

# Colorado Wildlife Council Messaging & Tracking Study

February 2019

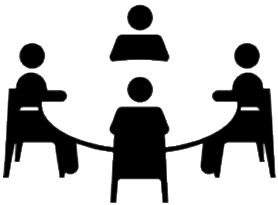
# Research Overview

*Benenson Strategy Group conducted a three-phase iterative research process among registered voters and In the Wind voters in Colorado to provide communications and messaging guidance for the Colorado Wildlife Council to increase support of hunting and fishing.*



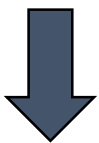
## **Phase 1: Online Ethnojournals**

An in-depth view into Coloradans' mindsets, and a nuanced understanding of the core values and beliefs that shape their views of hunting and fishing in CO.



## **Phase 2: In-person Courtroom Focus Groups**

Building off the values uncovered in the ethnojournals, this phase explored which arguments for and against hunting and fishing are most persuasive and why.



## **Phase 3: Online Quantitative Study**

Combining the learning from the first two phases, this study quantitatively tested the best support and opposition messages, along with a full exploration of the values and attitudes that explain why these messages do or do not succeed.

# Phase 1: Ethnojournal Key Findings

- While all Coloradans share the same attitudes about what they love about CO, hunting plays into a cultural divide that In the Wind (ITW) voters have a tough time identifying with (fishing is less divisive).
- Hunting isn't top of mind for ITWs, but they do have concerns stemming from discomfort with killing an animal and the use of guns.
- For most voters, including ITWs, hunting is not a black and white issue, indicating that ITWs are receptive to hearing arguments on both sides.
  - For example, there are some instances where hunting might be acceptable (hunting for food) and some where might not (trophy hunting).
- ITWs struggle to articulate the benefits of hunting and are unsure whether current regulations are appropriate or effective, making them susceptible to anti-hunting messaging.
- There is an opening to generate goodwill toward hunting by making it relevant to ITWs, even if they don't hunt.

# Phase 2: Courtroom Focus Groups' Key Findings

- While pro-hunting arguments won the day for ITW voters, there was little emotion behind them because they did not immediately connect these arguments back to their deeply held values.
- Economic arguments in support of hunting were the most resonant with all focus group participants – but more so when they tied directly back to their way of life.
- A key will be taking one of the main concerns about hunting – namely animal welfare – and turning the argument on its head. Two potential ways to do this:
  - Inform participants about existing regulations that are designed to keep animal populations healthy.
  - Counter concerns about “trophy hunting” by informing voters about the statute, requiring hunters to take and process all of a big-game animal.
- The costs of a hunting ban and the benefits of hunting were all spoken about largely in abstract terms. While ITW voters found these arguments intellectually persuasive, they did not seem to resonate on a core, emotional level.
- Our messaging must make clear the personal impact that hunting and fishing (or a ban on them) have on people’s lives, as well as mitigate the top concerns some have about hunting.



# Quantitative Survey Methodology

Benenson Strategy Group conducted an online survey among 969 registered voters in Colorado from Jan. 31–Feb. 7, 2019, including 407 ITW voters.

## Registered Voters

- ✓ Registered CO voter

## In the Wind Voters

- ✓ Registered CO voter
- ✓ Ages 18-35
- ✓ Neither strongly support nor oppose hunting/fishing
- ✓ Tend to be less politically engaged and have household income <75k

The margin of error for the dataset is +/- 3.1% for registered voters and +/- 4.8% for In the Wind voters at the 95% confidence level and is higher among subgroups.

# Quantitative Key Findings

- Colorado voters overall and In the Wind voters agree on what makes CO great (namely its natural beauty and independent spirit), but their opinions diverge when it comes to hunting.
- Registered voters are largely supportive of hunting overall, though support varies within certain demographics.
- Hunting is something ITWs struggle to identify with, but they aren't alienated from hunters themselves. About 4 in 5 know a hunter and only about 1 in 5 say that they couldn't be friends with one.
- This alienation stems mainly from concerns around trophy hunting (a concern shared by many registered voters as well) and discomfort around the gun culture involved in hunting.
- These concerns, along with a lack of knowledge of the benefits of hunting, lead them to be divided on whether they would vote in favor of more restrictions on hunting.
- Fortunately, messaging that connects hunting to the lives of ITW voters leads them to become more supportive of hunting.

# Key Findings: Messaging

- **Connect to a common value: Lean into Colorado’s “live and let live” spirit.**
  - Even though ITWs aren’t hunters, they recognize that hunting is a right that Coloradans enjoy and there is a significant reluctance to take away that right.
- **Make clear the benefits of hunting to non-hunters, using exact numbers when possible.**
  - The messages in favor of hunting that do best are ones that clearly demonstrate the direct and personal benefits of hunting to all Coloradans (e.g., license fees protect the land that all Coloradans enjoy).
  - Use specific numbers to drive home the economic impact.
- **Confront concerns about animal cruelty head-on.**
  - Trophy hunting is a concern of all voters, not just ITWs. Learning about the Willful Destruction of Wildlife statute was highly persuasive for all voters.
- **Humanize the economic benefits of hunting.**
  - Highlight small-business owners, manufacturers, and people in the tourism industry who would be hurt by further restrictions.
  - Highlight that individual taxpayers would have to pay more if hunting were restricted.



# Voter Mindset and Hunting Attitudes

# All voters love the same things about CO, but hunting is not seen by ITWs as particularly important to the CO lifestyle.

## % Agree CO's Natural Beauty Is One of the Best Things About Living There.

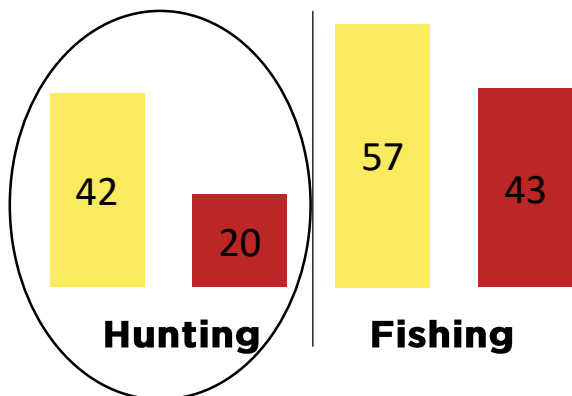


## % Agree CO Lifestyle Is Defined by Its Independent Spirit.



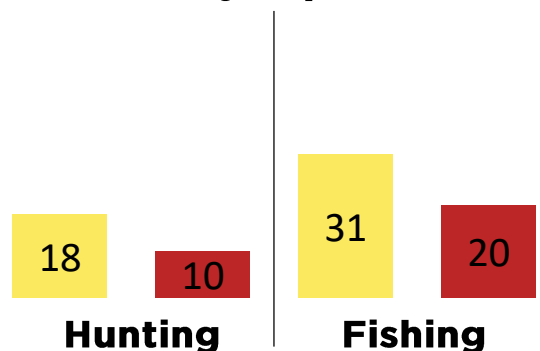
### Important to the CO Lifestyle

% Very Important



### Important to You Personally Enjoying the CO Lifestyle

% Very Important



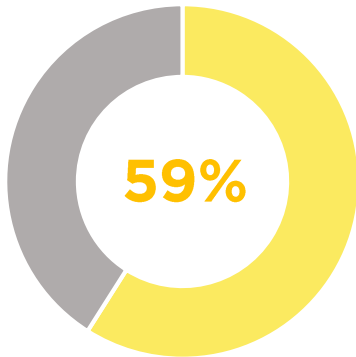
"Below are some statements that people could make about Colorado. Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with each one."

# ITWs' indifference to hunting is rooted in inability to identify with hunting and hunters.

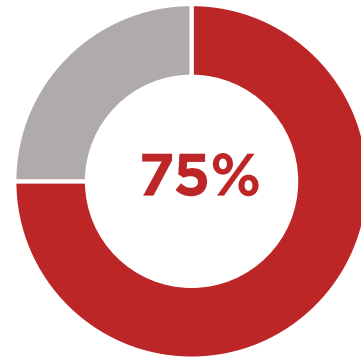
## Hunting Is Not an Activity for People Like Me.

*% Agree*

*Reg  
Voters*

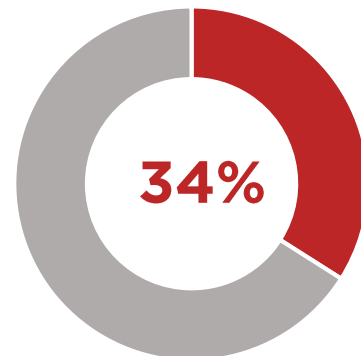
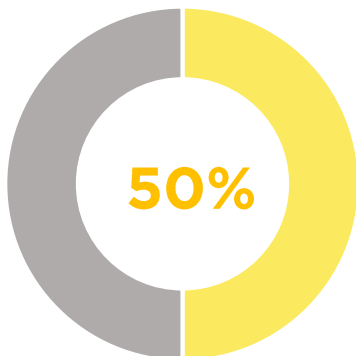


*ITW  
Voters*



## Hunting Is an Activity Everyone Can Enjoy.

*% Agree*

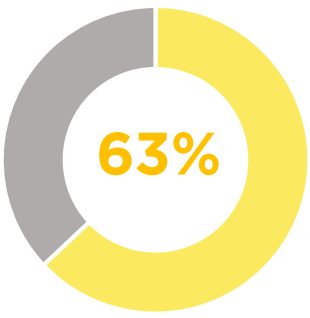


"How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about hunting and fishing?"

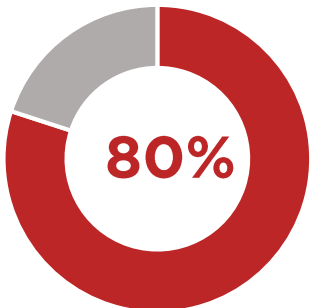
# Trophy hunting is a main source of the discomfort, even for reg. voters, but guns also play a role for ITWs.

## Killing an Animal for Sport Is Morally Wrong. % Agree

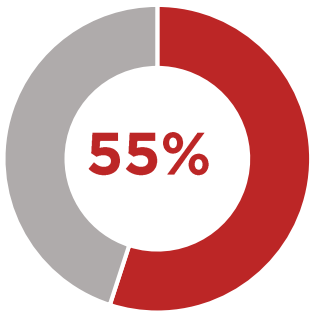
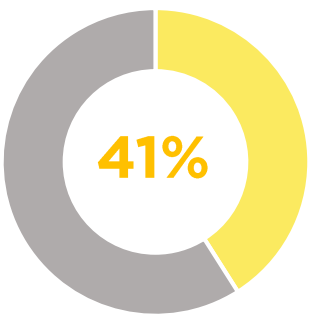
*Reg Voters*




*ITW Voters*



## The Gun Culture Involved in Hunting Makes Me Uncomfortable. % Agree



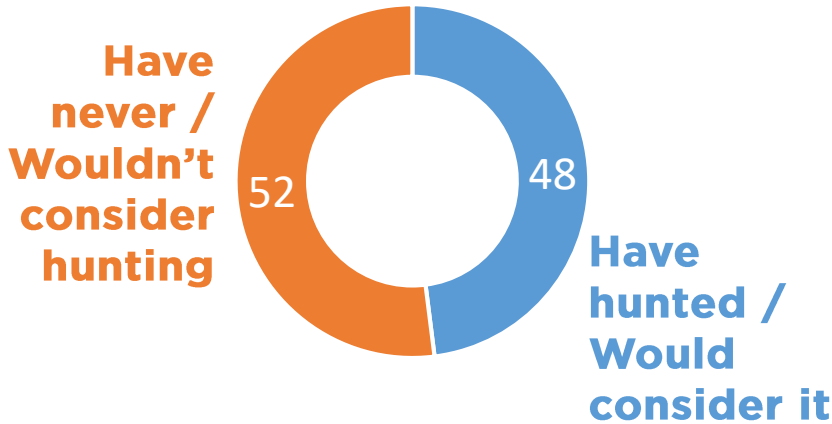
 *Reg. voters are nearly twice as likely to own a gun as ITWs. (32% vs. 17%)*

"How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about hunting and fishing?"

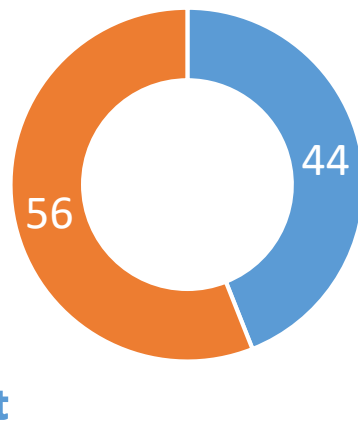
# ITWs can be persuaded: They aren't more likely to be "hunting rejectors" and most know people who hunt.

## Relationship to Hunting

*Registered Voters*

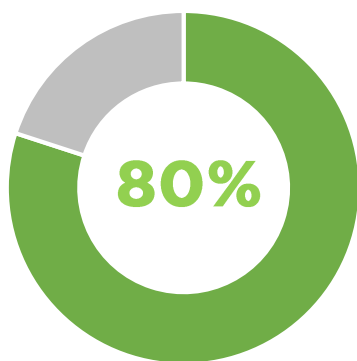


*ITW Voters*

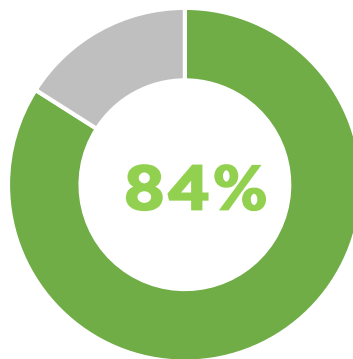


## Know Someone Who Hunts

*Registered Voters*



*ITW Voters*



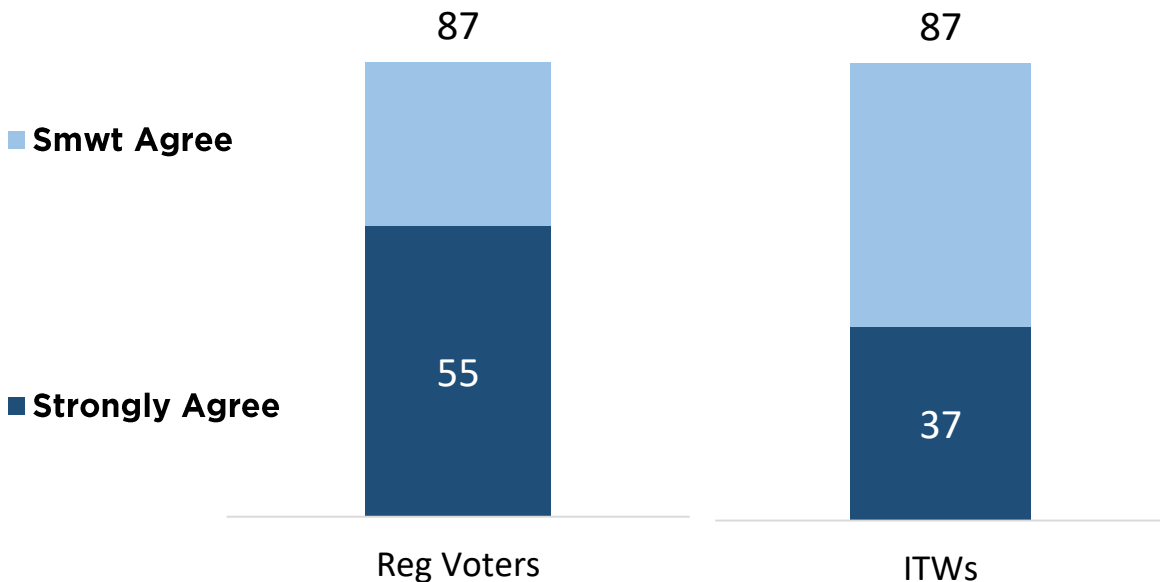
**77% of ITWs agree hunters are not different from average Coloradans.**

ITWs hold conflicting values: They don't think hunting is for them, but they aren't closed off to it. This is a weakness and an opportunity. The challenge is to make hunting relevant to them

"Which of the following best describes your relationship to hunting?"; "Which of the following people close to you hunt? Select all that apply. If you don't know any hunters, please indicate that."

# Most voters, including ITWs, agree that hunting is a right; supporters of a ban would have to clear a high bar.

## Regardless of How I Feel About It, Hunting Is Something People Should Have a Right to Do.



The high intensity with which voters feel that hunting is something that all Coloradans have a right to do – even if they don't like hunting – is something we should use to our advantage in

"How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about hunting and fishing?"

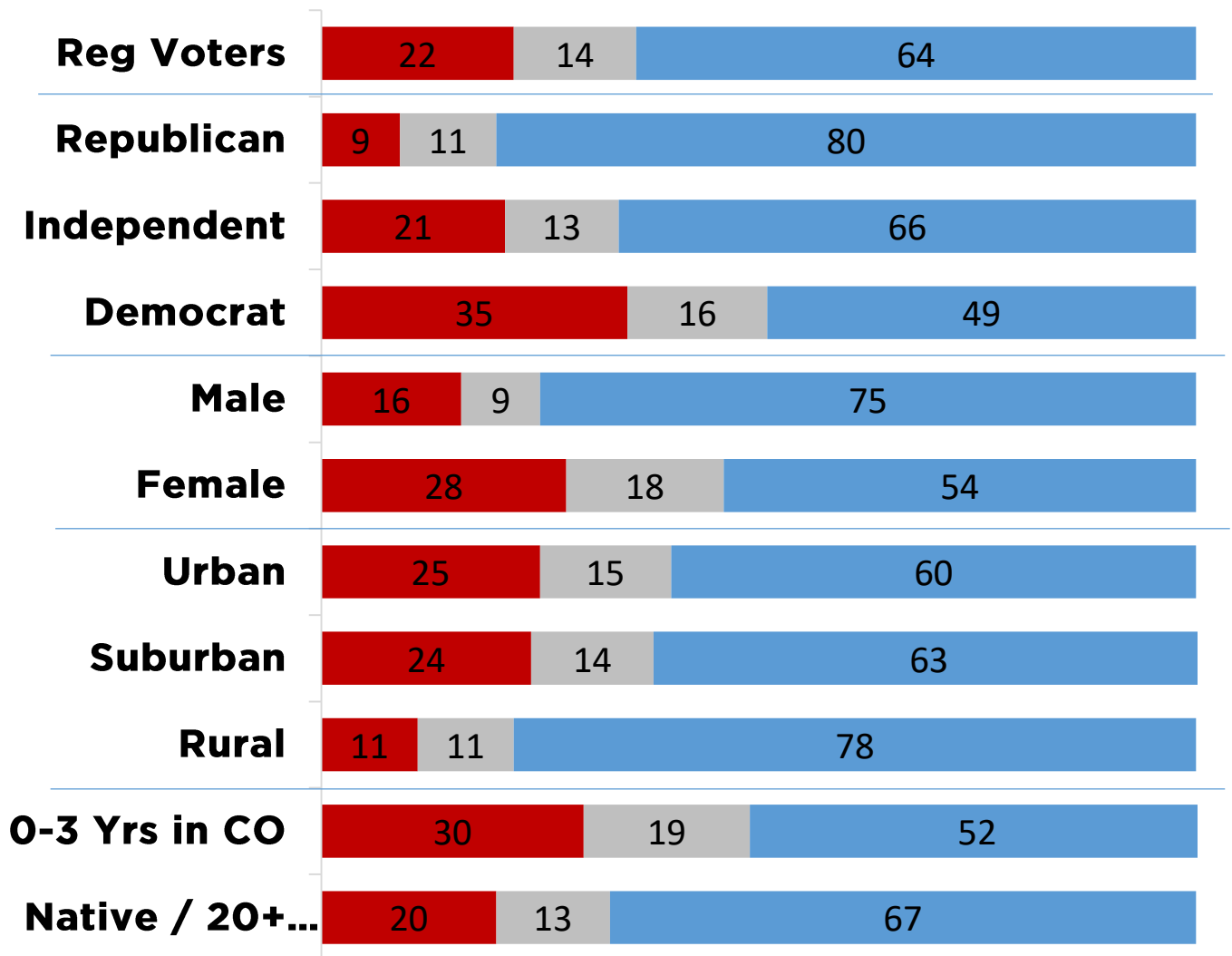
# While support for hunting overall is strong, don't assume all reg. voters are with us.

Recall: all ITWs start out b/w 3-5 on hunting support

## Hunting Support

Among RVs, % Support on a Scale from 1-7

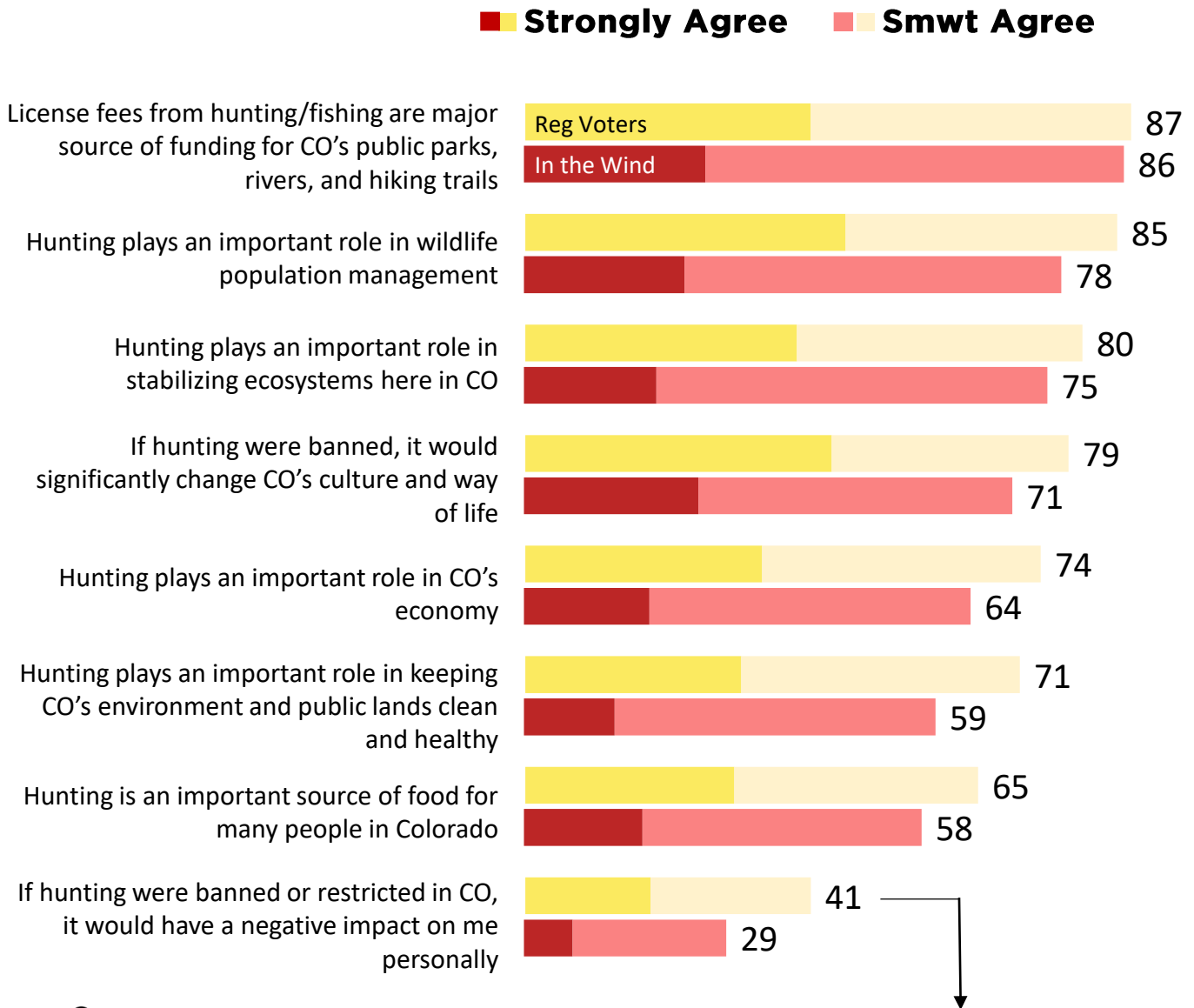
■ Don't Support (1 to 3)    ■ Neutral (4)    ■ Support (5 to 7)



"To what extent do you support hunting in Colorado? Use a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 means you do not support hunting in Colorado at all and 7 means you fully support hunting in Colorado."

# Demonstrating hunting's benefits to CO's wildlife and environment - and making the impact personal - will be critical.

## Hunting Attitudes



Watch out: Even RVs don't feel strongly that a hunting ban would have a negative impact on them personally

"How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about hunting?"

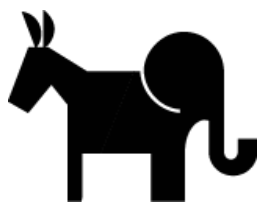
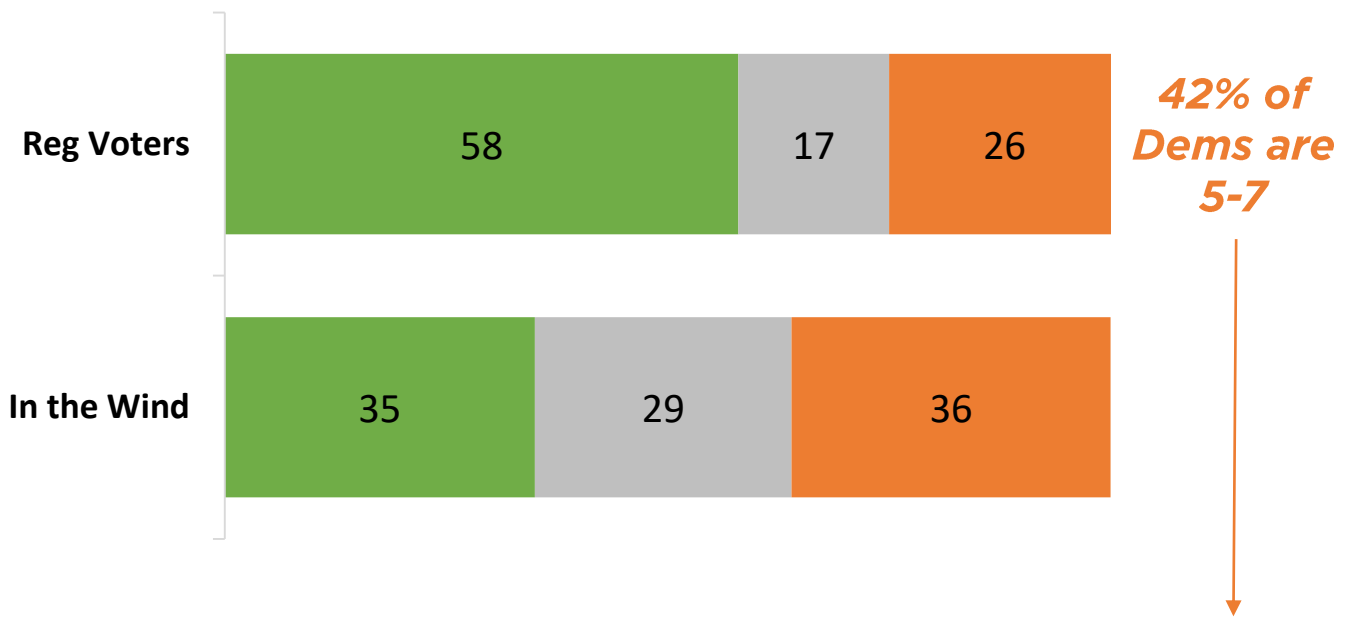


# Lack of knowledge about benefits, but reluctance to take away rights, leaves ITWs divided on hunting restrictions.

## Hunting Restrictions Ballot Support

*% Likely to Vote for a Ballot Initiative on a Scale from 1-7*

■ Not Likely (1 to 3) ■ Neutral (4) ■ Likely (5 to 7)



Making sure our messaging doesn't alienate those who may not be with us today is critical. Registered voters as a whole are largely on our side but there is a notable partisan divide.

"In general, how likely are you to support a ballot initiative in Colorado that seeks to further restrict hunting?"

# Messaging

# We tested eight pro-hunting arguments to see which was most convincing.

## Animal Welfare

“Willful Destruction of Wildlife” Statute

Due to the “Willful Destruction of Wildlife” statute, hunters are required by state law to harvest and process all of the big game they kill, and it is illegal to just take the “trophy” parts of the animals, such as antlers. The intentional wasting of a carcass is met with heavy fines and a felony charge.

Managing Big Game Populations

Recreational hunting is the state-mandated method for managing CO’s big-game populations. Without hunting, many animals can become overpopulated, and this may lead to starvation for the animals, a depletion of resources, and other health threats.

## Economy

\$3 Billion to the CO Economy

Hunting and fishing directly contributes nearly \$3 billion annually to CO’s economy, supporting 27,000 jobs, rivaled only by the ski industry in total revenue generated.

Alleviates Taxpayer Burden

The revenue generated from the sale of hunting and fishing licenses makes up more than half of the funding for the state’s wildlife management efforts – funds that might otherwise have to come from taxpayers.

## Environment

Funds Habitat Programs

The habitat conservation programs that license fees fund help to protect, conserve and beautify CO’s 66 million acres of land – the same land that Coloradans spend their time enjoying with their friends and families while doing activities such as kayaking, hiking and biking.

960 Species of Wildlife

The wildlife programs that license fees fund support the abundance and diversity of 960 species of wildlife in CO.

## Personal Benefit

Truly Free-Range Meal

Hunting provides an alternative for people to give their families a truly free-range meal. Game animals are free of steroids, hormones or other chemicals.

Human / Animal Wildlife Conflict

Human and wild animal conflicts, such as wild animals roaming into suburban yards or onto public roads and highways, pose a serious threat to public safety in CO. Hunting can help decrease the population of wild animals who wander into areas where humans live.

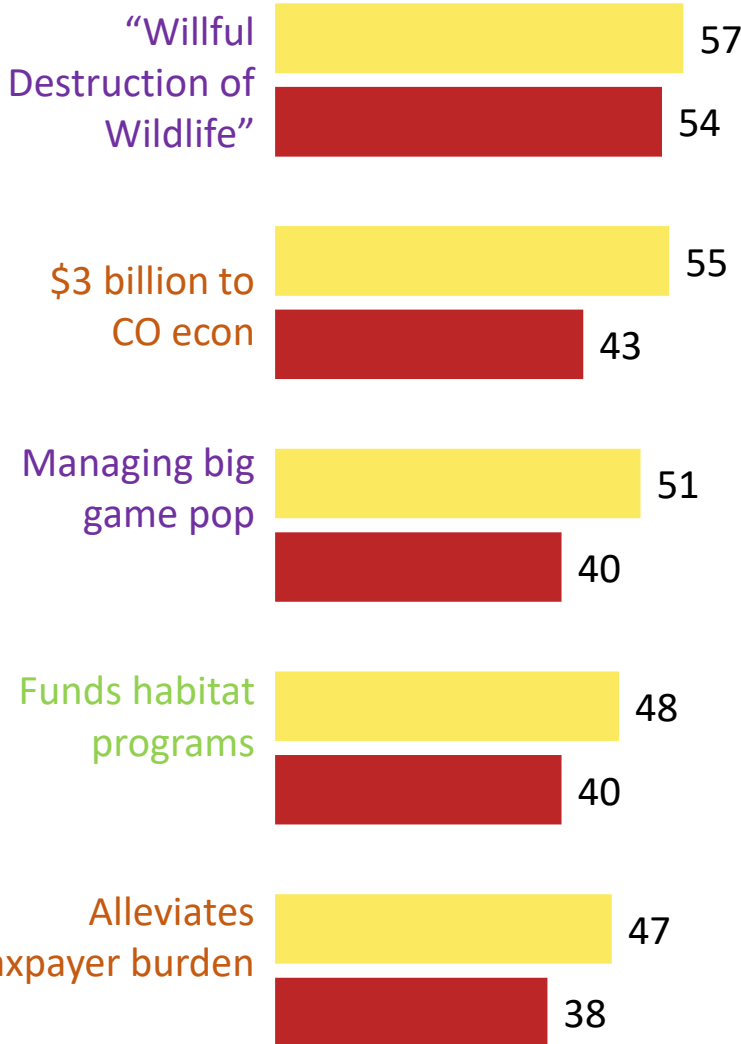
“Now you’ll see some reasons people might have for supporting hunting and fishing in Colorado. For each one, please tell me whether this is a convincing reason to SUPPORT hunting and fishing. How convincing a reason is this to SUPPORT hunting and fishing in the state of Colorado?”

# Arguments that directly address concerns about hunting and demonstrate a direct benefit do best.

## Top Tier Reasons to Support Hunting % Very Convincing

■ Reg Voters ■ ITWs

### Message Implications



✓ Highlight anti-trophy hunting regs as this is a concern for all voters. Even 44% of those who don’t support hunting found this very convincing.

✓ Use exact figures to show the economic benefits (jobs/revenue) instead of focusing on potential taxpayer harm.

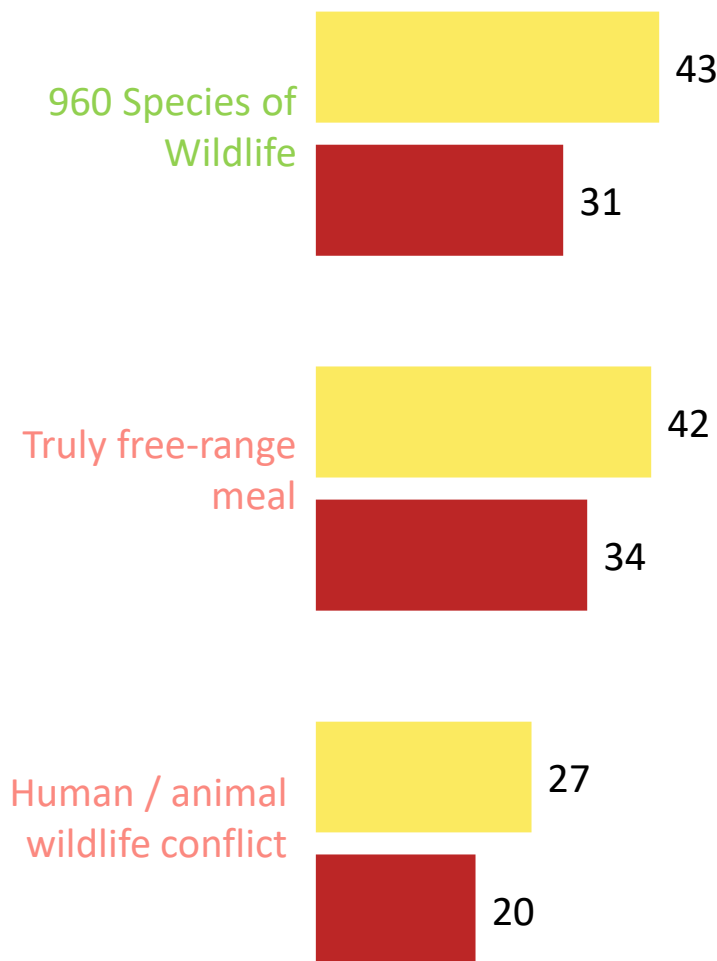
✓ It’s critical to tie environ benefits back to things voters enjoy (e.g., hiking).

“Now you’ll see some reasons people might have for supporting hunting and fishing in Colorado. For each one, please tell me whether this is a convincing reason to SUPPORT hunting and fishing. How convincing a reason is this to SUPPORT hunting and fishing in the state of Colorado?”

# Clean meat and preventing conflicts w/ wildlife aren't enough b/c they don't address main concerns about hunting.

## Second Tier Reasons to Support Hunting % Very Convincing

■ Reg Voters ■ ITWs



### Message Implications

- ✓ Benefits to the environment aren't as powerful when they're not tied back to a personal benefit to the voter.
- ✓ Clean food argument doesn't do as well because it doesn't override larger concerns. Only 30% of RVs and 17% of ITWs strongly agree that hunting is an imp't source of food.
- ✓ Preventing human/animal conflicts doesn't resonate with either group as it doesn't address their main concerns about hunting.

"Now you'll see some reasons people might have for supporting hunting and fishing in Colorado. For each one, please tell me whether this is a convincing reason to SUPPORT hunting and fishing. How convincing a reason is this to SUPPORT hunting and fishing in the state of Colorado?"

# We also tested four message frames.

## Economic Benefit

Whether they know it or not, hunting plays an important role in the lives of every Coloradan. **Hunting and fishing directly contribute nearly \$3 billion annually to Colorado's economy.** Without hunting and fishing, Colorado's economy, from small businesses to manufacturers to the tourism industry, would take a huge financial hit. Not only that, **the fees that the state takes in from hunting and fishing go directly back to funding wildlife management and conservation efforts** – programs that might have to be funded by Colorado taxpayers if hunting and fishing were to be restricted or banned.

## Live and Let Live

**Just because some people in Colorado don't hunt doesn't mean they should be able to take away other Coloradans' right to hunt.** One of the things that makes Colorado great is that people of all different political opinions and walks of life can live together and find their own version of Colorado. For some people, **hunting is an important part of their Colorado way of life** and, as long as they're responsible hunters and obey the law, **they should have the freedom to do so.**

## Hunting helps all of us enjoy the things that make CO great

Regardless of whether you hunt or not, **hunting plays a key role in helping you enjoy the things that you love about Colorado.** Without the fees that are brought in by hunting, Coloradans would not have as much unfettered access to pristine public lands, rivers and hiking trails. **It's because of hunting and fishing that Coloradans are able to enjoy and experience the state's natural beauty and have it be such an important part of the Colorado way of life.**

## Hunting is part of the CO Spirit

Hunting has been a **part of Colorado's culture, identity and lifestyle** since the state was founded nearly 150 years ago. Even if you don't hunt, hunting plays an **important role in the independent spirit culture** here. If hunting were to cease to exist in Colorado, we'd lose something very important about what **makes Colorado a unique and special place to live.**

"Now you will see some reasons why people would support hunting in Colorado. After each one, please tell me how convincing a reason it is to support hunting in Colorado. How convincing a reason is this to SUPPORT hunting in the state of Colorado?"

# Strongest messages demonstrate benefits of hunting for all; play into idea that CO welcomes differences of opinion

## Message Frames in Support of Hunting

% Very Convincing

■ Reg Voters ■ ITWs

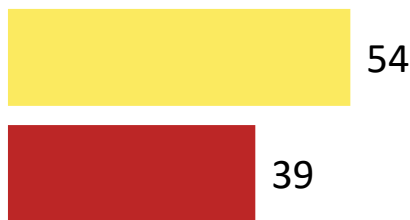
### Message Implications

**Economic Benefit**



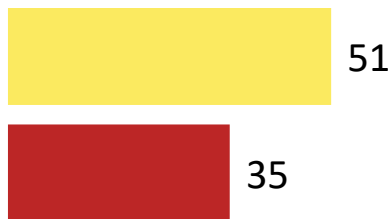
✓ Econ argument does well because it humanizes who would be hurt by a hunting ban.

**Live and Let Live**



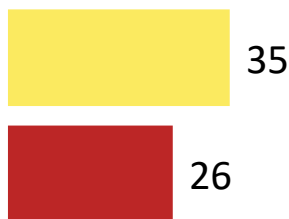
✓ Highlight that hunting bans take away rights from their fellow citizens, which makes even hunting opponents uncomfortable.

**Helps us enjoy things that make CO great**



✓ Making clear that the benefits of hunting are shared among us all – even non-hunters – is key.

**Hunting is part of the CO spirit**



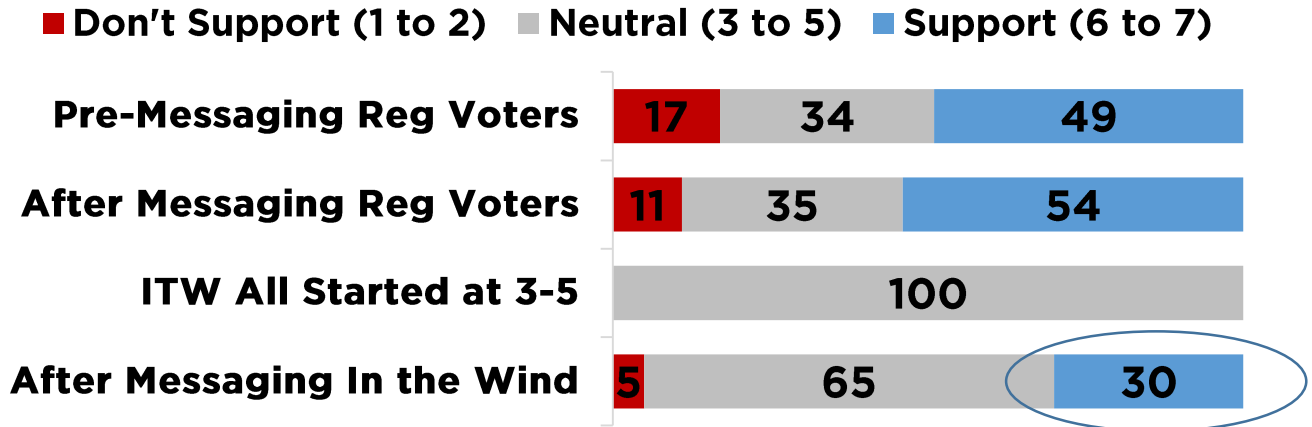
✓ Arguments need to be positive and forward-looking. Promote the benefits of hunting, not what is lost if it's banned.

"Now you will see some reasons why people would support hunting in Colorado. After each one, please tell me how convincing a reason it is to support hunting in Colorado. How convincing a reason is this to SUPPORT hunting in the state of Colorado?"

# Our messaging is successful in moving voters, especially ITWs, to be more supportive of hunting.

## Hunting Support

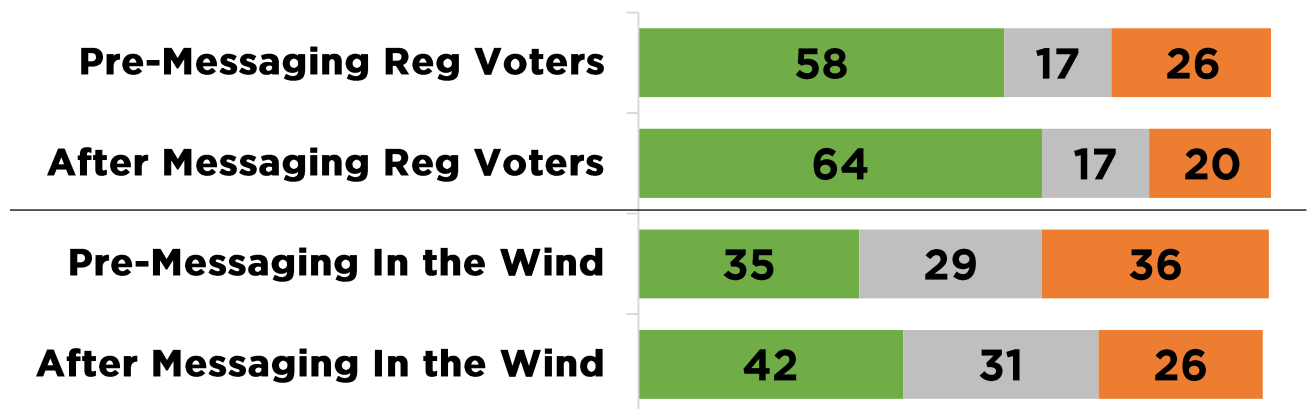
*% Support on a Scale from 1-7*



## Hunting Restrictions Ballot Support

*% Likely to Vote for a Ballot Initiative on a Scale from 1-7*

■ Not Likely (1 to 3) ■ Neutral (4) ■ Likely (5 to 7)



***We don't need ITWs to become hunting promoters. All we need is for them not to be against us on a potential ballot initiative, and our messaging moves the needle on that front.***

"To what extent do you support hunting in Colorado? Use a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 means you do not support hunting in Colorado at all and 7 means you fully support hunting in Colorado."; "In general, how likely are you to support a ballot initiative in Colorado that seeks to further restrict hunting?"

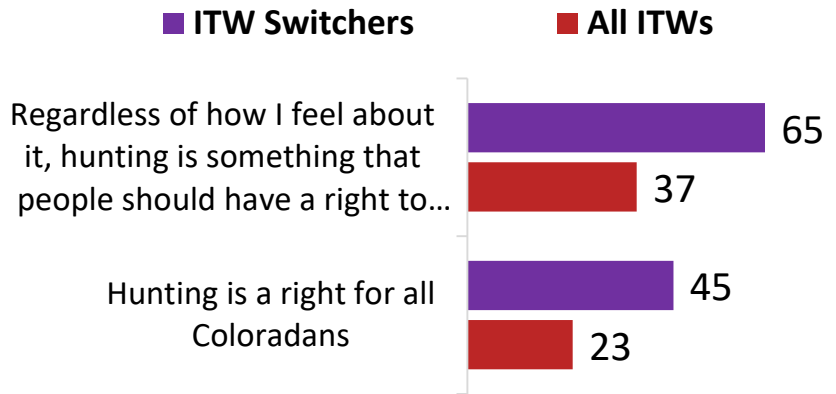


# ITWs who switched to pro hunting strongly believe in the rights of others to hunt and that hunting is impnt for CO.

ITW switchers: 30% of ITW voters who switch to 6-7 on hunting support after messaging

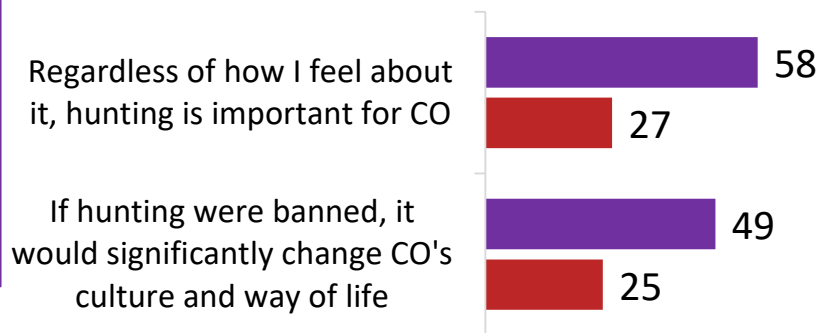
Respecting the right of others to hunt is extremely important for ITW switchers.

Hunting Attitudes  
% Strongly Agree



They strongly believe hunting is important for CO and the CO way of life.

Hunting Attitudes  
% Strongly Agree



ITW switchers are not significantly demographically different than ITW voters overall; respond to similar messages as all ITWs just with higher intensity

"How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about hunting?"

# Messaging Architecture

Theme	CWC Message	Why It Works
<b>Connect to a common value</b>	<i>One of the things that makes CO great is that people of all different walks of life can live together. Not everyone hunts, but we respect the rights of our fellow Coloradans.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Makes non-hunters empathize with hunters.</li><li>✓ Respects individual liberties and rights, which are common values.</li></ul>
<b>Make clear the benefits of hunting to all</b>	<i>License fees help protect and provide access to the land that Coloradans use for hiking and other outdoor activities and help keep animal populations healthy.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Makes the benefits of hunting personal for non-hunters.</li><li>✓ Highlights benefits for animal welfare.</li></ul>
<b>Confront concerns re: animal cruelty head-on</b>	<i>Trophy hunting is illegal and violators are subject to heavy fines and criminal charges.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Directly addresses and mitigates a top concern for all voters.</li></ul>
<b>Humanize the economic benefits of hunting</b>	<i>Further restrictions would have dire consequences for small-business owners, the tourism industry and regular taxpayers.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Highlights real people who would be impacted by hunting restrictions.</li><li>✓ Mention of taxpayers makes it personal.</li></ul>

# Bringing it all together: one example of how to talk about hunting.

One of the things that makes Colorado great is that people of all different walks of life can live together. **Not everyone hunts, but we respect the right of our fellow Coloradans to do so.** Hunting and fishing license fees help protect and provide access to the land that Coloradans use for hiking and other outdoor activities and help keep animal populations healthy. Trophy hunting is illegal and violators are subject to heavy fines and criminal charges. Hunting contributes \$3 billion to the Colorado economy each year and supports 27,000 jobs. Further restrictions would have dire consequences for small-business owners, the tourism industry and regular taxpayers. Even if you don't hunt, hunting is important to our public lands, our wildlife and our Colorado way of life.

## Why It Works

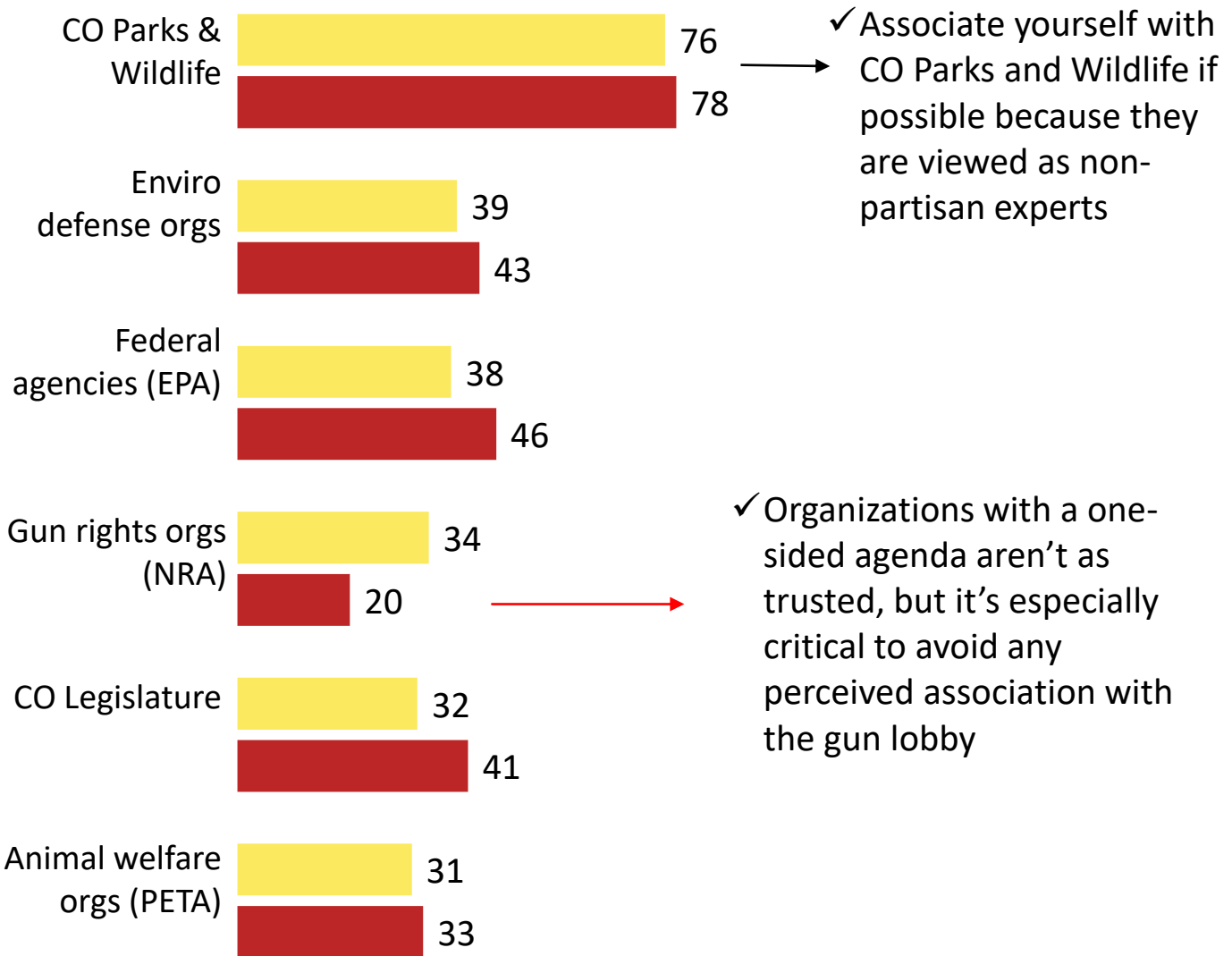
- ✓ Connects to a common value; respects individual liberty and rights
- ✓ Makes the benefits of hunting personal
- ✓ Highlights animal welfare benefits
- ✓ Shows impact on the economy w/ hard data and highlights the impact on real people
- ✓ Directly addresses top concern: trophy hunting

# Voters Are Looking for Non-Partisan Experts to Provide Info About Hunting

## Trust in Each Entity for Information About Hunting/Fishing

NET 5-7 on a 7 pt scale

■ Reg Voters ■ ITWs



# Communications Guidance

- **The campaign must be targeted to those who are on the fence about hunting and have yet to form a strong opinion, not those who already know where they stand.**
- **Humanizing hunters shouldn't be the main objective: Nearly all Coloradans – even ITWs – know someone who hunts. The key is giving non-hunters reasons to support hunting itself**
- **To humanize the benefits of hunting (and the costs of further restrictions), have real people (small business owners, tourism industry employees etc.) talk about how the hunting industry benefits them**
- **Give people who don't hunt 'permission' to support hunting by showing how license fees keep lands and wildlife populations healthy, allowing them to enjoy outdoor activities and the Colorado lifestyle**
- **The campaign should be demographically diverse to drive home the point that *all* Coloradans benefit from hunting**
- **In the Wind voters are looking for a campaign that feels authentic – it has to talk *to* them, not *down to* them.**

# Tracked Data from Previous Waves

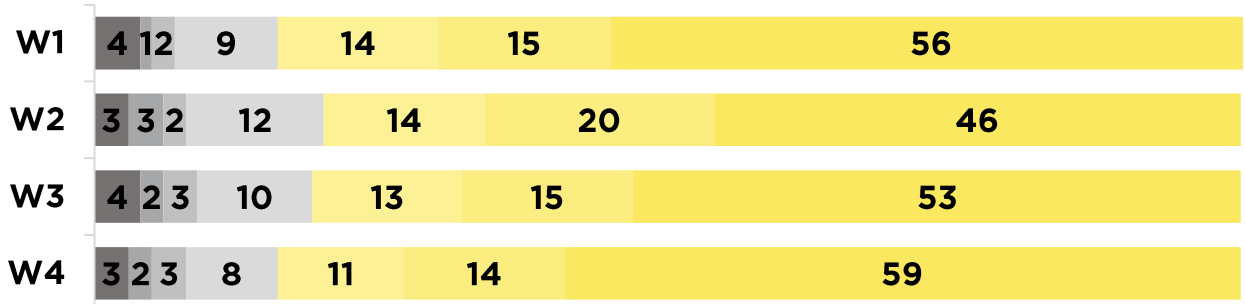
# Hunting Support and Fishing Support

All data among Registered Voters

## Support for Fishing in Colorado

% Support

■ 1 = Not at all ■ 2 ■ 3 ■ 4 ■ 5 ■ 6 ■ 7 = Fully support



Bottom-3 Box:

W1: 7% | W2: 8% | W3: 9% | W4: 8%

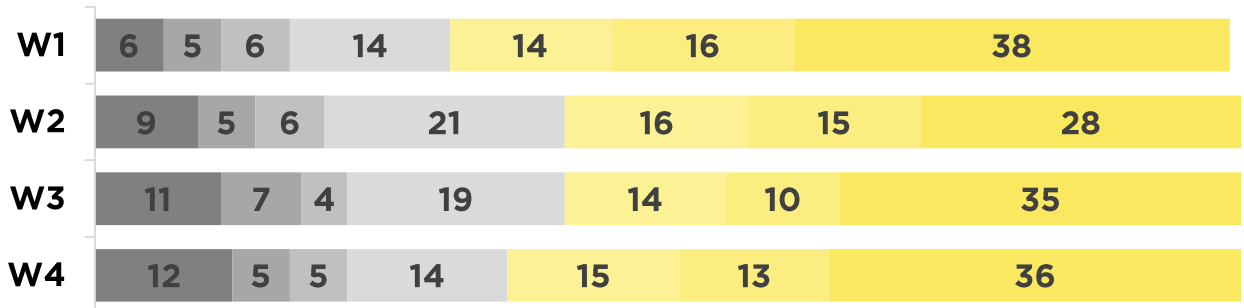
Top-3 Box:

W1: 85% | W2: 80% | W3: 81% | W4: 84%

## Support for Hunting in Colorado

% Support

■ 1 = Not at all ■ 2 ■ 3 ■ 4 ■ 5 ■ 6 ■ 7 = Fully support



Bottom-3 Box:

W1: 17% | W2: 20% | W3: 22% | W4: 22%

Top-3 Box:

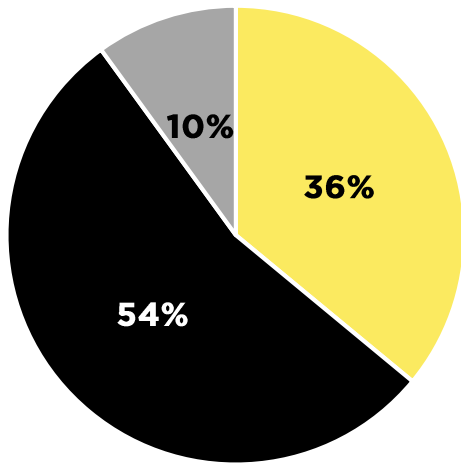
W1: 68% | W2: 59% | W3: 59% | W4: 64%

"To what extent do you support hunting/fishing in Colorado? Use a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 means you do not support hunting in Colorado at all and 7 means you fully support hunting in Colorado?"

# Hug-A-Hunter and Hug-An-Angler Awareness

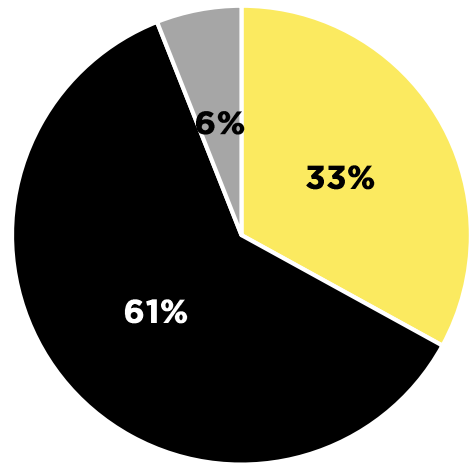
All data among registered voters

## W3: Hug-A-Hunter



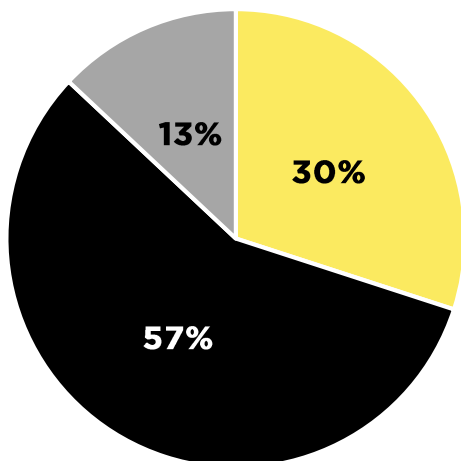
■ Yes ■ No ■ Not Sure

## W4: Hug-A-Hunter



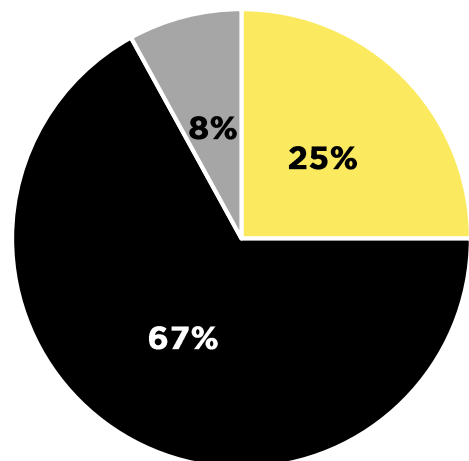
■ Yes ■ No ■ Not Sure

## W3: Hug-An-Angler



■ Yes ■ No ■ Not Sure

## W4: Hug-An-Angler



■ Yes ■ No ■ Not Sure

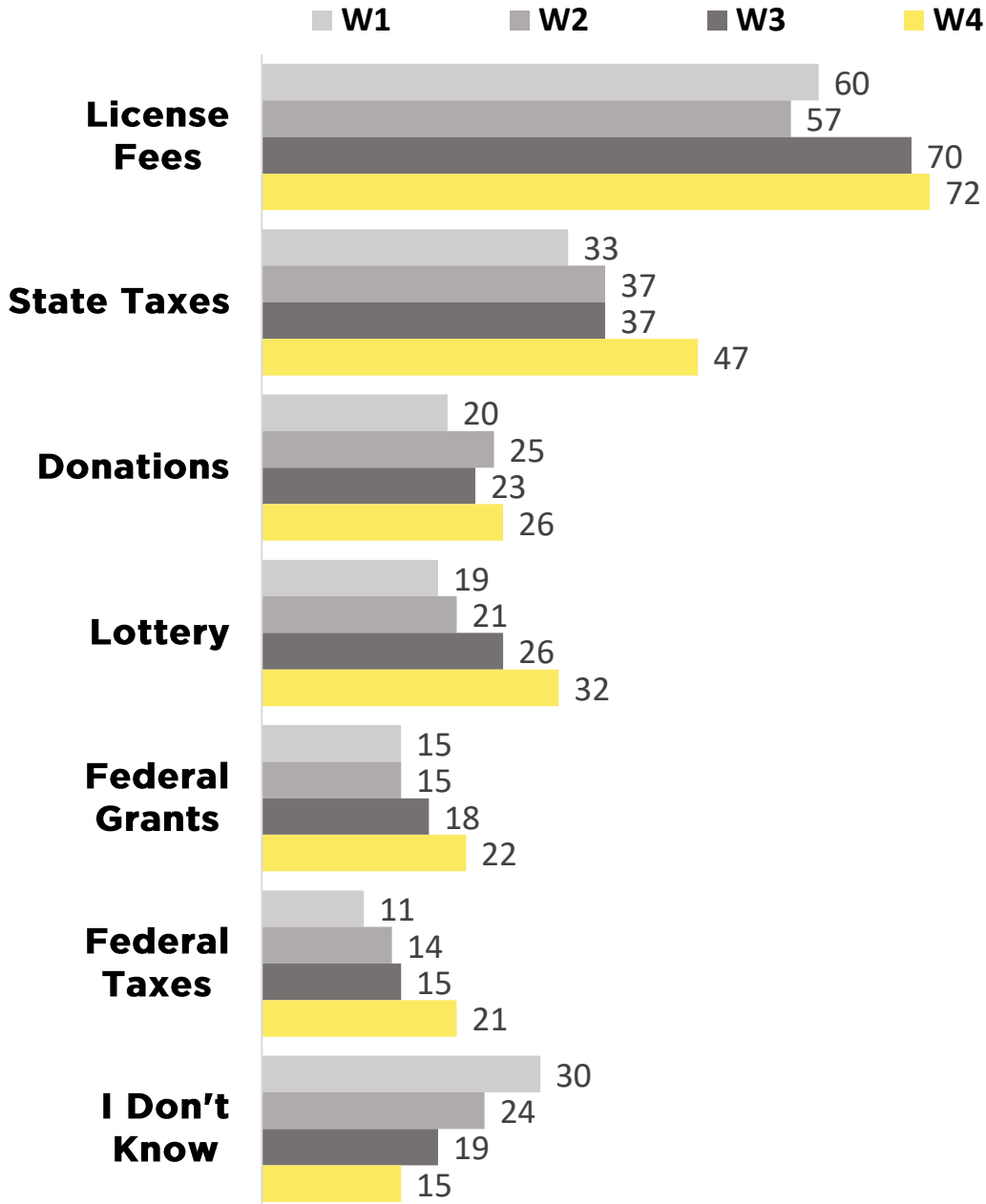
"Have you ever seen or heard any advertising using the phrase "Hug-A-Hunter/Angler?"



# Colorado's Wildlife Management Funding

All data among registered voters

## How Is Colorado's Wildlife Management Funded? Multiple Responses Accepted



"To the best of your knowledge, how is Colorado's wildlife management funded? Please select all that apply."

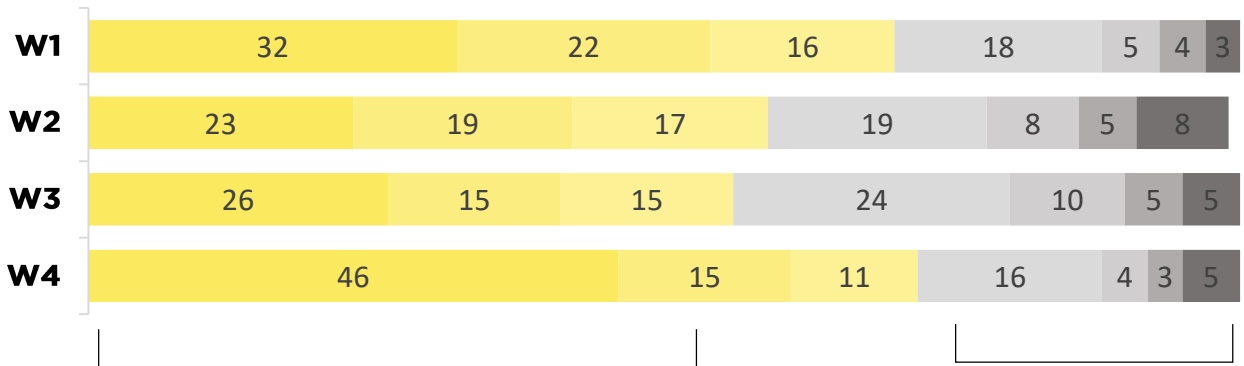
# Hunting and Fishing Ballot Support

All data among registered voters

## Support for a Ballot that Would Restrict Fishing

% Likely to Support

1 = Not at all likely 2 3 4 5 6 7 = Extremely likely



**Bottom-3 Box:**

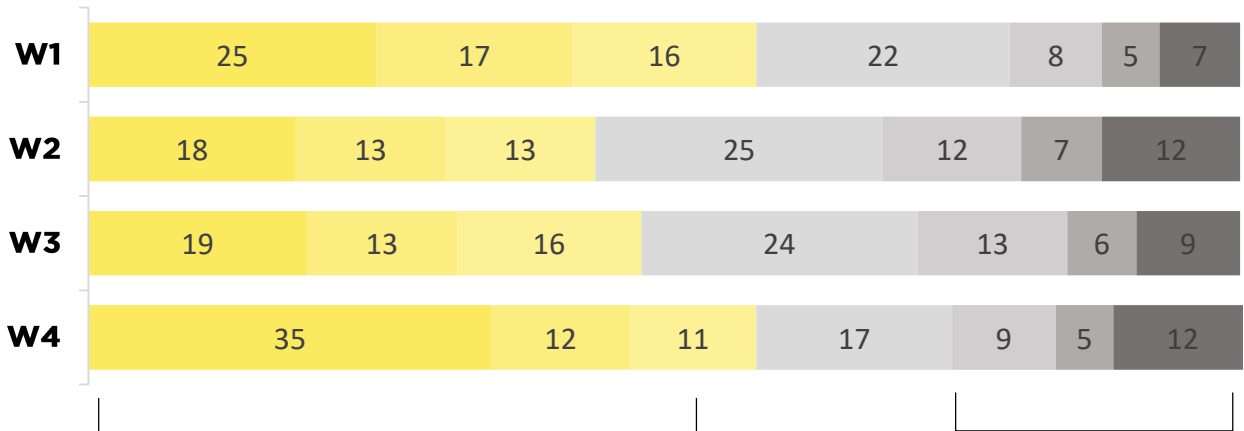
W1: 70% | W2: 59% | W3: 56% | **W4: 72%**

**Top-3 Box:**

W1: 12% | W2: 21% | W3: 20% | **W4: 12%**

## Support for a Ballot that Would Restrict Hunting

% Likely to Support



**Bottom-3 Box:**

W1: 58% | W2: 44% | W3: 48% | **W4: 58%**

**Top-3 Box:**

W1: 20% | W2: 31% | W3: 28% | **W4: 26%**

"In general, how likely are you to support a ballot initiative in Colorado that seeks to further restrict hunting/fishing?"

# Demographic Profiles

Demographics	Reg Voters	In the Wind
0-3 Yrs in CO	8%	15%
4-10 Yrs in CO	14%	21%
11-20 Yrs in CO	16%	16%
20+ Yrs in CO	37%	16%
Native CO	25%	32%
18-24 yrs	11%	30%
25-35 yrs	20%	70%
36-44 yrs	19%	n/a
45-54 yrs	17%	n/a
55-64 yrs	17%	n/a
65+ yrs	16%	n/a
Male	49%	25%
Female	51%	75%
<\$75k	63%	70%
\$75k+	36%	28%
White	78%	70%
Hispanic	11%	18%
Black	5%	5%
Asian	3%	3%
Other	3%	4%

# Appendix

# Qualitative Online Diaries

# Methodology

**Benenson Strategy Group conducted 43 online diaries among voters across Colorado from Dec. 4–17, 2018. The diary panel included 20 registered voters and 23 ITW voters.**

## **Registered Voters**

- ✓ Registered CO voter

## **“In the Wind” Voters**

- ✓ Registered CO voter
- ✓ Ages 18-35
- ✓ HHI <\$75k
- ✓ Neither strongly support nor strongly oppose hunting/fishing
- ✓ Not very politically engaged

**Participants answered four rounds of question sets with six to eight multilayered questions in each that resulted in 421 pages of transcripts.**

# Key Findings

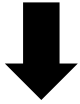
- The influx of newcomers in Colorado has created a cultural divide between long-time residents and transplants.
- This divide is evident even though natives and transplants often share the same values, including openness, inclusivity, community, an appreciation of Colorado's independence, and the near universal love of nature and the outdoors.
- Notably, hunting plays into the cultural divide as an aspect of the stereotypical "old" Colorado that In the Wind voters have a tough time identifying with. Fishing is less divisive.
- Hunting isn't something they really think about, but when they do, their source of concern stems from discomfort with killing an animal and the use of guns.
  - Still, for most voters, including In the Wind, hunting is not a black and white issue, with some instances where hunting is acceptable (hunting for food) and some where it isn't (trophy hunting).
- In the Wind voters struggle to articulate the benefits of hunting and fishing and are unsure whether current regulations are appropriate or effective, making them susceptible to anti-hunting and fishing messaging.
- There is an opening to generate goodwill toward hunting and fishing by demonstrating how these activities benefit them personally, and the state generally, by tapping into the values they share with hunters and anglers about what makes Colorado a great place to live.

# Baseline Values and Attitudes



# There is widespread concern that the Colorado way of life is being threatened by an influx of newcomers.

Newcomers to CO bring ...



**Skyrocketing cost of living**

“What I really want to change is the influx of people moving here; it is enabling **house building at such a rapid rate and driving the cost up of literally everything.**” – *ITW, Female, Native CO*

**Changes to CO's culture**

“The thing I would change about Colorado is the influx of people coming in who **do not embrace the culture** and bring along their **bad habits from the prior places they have lived.**”  
– *RV, 65+, Female, 20+ Yrs in CO*

**Stress on the environment**

“With all these people, it makes it **harder to keep the natural beauty of our state intact.** ... Going hiking these days, it's just packed with people. I just hope our state can handle it!”  
– *RV, 35-49, Female, 3-10 Yrs in CO*

**Increased traffic**

“The thing I would change about Colorado is the influx of people moving here. ... That has brought a **huge increase in traffic.** ...”  
– *ITW, Male, 10-20 Yrs in CO*

# An “us vs. them” dynamic has developed between transplants and Nnatives.

Long-time residents fear that they’re losing what makes Colorado great; transplants believe they’re bringing new energy and ideas.

## Long-term CO Residents

“I feel like the people moving here want ... to **change Colorado** to make it like the state they came from. They move into a small town and want upscale gluten-free restaurants, no oil drilling, the finest private schools ...”

– RV, 35-49, Female, 20+ Yrs in CO

“True native Colorado values are to be open and friendly to all. The **transplants have ruined that. Rudeness abounds**, since they now outnumber the natives.”

– RV, 65+, Female, 20+ Yrs in CO

## In the Wind

“[Colorado natives] are a bit **prejudiced and judgmental**. They like to **talk smack** about people not from Colorado. I guess that they **believe they are slightly better** than others.”

– ITW, Female, 3-10 Yrs in CO

“[A native Coloradan] has a **“Native” bumper sticker**. Are usually **older** (50s-60s) and a little **crotchety**. Not overly pleased that ... people are moving here for weed and winter sports. ... Possibly a little **racist**.”

– ITW, Male, 3-10 Yrs in CO

“

Transplants have been accused of **“using up”** resources that natives would otherwise use. ... I believe **transplants can bring new energy. ...**

– ITW, Female, 3-10 Yrs in CO

# Hunting plays directly into this cultural divide.

## The general Colorado voting population sees hunting as part of state's spirit and identity ...

"To be a Coloradan means to get out and enjoy your public lands. To get out and hunt, camp and go hiking."  
- RV, 18-34, Female, 3-10 Yrs in CO

"If I were to stay in Colorado, I would want to pass down my love for the outdoors, mainly hunting and fishing. This demographic is shrinking and I think it is important to pass on."  
- RV, Male, 35-49, 10-20 Yrs in CO

## ... and while In the Wind voters tend to be indifferent to hunting, they have negative stereotypes about who hunters are ...

"[When I think of a hunter] I automatically think camo gear. ... They look a bit more **gruff** and talk more about their **gun collections**. Has his big truck and RV to go out and camp with. Always carries a knife and typically a **Republican** supporting gun rights."  
- ITW, Female, 10-20 Yrs in CO

"The first image that comes to mind is a **loud, arrogant, white man**, with a greying van dyke beard and a beer gut. This person is a **staunch conservative** who believes that commonsense gun reform is an infringement on their constitutional rights."  
- ITW, Male, 0-3 Yrs in CO

# But the groups share the same values when it comes to what makes Colorado special.

## Love of Outdoors

"I love the fresh mountain air, all of the amazing outdoor activities, and the people."

- RV, 18-34, Female, 3-10 Yrs in CO

"I just love the environment and being so close to the outdoors. Colorado has so many great places to go visit that you don't really have to travel out of state."

- ITW, Female, 3-10 Yrs in CO

## Independent Spirit

"We were first to legalize pot because we thought it was the right thing to do and didn't care what the rest of the country thought. Whether it's liberals being excited about the first openly gay governor or conservatives fighting for gun rights – we really take pride in being at the front in our political ideologies." - ITW, Female, 10-20 Yrs in CO

## Live and Let Live

"Most people live and let live. I think that comes from the pioneer spirit of natives. They had to help each other just to survive."

- RV, 65+, Female, 20+ Yrs in CO

"Colorado is nicer, more open-minded, and safer than a lot of other states. Lifestyle options are available for anyone's preferences, creating a culture of inclusivity, which I admire and in which I take part."

- ITW, Female, 3-10 yrs in CO

# Attitudes Toward Hunting and Fishing

# Regardless of whether they support it, voters agree that hunting/fishing are part of CO lifestyle.

“I think hunting and fishing are definitely part of the Colorado lifestyle. **Everyone here does those things or knows someone who does. ...**”

– ITW, Female, 10-20 Yrs in CO

“I think [hunting and fishing] are **a big part of the Colorado lifestyle**, especially in communities in the **mountains and more rural areas**. ... I think it’s something that gets passed down through families. ...”

– RV, 18-34, Female, Native CO

**A few ITW outliers live in a city and don’t know anyone who hunts or fishes, so they don’t think hunting/fishing are necessarily part of the lifestyle.**

“Maybe [hunting and fishing] was a part of [the CO lifestyle] a long time ago, but nowadays, I think of hiking, mountain biking, skiing, snowboarding, camping and breweries as the Colorado lifestyle.” –ITW, Male, 3-10 Yrs in CO

# Fishing and hunting seen as distinctly different; focus on improving image of hunters and hunting

## Anglers are seen a quiet introverts who respect the environment.

"I think of [an angler] as an **introverted person who enjoys being quiet and alone**. ... He/she appreciates nature, fish and the environment."

- ITW, Female, 0-3 Yrs in CO

"[Anglers] **care deeply for the rivers and lakes**. They make sure to conserve and care for our wildlife. I am one and friends with many."

- RV, 35-49, Male, 10-20 Yrs in CO

## Fishing doesn't involve guns.

"I respect fishermen more than hunters. Fishing is a quiet, meditative activity in nature that **doesn't require firearms or necessarily even killing** the animal. Fishing is more elegant than hunting, especially fly fishing."

- ITW, Male, 0-3 yrs in CO

"I do not feel personally drawn to fishing or hunting. **I do not feel comfortable using a gun** for hunting, and I don't have the stomach to clean a dead animal."

- ITW, Female, 3-10 Yrs in CO

# For most voters, hunters viewed as responsible environmentalists, but there is a range of support for hunting.

“When I think of a hunter, I think of someone **who respects the land and the animals**. They are **ethical and provide a game management tool** while providing natural meat to themselves and family.”

– RV, 35-49, Male, 10-20 Yrs in CO

Pro-Hunting

“I feel the same about anglers as I do **hunters**. **Awesome people.**” – RV, 18-34, Male, 3-10 Yrs in CO

A lot of voters are in the middle, but support hunting:

“I think **[hunting] is good for CO if it’s done responsibly** and collects money that is then put back into preserving Colorado.” – RV, 35-49, Female, 20+ Yrs in CO

“I am not a hunter, and I tend to hate the killing, but I understand **the important role hunters have in the ecosystem.**” – RV, 50-64, Male, Native CO

“I have grown up believing **that hunting is morally wrong**. As my grandpa always says, ‘hunting isn’t a sport because both sides don’t know they’re in the game.’”

– RV, 18-34, Female, Native CO

Anti-Hunting



# But less familiar In the Wind voters can't articulate benefits of hunting, so they lean on negative stereotypes.

## ITWs have low information when it comes to the effects of hunting/fishing.

"It's hard to say whether or not I think it's good or bad for Colorado for either of these hobbies [hunting/fishing] because I'm not engaged enough in the community to know the impact it has on our community."

- ITW, Female, Native CO

## Negative stereotypes of hunters

"Usually I picture a hunter always holding up a deer they just killed by its horns. I always see hunters as killing for fun."

- ITW, Female, 3-10 Yrs in CO

"I also (unfortunately) think of hunters as beer-drinking mountain folks, who don't want their gun laws changed, who don't want to talk to vegetarians, and who like isolation more than socialization."

- ITW, Female, 3-10 Yrs in CO

# Discomfort around hunting stems from the killing of an animal.

“I like animals. I don’t want to watch people shoot one or cut it up after.” – *ITW, Female, 10-20 Yrs in CO*

“I can’t be friends with a person who kills just to kill. ...”  
– *ITW, Female, Native CO*

“I have nothing against people that hunt or fish, but I personally don’t think I’d find either of those things fun. I think **the aftermath of hunting (preparing meat) grosses me out a lot too.**”  
– *ITW, Female, 10-20 Yrs in CO*

**The main objection to hunting is the killing of an animal, but a few In the Wind voters have a specific objection to firearms specifically.**

“Hunting I cannot get on board with at all. I feel very uncomfortable around guns and even more uncomfortable using them.”  
– *ITW, Male, 0-3 Yrs in CO*

# But hunting isn't a black and white issue: Certain types of hunting are seen as more acceptable than others.

## Hunting is OK ...

### For Food

"If you are hunting/fishing **for food**, then I am all for it. **Use 100% of the animal** and I am all for it."

- ITW, Male, 3-10 Yrs in

CO

### For Population Control

"The majority of people hunt for reasons of **population control**. If we have too many of the same species, their food supply shrinks as their population grows. There becomes a shortage of food for them and they end up **suffering**."

- ITW, Female, Native CO

## Hunting is not OK ...

### Trophy Hunting

"I find **trophy hunting disgraceful** and to kill animals just for sport to hang on your wall is **dishonorable** in my opinion."

- ITW, Male, 3-10 Yrs in

CO

### When It's Inhumane

"While I never practiced hunting or fishing, I believe people do so for food and relaxation. ... There are always exceptions; **cruel practices just for "fun,"** where animals are **mistreated or too many fish are taken**. These practices I do not condone."

- RV, 65+, Female, 10-20 Yrs in CO



**Message Implication:** Make sure voters know just how regulated hunting is to push back on misinformation. Lean into images of hunting that benefits the individual (food) or the ecosystem (population control).

# This means that there are message opportunities to explore and vulnerabilities to be aware of.

## Message Opportunities

Top Reasons for Hunting/Fishing

**Population Control** 27 mentions

**Food Resource** 15 mentions

**Money for Enviro Conservation** 7 mentions

**People's Right to Hunt for Sport** 7 mentions

**Good for the Local Econ /Small Biz** 6 mentions

**Tourism** 6 mentions

**Other mentions:** tradition, helps people connect with nature, survival, promotes responsible gun use

## Possible Vulnerabilities

Top Reasons Against Hunting/Fishing

**Animal Cruelty** 25 mentions

**Overhunting & Overfishing** 12 mentions

**Damage Local Ecosystems** 9 mentions

**Dangerous** 7 mentions

**Hunters Litter** 5 mentions

**Meat/Fish Available at the Store** 4 mentions

**Promotes Gun Culture** 4 mentions

**Other mentions:** endangered species, might ruin the enjoyment of nature



# As a result, views on hunting/fishing regulation are varied.

## Reasons for Fewer Regulations

### DETERS NEW HUNTERS

“I think there needs to be less regulation on hunting. At least to the point that it doesn’t deter new hunters from entering.”

– RV, 18-34, Male, 3-10 Yrs in CO

### LICENSES TOO EXPENSIVE FOR LOCALS

“The regulations are a little harsh. Getting a license here can be hard. And maybe a little to pricey for locals.”

– RV, 18-34, Female, 3-10 Yrs in CO

### REGS DECREASE TOURISM

“If [regulations] became [too] egregious people would look elsewhere to hunt.”

– RV, 35-49, Male, 10-20 Yrs in CO

**But, overall, most voters think the status quo is working.**

“I think things are being handled appropriately. We have smart people with a lot of knowledge managing these resources.”

– RV, 65+, Female, 20+ Yrs in CO

## Reasons for More Regulations

### POPULATION GROWTH MEANS TOO MANY HUNTERS

“With many people moving [to CO] for ... activities like hunting and fishing we need to act ... to protect these spaces.”

– RV, 18-34, Female, Native CO

### NEED TO REGULATE GUNS

“I am in favor of more regulations for hunting. **It's the guns.** They are just too dangerous ...”

– RV, 65+, Female, 20+ Yrs in CO

### PROTECT PUBLIC LAND

“There needs to be **stricter laws about hunting and fishing** in national parks and nature reserves.”

– RV, Female, 18-34, Native CO

# In the Wind voters don't feel knowledgeable, so they err on the side of the status quo – but they could be persuaded otherwise.

**“I wish I had more information. ... I think [the way the regulations are] is fine.** I haven't heard anything about it on local news. I think that speaks to the fact it is working.”

*– ITW, Female, 3-10 Yrs in CO*

**“I think things are probably fine the way they are.**

I think if something was horribly wrong with current laws or regulations regarding hunting and fishing, we would be hearing about it.”

*– ITW, Female, 10-20 Yrs in CO*

## Without a solid base of knowledge, ITWs are open to reexamining the current regulations.

“I don't know what regulations should be in place. It's really out of my knowledge base. I generally trust wildlife experts. **I do think changing demographics in Colorado mean these issues do need to be examined.**” – *ITW, Female, 10-20 Yrs in CO*

# Message ideas to consider

## Preserves the outdoors that's special to all of us.

Hunting and fishing license fees go directly back to the state and fund wildlife conservation and other efforts that help **keep CO beautiful**.

## A healthier ecosystem is better for the animals.

Hunting and fishing are integral to **wildlife population control**. It's more humane to hunt these animals than to let them starve to death, and better for the CO ecosystem to not let these animals overrun the land.

## A boon for the economy

Hunting and fishing bring in **tourism dollars and strengthen our economy**, especially in smaller, more rural areas of Colorado.

# Message ideas to consider

## Closer to your food

Hunters and anglers know that the **animals they eat were killed humanely and the meat is clean**, unlike the meat we get from the grocery store, which is full of chemicals and comes from animals that were horribly treated in factory farms.

## Protect the spirit of Colorado

Colorado was founded on a spirit of individuality – making your own way – and we have to let people continue to **make the mountains their own**, and enjoy it the way Coloradans have done for generations, whether it's hiking, camping, skiing, snowmobiling, fly fishing or hunting.

## Humanize hunters

Hunters are just one part of the independent spirit of Colorado. **They live in the city and in the mountains. They commute to work and sit in traffic on I-70.** And they love to head to the mountains to unplug and enjoy everything the outdoors has to offer. Let's protect what makes Colorado special.

*(Note: Imagery will be powerful here)*



# In the Wind Voters: Who they are

## Enjoy the Outdoors

“Love to read books. Listen to podcasts. Hike mountains, camping, spending time at the park, or anything outside.” – *ITW, Female, 0-3 Yrs in CO*

## Love to Travel

“I like ... traveling as much as possible. **I try to go to one new country and one new state each year.**” – *ITW, Female, 3-10 Yrs in CO*

## Try New Things

“I like getting out of the house with my boyfriend by either going into the city or just having a nice walk. **I also like busing to new places around Colorado and trying out new restaurants.**”  
– *ITW, Female, 3-10 Yrs in CO*

## Keep up with What's Trendy

“I also like to try out **new breweries in Denver**, play video games with friends, and **explore new restaurants** with my wife and friends.”  
– *ITW, Male, 3-10 Yrs in CO*

## Spend Time with Friends and Pets

“For my free time, I usually go play tennis or **hike with my dog and girlfriend**. We often go to happy hours, or cook, or go out for a glass of wine.” – *ITW, Male, 0-3 Yrs in CO*

# In the Wind voters have darker senses of humor, prefer non-mainstream content.

## Registered voters

"I like *The Goldbergs*, *Modern Family* ... for TV comedies. I like Ellen DeGeneres, Kevin Hart and Allison Janney. I like how they make fun of themselves and are **not particularly mean to other people.**"

- RV, 50-64, Male, 10-20 Yrs in CO

"I grew up watching comedians like Cheech and Chong, Steve Martin, Richard Pryor, and Eddie Murphy. My range of comedy goes from watching sitcom shows such as ***Young Sheldon*, *Shameless*, or even *Family Feud!***"

- RV, 50-64, Female, 20+ Yrs in CO

## In the Wind

"[My humor is] a **little dark, sarcastic and absurdist.** I like telling absurd lies with a straight face just to see if anyone is gullible enough to believe me."

- ITW, Male, 3-10 Yrs in CO

"I would describe my sense of humor as **dark, crude and intelligent.** ... [I like] *F is for Family* on Netflix because it is crude, dark and intelligent much like myself."

- ITW, Female, Native CO

# Coloradans, including ITW voters, use social media, but they don't love it.

"Yes, I do use social media. Mainly Facebook and Instagram. ... Social media is not a big role in my life. I can take it or leave it. I think all too often people get wrapped up in it and it provides a false sense of security."

- ITW, Male, 10-20 Yrs in CO

"I'm fairly active on Facebook. ... I have a love/hate view of Facebook. I hate that it feels like an invasion of privacy. I hate the nastiness that comes up in comments. ... On the other hand, Facebook is a wonderful way for me to come up with far-flung friends and relatives."

- RV, 50-64, Female, 10-20 Yrs in CO

"I only use [Facebook and Instagram] to stay connected to friends and family that are dispersed all around the world. I don't actually enjoy posting very much because I don't think it shows my real life and I don't want people to assume they know me or what my life looks like just because they see a post on IG."

- ITW, Female, 0-3 Yrs in CO

# Courtroom Focus Groups

# Key Findings

- The jury groups confirmed much of what we learned from the ethnojournals regarding the values that Coloradans and In the Wind voters bring to the table, as well as the attitudes they hold toward hunting and fishing. The groups also provided initial guidance toward a successful messaging strategy for the CWC.
- Echoing what we saw in the ethnojournals, all participants in the jury groups, regardless of whether they're newcomers or lifelong residents, share the same reasons for why they love living in Colorado: the outdoor lifestyle and the western culture of the state.
  - Colorado provides numerous outdoor recreational activities, from hiking to skiing to kayaking, all within a short distance of a thriving urban center where they can also experience art, music and culture.
  - Additionally, Coloradans love the culture that is part of being a western mountain state: the clean air, having nature all around them, and the state's welcoming of new ideas and independent thinking.
- Long-term residents are much more likely to recognize hunting and fishing as an integral part of the Colorado lifestyle (even if they themselves don't hunt or fish). But ITW voters are much less likely to connect hunting and fishing to "their" Colorado.
- While there are varying levels of comfort with hunting among ITW voters, they all place some importance on Colorado's "live and let live" political spirit, meaning that even if they personally would never hunt, they value the fact that others have the freedom to do so.
- Regardless, hunting is not a core part of who ITW voters are, nor do they see it as contributing to the things that they love about living in Colorado.

# Key Findings

- As a result, our main challenge isn't to combat anti-hunting sentiment (there isn't much there among ITW voters), as much as it is to combat ITW voters' indifference to hunting.
- Because it is not clear to ITW voters that they would experience personal negative consequences if hunting were to be further regulated, restricted or banned, they are open to persuasion from anti-hunting opposition.
- While ITW voters were able to identify some of the benefits of hunting on an intellectual level (such as benefits to Colorado's economy or help with wildlife population management), they did not immediately connect these benefits to their personal lives or the values they hold.
- They were able to clearly point out the impact changes to hunting rules and regulations might have on others (people who currently hunt, small-business owners, people directly involved in the hunting and fishing industry), but they did not immediately connect how a ban or further regulation might directly impact their own lives.
- As a result, rational arguments in favor of hunting have limited power because they do not have emotional resonance for ITW voters.
- While nearly all ITW respondents felt that banning all hunting was a step too far (respondents noted to take away a right currently enjoyed by their fellow citizens was a very high hurdle to clear), the danger is that nearly all of them are open to further restrictions on hunting because they feel they personally would have little to lose if hunting didn't exist.
  - One ITW respondent noted that while an outright ban was a bridge too far for him, he felt that the anti-hunting lawyers actually made the more compelling arguments.

# Key Findings

- One major factor playing into this openness to new hunting restrictions is that ITW voters don't know what the current laws and regulations are, who makes these laws and who they would trust to make these decisions.
  - ITW voters largely have little idea about the current regulations governing hunting, in contrast to many registered voters, some of whom are quite knowledgeable about the law.
  - When asked who they would trust to make the rules, there was a clear distrust of government institutions. ITW voters want nonpartisan "experts" to make the rules but could not agree on who that should be. This leads them to problematic conclusions for our side, as some said that it should be environmental defense organizations who make the rules.
- In short, while ITW voters tend to lean toward our side, their support is extremely soft and their lack of connection to hunting predisposes them to be persuaded by opposition arguments.
- It will be critical for our side to provide not just intellectually compelling but emotionally compelling arguments in favor of hunting and fishing that connect with ITW voters' values and that demonstrate clear, personal consequences for increased regulation of hunting and fishing.

# Messaging Implications

- Overall, the arguments in favor of hunting were more persuasive than arguments against for both registered voters and ITW voters. However, some of the anti-hunting arguments, particularly around guns and safety, did find some support.
- While pro-hunting arguments won the day for ITW voters, there was little emotion behind them because they did not immediately connect these arguments back to their deeply-held values nor did they feel they had much skin in the game either way.
- Economic arguments in support of hunting were by far the most resonant with all focus group participants - but more so when they tied directly back to their way of life.
  - Arguments that hunting and fishing licensing fees fund the state's wildlife management and conservation efforts seemed equally as persuasive as arguments that the hunting and fishing industries support tens of thousands of jobs and provide billions in revenue to the state.
- Importantly, some respondents did eventually make the connection that if there were decreased funds from licensing fees that the taxpayer would be on the hook for funding these programs. The ability to more easily draw a personal consequence is potentially why the economic arguments were most persuasive.
  - That said, the discussion around increased taxes was in the abstract and respondents did not bring it down to a personal level (e.g., license fees allow them to hike on trails for free and without them they would have to pay entrance fees).



# Messaging Implications

- Another key for us will be taking one of the main concerns about hunting – namely animal welfare – and turning the argument on its head.
  - Learning that hunting fees play a key role in the flourishing of the elk population in Colorado was a persuasive argument because it showed that, contrary to a belief that hunting hurts animals, it actually plays a key role in protecting Colorado’s wildlife and takes care of the lands and natural resources in which they need to thrive.
- We found another way to potentially counter concerns about animal cruelty: informing participants about current regulations that already exist that are designed to keep animal populations healthy and thriving.
  - Many voters feel uneasy about “trophy hunting,” so one of the more persuasive arguments for ITW voters was learning about the “Willful Destruction of Wildlife” statute, requiring hunters to take and process all of a big-game animal.
- However, for all of the above arguments, the costs of a hunting ban and the benefits of hunting were all spoken about largely in abstract terms. While ITW voters found these arguments intellectually persuasive, they did not seem to resonate on a core, emotional level.

# Messaging Implications

- In fact, the arguments that were the least persuasive were ones that had little to no personal connection for ITW voters at all.
  - For example, the argument that hunting is part of Colorado's way of life and a key way for Coloradans to spend time with family resonated more with registered voters than ITW voters precisely because, for ITW voters, hunting is not part of their Colorado way of life.
  - Similarly, arguments about meat from hunting being cleaner than factory-farmed meat from the grocery store resonated less with ITW voters because, while they found the argument credible, it doesn't mean anything to them because they aren't likely to go hunting for their own food either way.
- On the other side, while most anti-hunting arguments fell flat, arguments around guns and safety did seem to have some resonance.
- ITW voters pointed to the tens of thousands of gun-related hunting accidents that happen each year and how they could be prevented or reduced through a hunting ban.
  - Still, the gun issue remains more of a signifier of the cultural divide between hunters and non-hunters than a source of anti-hunting sentiment.
  - While safety among hunters or accidental shootings by hunters was the main argument used against hunting, no respondents expanded the argument to gun issues in society at large (e.g., hunting culture is why there are lax gun laws in Colorado, which leads to decreased safety for the general public).
- Aside from gun-safety arguments, the anti-hunting lawyers on both nights tried to emphasize the way hunting interrupts natural selection and the natural ecosystem, but this argument didn't seem to hold much water.

