tied to open space in any way, such as selling outdoor equipment, offering bike tours or even just owning a business near a touristy outdoor area. When asked how their businesses are faring, 39 percent of New Mexico small business owners say they’re doing well, while only 12 percent say they’re not doing well.

Additional findings from the poll include:

- 75 percent agree we can protect land and water, create jobs and maintain a vibrant economy simultaneously.
- 92 percent believe national parks, forests, monuments and wildlife areas are important to New Mexico’s economy.
- 94 percent believe public spaces drawing tourists can boost business for local restaurants, hotels, grocery stores and more.
- 61 percent believe we should not allow more private companies to develop public lands when doing so would limit the public’s enjoyment of them.
- 55 percent identified as Republican or independent-leaning Republican, 35 percent identified as Democrat or independent-leaning Democrat and 8 percent identified as independent.

For more information, visit: <http://www.smallbusinessmajority.org/small-business-research/public-lands/index.php>

This poll reflects an Internet survey of 400 small business owners in New Mexico, Colorado, Arizona and Nevada, drawn from Research Now Panel and conducted by Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research for Small Business Majority. The survey was conducted from May 1-7, 2012. The overall margin of error is +/- 4.9%.

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Who is the Small Business Majority?

We are a national nonpartisan small business advocacy organization founded and run by small business owners and focused on solving the biggest problems facing America’s 28 million small businesses. We conduct extensive opinion and economic research and work with small business owners, policy experts and elected officials nationwide to bring small business voices to the public policy table. Learn more about us on [Wikipedia](#) and follow us on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).