



**To: Interested Parties**  
**From: Chris Keating, *Harstad Strategic Research, Inc.***  
**Date: September 22, 2009**  
**Re: Support for the Split Estate Amendment in Montana**

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HARSTAD STRATEGIC RESEARCH conducted a telephone survey among 605 registered voters statewide in Montana. Interviews were conducted from August 3-5, 2009.

### **Key Findings**

- **More than eight-out-of-ten voters in Montana favor the split estate amendment that strengthens protections for private property owners from the effects of oil and gas drilling, while only 10% oppose it.**

Voters in Montana heard the following description of the split estate amendment:

As Congress debates a new energy policy, some legislators are proposing an amendment that strengthens protections for private property owners who own the surface of their land, but do not own the rights to the oil and gas located underneath their land. This amendment would notify landowners before the government leases the oil and gas out from underneath them. It would require oil and gas companies to negotiate with private property owners to find the least intrusive ways to develop oil and gas located underneath the property owner's land -- and it would require oil and gas companies to fairly compensate the landowner for damages to their land. Do you favor or oppose this amendment that strengthens protections for private property owners from the effects of oil and gas drilling? *[If favor or oppose ask:]* Is that strongly, or not so strongly?

After hearing this description of the split estate amendment, 84% of Montanans say they favor the split estate amendment including 73% who *strongly* favor it, compared to only 10% who oppose it, and 7% undecided.

- **The split estate amendment receives the collective support of Montanans across all political persuasions and among those who live and work in the more rural regions.**

Montanans support for the split estate amendment is nearly universal across the following groups:

- Democrats (87% favor the split estate amendment), Independents (83% favor the split estate amendment), and Republicans (81% favor the split estate amendment);
- Voters in Montana's seven more urban counties, Cascade, Flathead, Gallatin, Lewis and Clark, Missoula, Silver Bow, and Yellowstone (83% favor the split estate amendment), and voters in the remaining more rural counties (84% favor the split estate amendment);
- Households that work in farming or ranching (80% favor the split estate amendment);
- Voters who go fishing or hunting (81% favor the split estate amendment), and voters who consider themselves to be environmentalists or conservationists (86% favor the split estate amendment).

*The August 3-5, 2009 Montana Voter Survey was conducted by Harstad Strategic Research, Inc., the national public opinion research firm in Boulder, Colorado. The results of this survey are based upon 605 random telephone interviews among registered voters in Montana, using a voter list. The random sample of 605 has a worst-case 95% confidence interval of plus or minus 4.0% about any one reported percentage.*