



Texas parks & conservation issues

February 22—24, 2009

Background

- **Methodology**

- Statewide sample of 601 voters
- Interviews conducted February 22–24, 2009
- Margin of error of $\pm 4.0\%$ for 601 cases
- Survey funded and conducted on behalf of the Texas Coalition for Conservation, a non-partisan organization that advocates on behalf of state parks, outdoor-recreation, and wildlife conservation issues (www.texascoa.org)
- For full results, copy of survey questionnaire or customized cross-tabs please email info@hillresearch.com

- **Contributors**

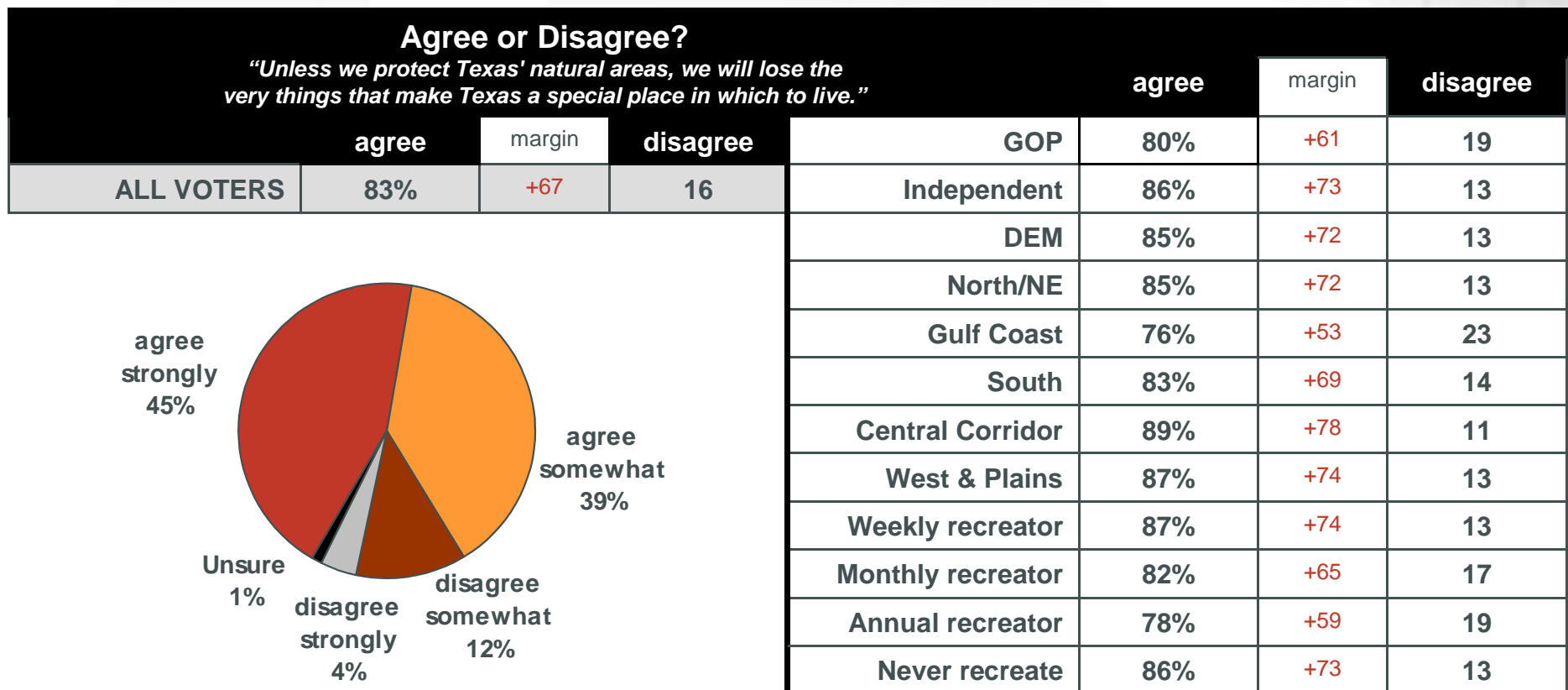
- Dr. David B. Hill, Director, Hill Research Consultants
- Dr. Stephen H. White, Assistant Director
- David J. Benzion, Senior Research Analyst
- Jason Nemeck, Project Manager

Key findings

- **There is broad & intense sentiment—transcending all partisan & geographic lines—that conservation is a core Texas value**
- **Funding parks & conservation via a sales tax on outdoor sporting goods makes intuitive sense to the public; wide support exists for devoting all such revenues to that purpose; there is strong opposition to diversion to other government programs**
- **Support for higher hunting/fishing fees, while limited at first, quickly gains momentum once voters are informed of how long it has been since rates have been increased, and especially that what is being considered falls under \$5 per licensee**

Valuing Conservation

- Broad and strong agreement that conservation of Texas' natural areas is a core Lone Star value



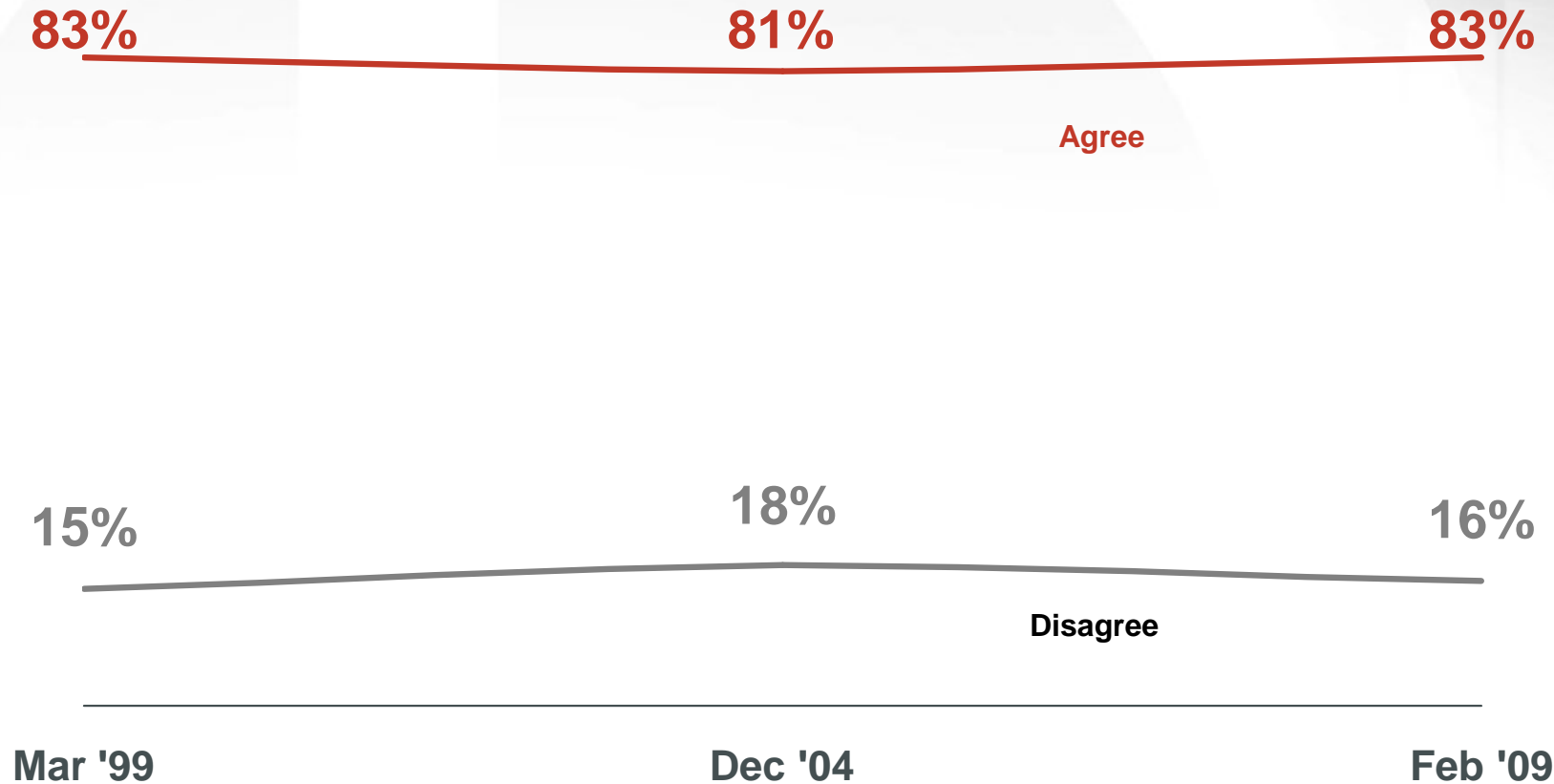
Numbers may not add up to 100% due to rounding and/or respondents answering "unsure."



Valuing conservation

time series

“Unless we protect Texas' natural areas, we will lose the very things that make Texas a special place in which to live”



Valuing conservation

"If state leaders don't purchase & protect some of Texas' natural areas today, they will be lost forever to development"

76%

77%

79%

Agree

22%

20%

19%

Disagree

Mar '99

Dec '04

Feb '09

Sporting goods tax

ballot tests

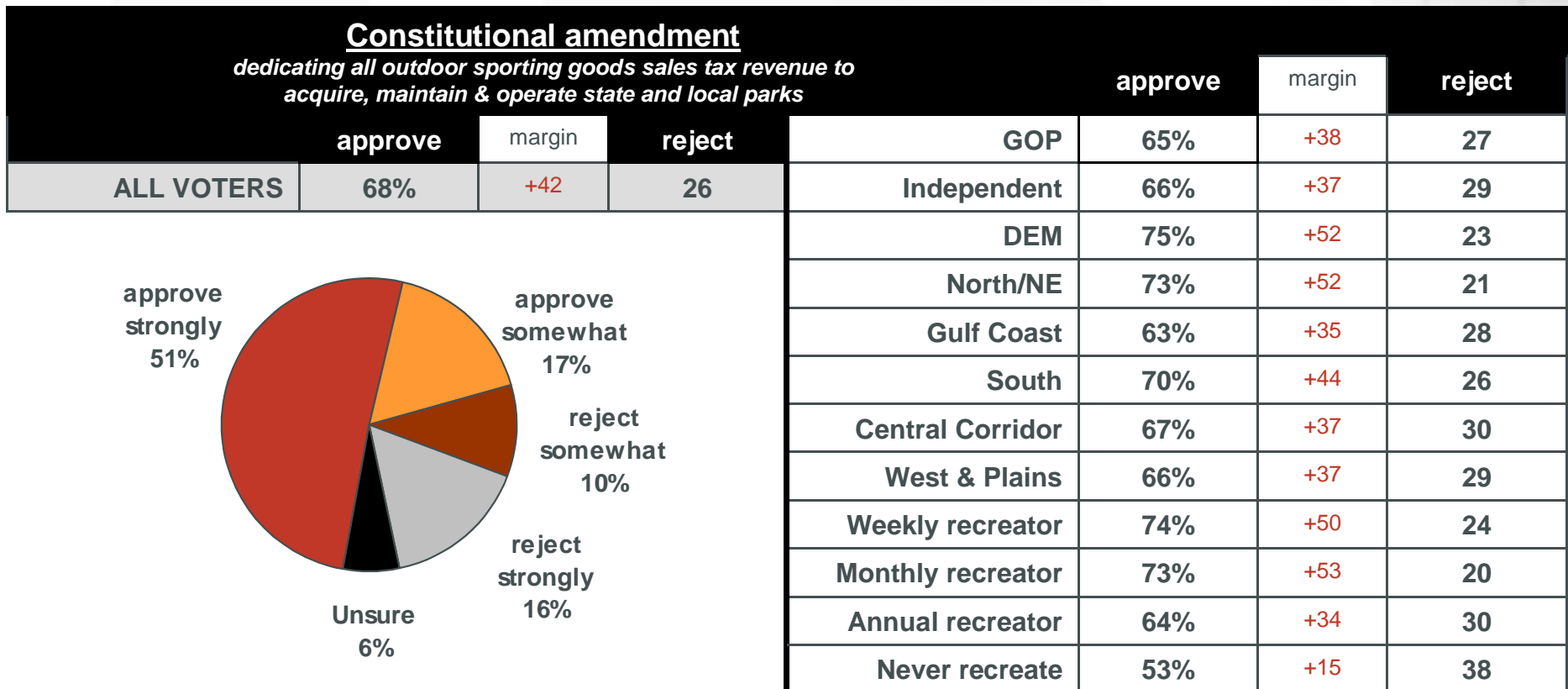
- It strikes the public as intuitive & reasonable to fund parks with sales tax on outdoor sporting goods
- Strong support for dedicating all “SGT” revenue for parks funding; intense pushback against diverting revenue to other purposes

Sporting goods tax <u>ballot tests</u>					
<i>approve or disapprove</i>					
	strongly	Yes, approve	margin	No, disapprove	strongly
<u>GENERAL USE</u> of tax revenue generated by sale of outdoor sporting goods to acquire, maintain & operate state and local parks	35	74%	+51	23	14
<u>DEDICATE ALL</u> tax revenue generated by sale of outdoor sporting goods to acquire, maintain & operate state and local parks	54	75%	+55	20	11
Use sporting goods tax revenue to <u>ACQUIRE ADDITIONAL</u> land for public hunting, fishing, birding, camping, hiking, kayaking, canoeing	46	76%	+55	21	13
Use sporting goods tax revenue to pay for other government programs with <u>LITTLE OR NO CONNECTION</u> to parks or wildlife programs	8	23%	-50	73	55
<u>CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT</u> dedicating all outdoor sporting goods sales tax revenue to acquire, maintain & operate state and local parks	51	68%	+42	26	16

Up-Close: Sporting goods tax amendment

ballot test

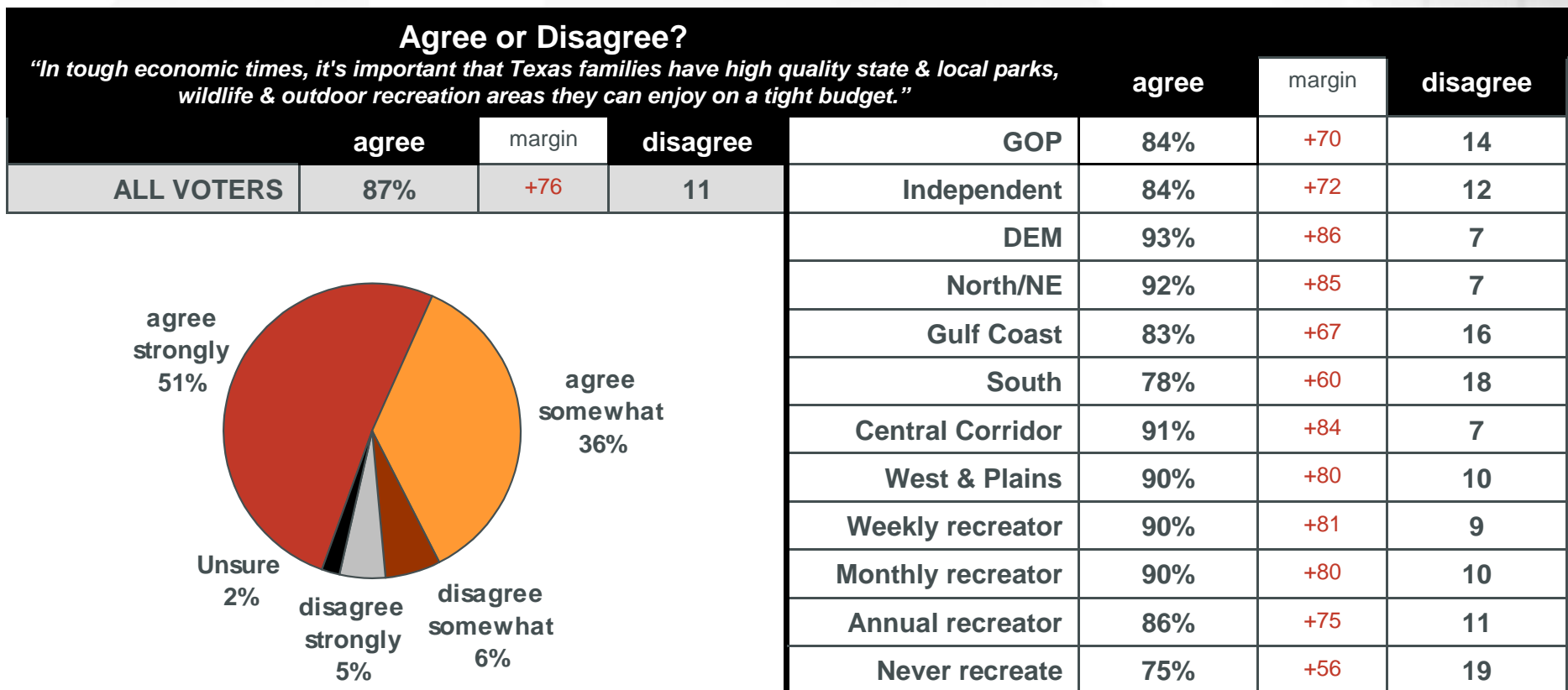
- Support for an actual constitutional amendment locking in SGT revenue for parks is broadly-held across partisan & geographic lines; even “non-recreators” back slightly



Numbers may not add up to 100% due to rounding and/or respondents answering “unsure.”

Support for funding parks

- A high quality park system is deeply valued among nearly all Texans—even those that don't regularly recreate outdoors



Numbers may not add up to 100% due to rounding and/or respondents answering "unsure."

Increasing licenses & fees

ballot tests

- Despite larger economic anxieties, general support for an increase in hunting & fishing fees out-paces opposition almost 2:1
- Backing increases as the public is informed of the lack of any such increase in last half-decade, as well as relatively minor amount of hike being contemplated

Approve or disapprove...?					
	strongly	Yes, approve	margin	No, disapprove	strongly
<u>GENERAL</u> increase of hunting & fishing fees to fund fish & wildlife conservation programs	35	59%	+25	34	22
Support for higher hunting & fishing fees for fish & wildlife conservation programs after being told there has been <u>NO INCREASE IN 5 YEARS</u>	39	63%	+31	32	23
Support for higher hunting & fishing fees for fish & wildlife conservation programs after being told any increase would be <u>UNDER \$5</u>	52	72%	+47	25	18