



Opinion Poll

Louisiana Small Business Owners Want Public Lands Protected & Preserved

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Small Business Majority

1101 14th Street, NW, Suite 1001

Washington, DC 20005

(202) 828-8357

www.smallbusinessmajority.org

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Executive Summary

Small businesses are the lifeblood of our nation's workforce. We depend on them to keep local communities and economies thriving, which in turn boosts our national economy. But in the current fiscal climate, many of them are having a hard time turning a profit. Now is a better time than ever to help them get back on their feet, and scientific opinion polling reveals small business owners in Louisiana believe protecting their state's natural assets is one way we can enhance the financial success of small businesses and local economies. Furthermore, the vast majority of them support extending the life of the Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund, which helps protect places like the Jean Lafitte National Historic Park and Preserve and the Atchafalaya National Wildlife Refuge, along with local parks, trails and recreational facilities.

The poll reveals the important role public lands play in the success of local small businesses and economies. Nine in 10 Louisiana small business owners believe the state's parks, waterways, forests and public lands are an important part of the economy, and 94% of respondents agree that public lands draw visitors and have a positive impact on small local businesses.

Unfortunately, small business owners don't think policymakers are doing enough to safeguard these lands. More than 6 in 10 Louisiana entrepreneurs believe policymakers should be doing more to protect the water, air, parks and wildlife habitat in their state.

Given the importance small businesses place on the preservation of public lands, it's easy to understand why they strongly support federal programs specifically funded to preserve public spaces. Nine in 10 small business owners want Congressional leadership to extend the life of the Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund, which receives its funding from fees paid by oil and gas companies that do offshore drilling, and that is used to protect national forests and parks. In the last 40 years, Louisiana has received about \$205 million to protect various public lands throughout the state. But next year the fund will expire if Congress doesn't act.

The vast majority of small businesses believe the Conservation Fund can create and protect outdoor recreation opportunities, which supports local jobs and small businesses in the state. They also strongly believe that the money allocated to the fund should go towards protecting public lands. When Congress created the Conservation Fund 50 years ago, it said that up to \$900 million from offshore oil and gas drilling fees are required to go into the fund each year. However, almost two-thirds of that money has gone to other uses instead over the past half-century, leaving public lands without the funding they need. A vast 84% of small businesses believe the revenues from the fund should go to intended purposes only, instead of being diverted away for other uses.

This was not just a poll of owners whose income is related to outdoor activities. In fact, the vast majority of owners reported their business as a professional service (50%), retail or wholesale trade, construction or manufacturing or something else. Moreover, respondents were majority Republican, with 56% identifying as Republican or leaning Republican, 37% identifying as Democrat or leaning Democrat and 7% identifying as independent.

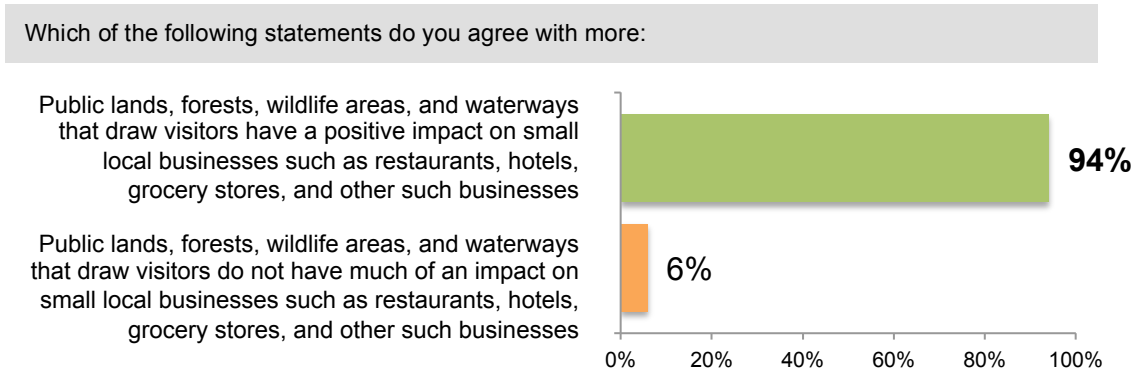
Main Findings

- **More than 9 in 10 Louisiana entrepreneurs agree public lands that draw visitors have a positive impact on local small businesses, and that the preservation of these lands is important to the economy and can create jobs:** 94% agree public lands, forests, wildlife areas and waterways that draw visitors have a positive effect on small local businesses such as restaurants, hotels, grocery stores and other such businesses. Another 90% believe public lands are an important part of the economy, and 87% believe we can protect our land and water and have a strong economy and create local jobs.
- **Two-thirds of Louisiana entrepreneurs believe policymakers should be doing more to protect the state's lands and environment:** 64% of small employers believe policymakers should be doing more to protect the water, air, parks and wildlife habitat in Louisiana. Twenty-one percent believe they're doing the right amount and just 13% believe they should be doing less.
- **Nine in 10 Louisiana small business owners believe Congressional leadership should extend the life of the Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund, which will expire next year if not extended:** The Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund, which receives its funding from fees paid by oil and gas companies that do offshore drilling, protects national forests and parks. It also matches money that state and local governments invest in protecting clean water and wildlife habitats. Over the past four decades, Louisiana has received about \$205 million to protect places like the Jean Lafitte National Historic Park and Preserve and the Atchafalaya National Wildlife Refuge. However, the fund will expire next year if Congress doesn't vote to extend it. Ninety-three percent of Louisiana small businesses support Congressional leadership extending the life of the Fund beyond 2015.
- **Four in five entrepreneurs believe the Conservation Fund can create outdoor recreation opportunities, which supports local jobs and small businesses:** 80% of respondents agree the Land and Water Conservation Fund can create and protect outdoor recreation opportunities, which support local jobs and small business in Louisiana. Only 15% believe it doesn't have much impact on local jobs.
- **Vast majority of small employers believe fund revenues should go to intended purposes only—the protecting of public lands:** Since the fund was created, almost two-thirds of the money in the fund has gone to other uses, leaving our national parks without the money they need. Eighty-four percent of owners believe money in the fund should go to its intended purpose—towards protecting our public lands.
- **Respondents were majority Republican:** 56% identified as Republican or lean Republican, 37% identified as Democrat or lean Democrat, and 7% identified as independent.

Entrepreneurs Believe Public Lands Have Positive Impact on Local Small Businesses, Economies

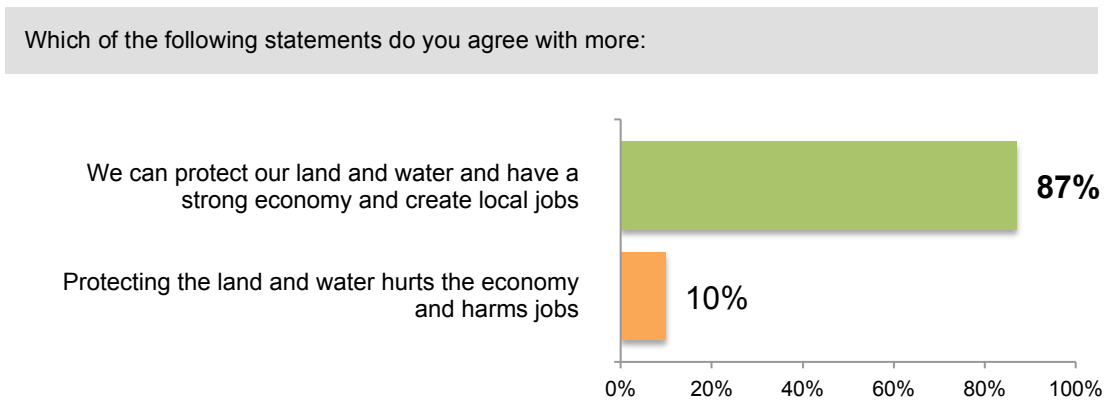
Ninety-four percent of small business owners say public lands, forests, wildlife areas and waterways that draw visitors have a positive impact on small local businesses such as restaurants, hotels, grocery stores and other such businesses.

■ **Figure 1: More than 9 in 10 Louisiana small business owners say public lands have a positive impact on local economies**



Another 90% of Louisiana small employers agree our national parks, waterways, forests, wildlife areas, and public lands are an important part of the economy, and 87% believe we can protect our land and water and have a strong economy. Just 10% of respondents believe protecting the land and water hurts the economy.

■ **Figure 2: Nearly 9 in 10 Louisiana small business owners believe we can protect public lands and have a strong economy**



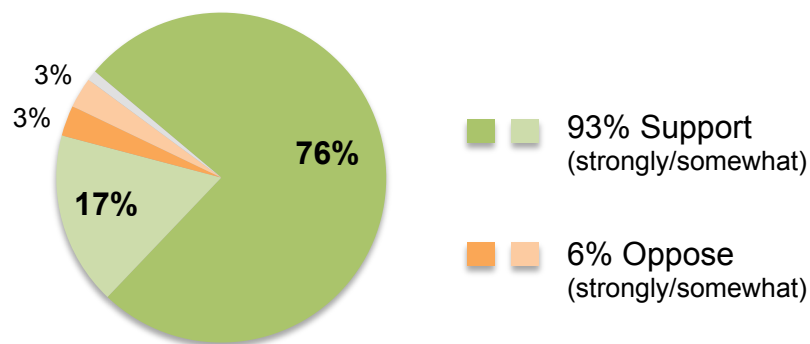
Small business owners in the Pelican State believe policymakers should be doing more to protect public lands: 64% say lawmakers should be doing more to protect the water, air, parks and wildlife habitats in the state. Twenty-one percent believe they're doing the right amount, and 13% believe policymakers should be doing less to protect the environment.

Owners Support Extending the Land and Water Conservation Fund

Nine in 10 small business owners want Congressional leadership to extend the life of the Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund, which receives its funding from fees paid by oil and gas companies that do offshore drilling, and that is used to protect national forests and parks. In the last 40 years, Louisiana has received about \$205 million to protect various public lands throughout the state, but the fund will expire next year if Congress doesn't act. Ninety-three percent of Louisiana small businesses support Congressional leadership extending the life of the Conservation Fund beyond 2015.

■ **Figure 3: Small businesses strongly support extending the Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund**

Would you support or oppose Congressional leadership working to extend the life of the fund beyond 2015?

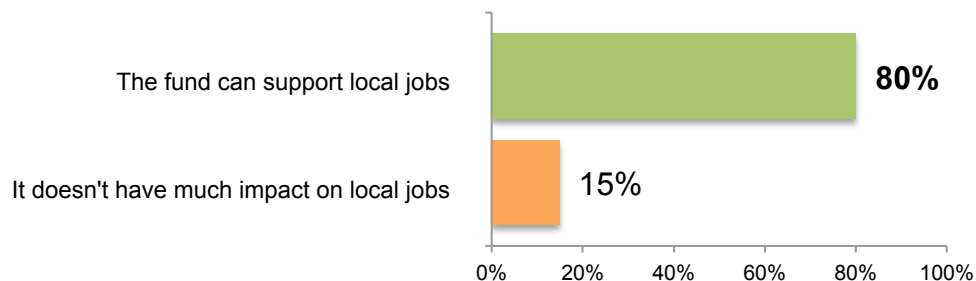


Vast Majority Agree Preserving Public Lands is Good for Local Jobs and Businesses; Believe Fund Allocations Should Go Directly Towards Public Lands

With so many entrepreneurs saying monuments, national parks and the like are important to them and to their local economies, it's not surprising that 4 in 5 owners agree the Conservation Fund can create and protect outdoor recreation opportunities, which support local jobs and businesses in Louisiana. Only 15% believe it doesn't have much impact on local jobs.

■ **Figure 4: Four in five small business owners believe the fund can create outdoor recreation opportunities, benefitting local jobs and businesses**

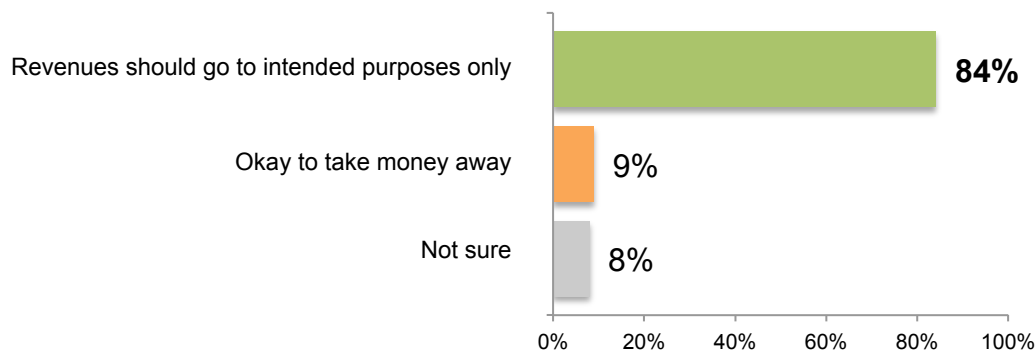
Which of the following statements more accurately describes how you feel about the Land and Water Conservation Fund:



They also strongly believe that the money allocated to the Conservation Fund should go towards protecting public lands. When Congress created the fund 50 years ago, it said that up to \$900 million from offshore oil and gas drilling fees are required to go into the fund each year. However, almost two-thirds of that money has gone to other uses instead over the past half-century, leaving national parks without the money they need. A vast 84% of small businesses believe the revenues from the fund should go to intended purposes only, instead of being diverted away for other uses.

■ **Figure 5: Small businesses believe Conservation Fund allocations should go towards protecting public lands**

Do you think it is OK to take away money intended for the Land and Water Conservation Fund and move it to other programs, or do you think these oil and gas revenues should go to their intended purposes only?



Conclusion

Louisiana small business owners, like many others across the nation, are working tirelessly to overcome the economic impacts of the Great Recession. They believe protecting their state’s natural assets is one way to ensure the financial success of small businesses and local economies, and as this poll reveals, small employers believe public lands are key to this success.

Given this, it’s not surprising that the vast majority of small businesses support extending the life of the Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund to help protect important Louisiana lands like the Jean Lafitte National Historic Park and Preserve, and the Atchafalaya National Wildlife Refuge. Small businesses believe the Conservation Fund can create and protect outdoor recreation opportunities that contribute to the state’s economy, and feel allowing the fund to expire could have severe impacts on local jobs and small businesses. In order to help Louisiana small business owners thrive in our slowly-recovering economy, it’s vital that policymakers take steps to protect the state’s natural assets that draw in visitors and help contribute to local economies.

Methodology

This poll reflects a telephone survey of 348 small business owners in Louisiana conducted by Public Policy Polling for Small Business Majority. The survey was conducted from June 12-15, 2014. The overall margin of error is +/- 5.3%.

Poll Toplines

June 12 –15, 2014

348 Louisiana small business owners of 100 or fewer employees

Q1. Are you the owner of a small business?

Yes	100%
No	0%

Q2. How many people are directly employed by your business, including yourself: is it just you, is it between two and five employees, is it between six and 10 employees, is it between 11 and 25 employees, is it between 26 and 50 employees, is it between 51 and 100 employees, or is it more than 100 employees?

Just yourself.....	25%
2 to 5.....	47%
6 to 10.....	16%
11 to 25.....	6%
26 to 50	5%
51 to 100	2%
More than 100.....	0%

Q3. (Q3-17 asked only of those with 100 or fewer employees) Which of the following statements do you agree with more: “We can protect our land and water and have a strong economy and create local jobs,” or “Protecting the land and water hurts the economy and harms jobs”?

We can protect our land and water	87%
Protecting the land and water hurts the economy	10%
Not sure	3%

Q4. Which of the following statements do you agree with more: “Our national parks, waterways, forests, wildlife areas, and public lands are an important part of the economy,” or “Our national parks, forests, waterways, wildlife areas, and public lands are not an important part of the economy”?

They are.....	90%
They are not	8%
Not sure	2%

Q5. Which of the following statements do you agree with more: “Public lands, forests, wildlife areas, and waterways that draw visitors have a positive impact on small local businesses such as restaurants, hotels, grocery stores, and other such businesses,” or “Public lands, forests, wildlife areas, and waterways that draw visitors do not have much of an impact on small local businesses such as restaurants, hotels, grocery stores, and other such businesses”?

They do.....	94%
They do not	6%
Not sure	0%

Q6. When it comes to protecting the water, air, parks, and wildlife habitat in Louisiana, do you think policymakers should be doing more, doing less, or are they doing about the right amount?

More	64%
Less	13%
About the right amount	21%
Not sure	2%

Q7. The Outdoor Industry Association has found that in Louisiana, outdoor recreation generates \$15 billion in consumer spending, 146,000 jobs in the industry, and \$4.6 billion in wages and salaries. Given these figures, how important would you say it is to small business to protect public lands, waterways, and forests to create outdoor recreation opportunities: very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not important at all?

Very important.....	69%
Somewhat important	24%
Not too important	7%
Not important at all	1%
Not sure	0%

Q8. The Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund was created by Congress 50 years ago, and receives its funding from fees paid by oil and gas companies that do offshore drilling. The fund uses the money to protect national forests and parks. The fund also matches money that state and local governments invest in protecting clean water and wildlife habitat. In the last 40 years, Louisiana has received about \$205 million to protect places like the Jean Lafitte National Historic Park and Preserve and the Atchafalaya National Wildlife Refuge. Next year, the fund will expire if Congress doesn't vote to keep it going. Would you support or oppose Congressional leadership working to extend the life of the fund beyond 2015?

Strongly support	76%
Somewhat support	17%
Somewhat oppose	3%
Strongly oppose.....	3%
Not sure	1%

Q9. (Asked only of those who oppose:) When you say you don't support them taking a lead on extending the Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund, is it because you don't support the program or you would rather have Congressional leadership focus on other priorities?

Don't support the program	30%
Congress should focus on other priorities	70%
Not sure	0%

- Q10. Which of the following statements more accurately describes how you feel about the Land and Water Conservation Fund: “The fund can create and protect outdoor recreation opportunities, which supports local jobs and small business in Louisiana,” or “The fund may create and protect outdoor recreation opportunities, but that does not have much of an impact on local jobs and small business in Louisiana.”
- The fund can support local jobs 80%
- It doesn't have much impact on local jobs 15%
- Not sure 4%
- Q11. When Congress created the Land and Water Conservation Fund, it said that up to \$900 million from offshore oil and gas drilling fees are required to go into the fund each year. But in reality, since the fund was established, almost two-thirds of that money has gone to other uses instead, leaving our national parks without the money they need to preserve and protect those areas. Do you think it is OK to take away money intended for the Land and Water Conservation Fund and move it to other programs, or do you think these oil and gas revenues should go to their intended purposes only?
- Okay to take money away 9%
- Revenues should go to intended purposes only 84%
- Not sure 8%
- Q12. Some people, after they hear more about a topic, change their mind about how they feel about an issue. After hearing more about the Land and Water Conservation Fund, would you support Congressional leadership working to extend the life of the fund beyond 2015, or is extending the life of the fund just not that important to you?
- Support extending the fund 83%
- Not important to you..... 13%
- Not sure 4%
- Q13. If you are a woman, press 1. If a man, press 2.
- Woman 55%
- Man 45%
- Q14. If you are a Democrat, press 1. If a Republican, press 2. If you are an independent or identify with another party, press 3.
- Democrat 33%
- Republican..... 47%
- Independent / Other 20%
- Q15. (Asked only of independents:) Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican or Democratic Party?
- Democrat 20%
- Republican..... 46%
- Neither 34%

Q16. If you are Hispanic, press 1. If white, press 2. If African-American, press 3. If other, press 4.

Hispanic	3%
White	83%
African-American	10%
Other	4%

Q17. If you are 18 to 29 years old, press 1. If 30 to 45, press 2. If 46 to 65, press 3. If you are older than 65, press 4.

18 to 29	1%
30 to 45	8%
46 to 65	56%
Older than 65	35%

Q18. Which of the following categories best describes your business: professional services; retail or wholesale trade; education, healthcare or a not-for-profit organization; construction or manufacturing, transportation or utilities, agriculture, food services or production, or something else?

Professional services.....	50%
Retail or wholesale trade	13%
Education, healthcare, or not-for-profit organization	5%
Construction or manufacturing.....	9%
Transportation or utilities	1%
Agriculture	8%
Food services or production	3%
Something else	12%