



Jerome County: Energy, Land, and Your Voice

Jerome County is considering major updates to its Zoning Ordinance (Chapters 7 and 11) and Comprehensive Plan. These changes would shift how large-scale energy projects—like wind, solar, and battery storage—are permitted in rural and agricultural areas.

PROPOSED POLICY SHIFTS

Moving Beyond Industrial Zones

Proposed changes would allow large-scale energy facilities in rural areas via "Conditional Use Permits."

Defining Facility Scales

"Large-scale" projects exceed 10 MWh or disturb more than 60 acres of land.

New Energy Technologies

Regulations now include Wind, Solar, and Lithium Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS).

YOUR PERSPECTIVE MATTERS

Agricultural Land Preservation

The survey asks if the county should prioritize farming over energy revenue.

Safety & Accountability

Residents can weigh in on BESS safety risks and decommissioning requirements.

Expand Public Notification

Voice your opinion on whether all residents should be notified of nearby projects.

STAKEHOLDER GUIDANCE

STAKEHOLDER TYPE	ENGAGEMENT FOCUS
Agricultural Producers	Rural Residents
Land preservation and property rights	Rural character and infrastructure impacts
	Business Owners
	Economic considerations and tax revenue

Energy, Facilities & Farmland Preservation

Introduction & Background Summary

Jerome County Commissioners and the Jerome County Planning and Zoning Commission are currently considering proposed amendments to Chapters 11 and 7 of the Jerome County Zoning Ordinance. These changes would adjust existing regulations in ways that may favor expanded large-scale energy development in unincorporated (rural) areas of the county.

At the same time, proposed updates to the Jerome County Comprehensive Plan introduce new language that signals increased long-term support for both large- and small-scale energy projects in rural areas.

The energy projects under consideration include wind turbines, solar installations, and lithium battery energy storage systems (BESS).

Here is a brief overview of the draft ordinance plans:

Chapter 11 (Energy Facilities)

This is a newly proposed chapter that establishes standards for energy projects, including wind, solar, and **battery energy storage systems (BESS)**. The initial draft restricted **large-scale energy facilities**

(those exceeding 10 megawatt-hours or disturbing more than 60 acres) to Heavy Industrial zones. However, the Planning & Zoning Commission recently recommended rewriting this chapter to remove the **Heavy Industrial** restriction. Instead, they proposed using a **Conditional Use Permit** process.

Under the current Chapter 11 definitions:

- **Large-scale energy facilities** exceed 10 megawatt-hours (MWh) of capacity or disturb more than 60 acres of land.
- **Small-scale energy facilities** have a capacity of 1–10 MWh and disturb up to 60 acres of land.

Chapter 7 (Conditional Use)

This proposal repeals and replaces the "outdated" **Special Use** chapter. It updates the terminology to **Conditional Use**, clarifies application and review standards, and establishes new permit duration and expiration standards to ensure projects remain compliant with modern regulations over time.

Comprehensive Plan Updates

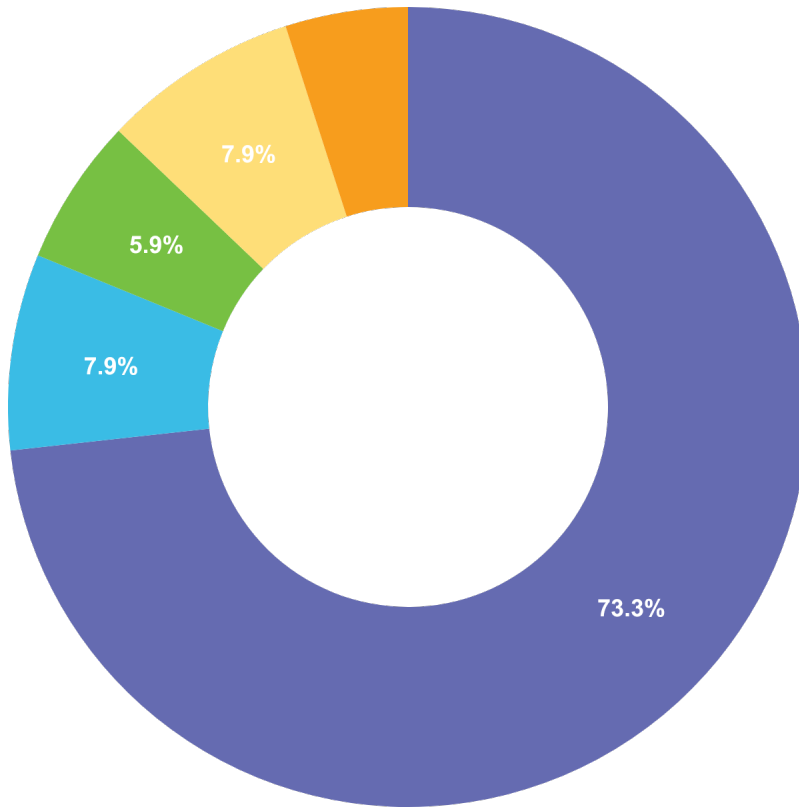
Proposed updates introduce new language signaling increased long-term support for both **large-scale energy (exceed 10 megawatt-hours (MWh) of capacity or disturb more than 60 acres of land)** and **small-scale energy facilities (1–10 MWh and up to 60 acres)** in rural areas.

These proposed policy changes could have lasting impacts on agricultural land preservation, private property rights, rural character, infrastructure demands, environmental conditions, and the overall future of Jerome County.

The JTown Beacon is presenting this survey to ensure that residents, agricultural producers, landowners, and community members have an opportunity to share their perspectives before these policy decisions are finalized. Survey results will be shared publicly to reflect community viewpoints and encourage informed participation in the decision-making process.

Q1 Land Use Priorities

Considering agriculture land in Jerome County is a limited resource like water, how important is it to you that Jerome County prioritize the preservation of agricultural land when considering large- or small-scale energy projects?*

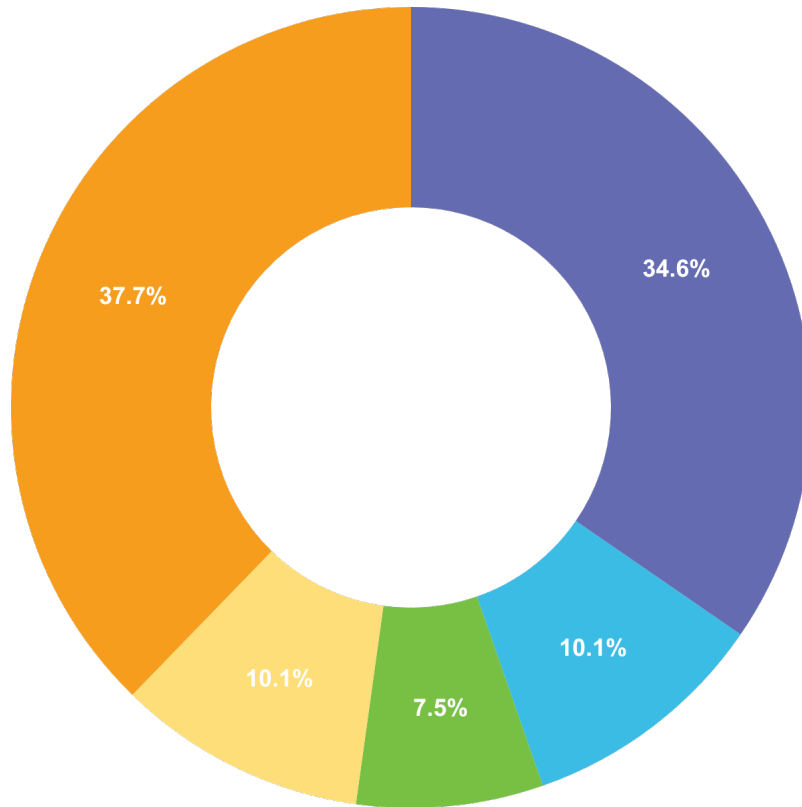


Answered: 83 Unanswered: 0 Average Rating: 1 - Extremely Important

Choice	Total	Rating
1 - Extremely Important	74	74
2 - Very Important	4	8
3 - Moderately Important	2	6
4 - Slightly Important	2	8
5 - Not Important	1	5

Q2 Location of Large-Scale Energy Facilities

Chapter 11 currently allows large-scale energy facilities in **Heavy Industrial (IH)** zones and does not permit them in Agricultural or Residential zones. Do you support maintaining this zoning approach?*



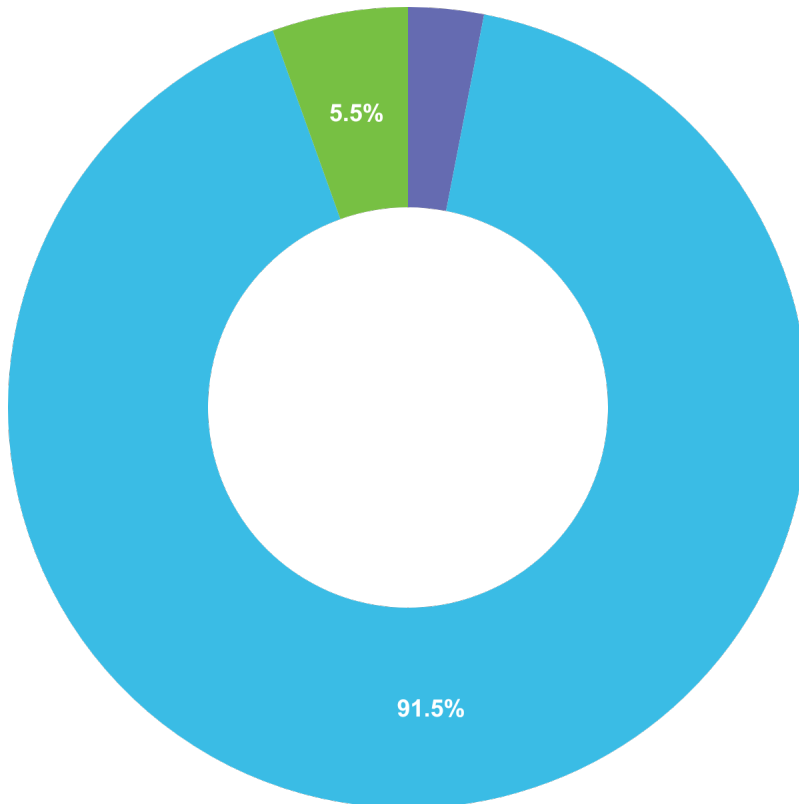
Answered: 83 Unanswered: 0 Average Rating: 2 - Support

Choice	Total	Rating
1 - Strongly Support	55	55
2 - Support	8	16
3 - Neutral	4	12

Choice	Total	Rating
4 - Oppose	4	16
5 - Strongly Oppose	12	60

Q3 ** Energy Development in Agricultural Zones**

Would you support allowing large-scale energy facilities in Agricultural zones under certain conditions?*

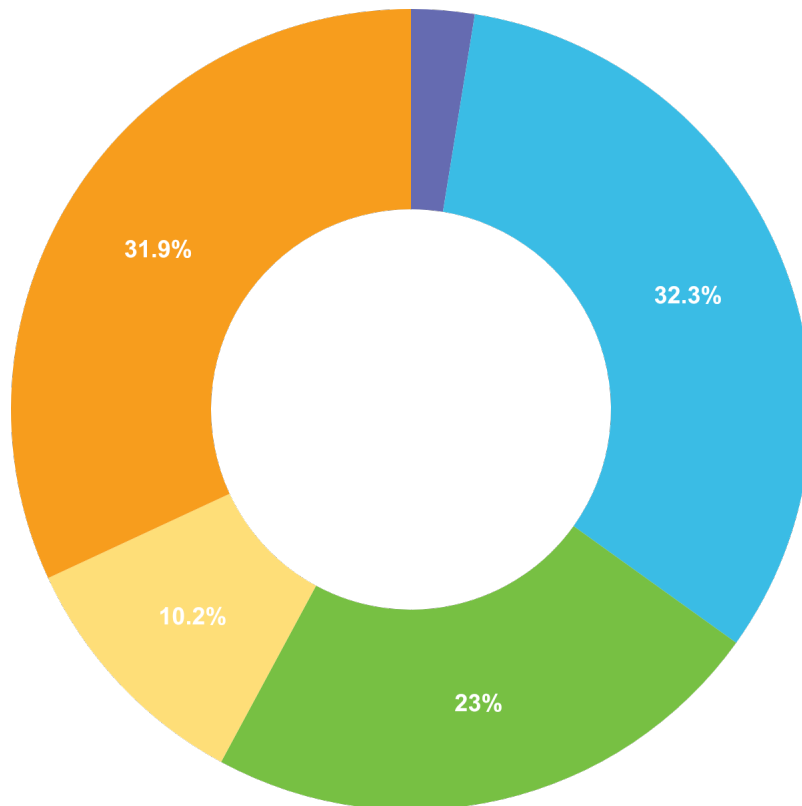


Answered: 83 Unanswered: 0 Average Rating: 2 - No

Choice	Total	Rating
1 - Yes	5	5
2 - No	75	150
3 - Unsure	3	9

Q4 Small-Scale & On-Site Energy Systems

Do you support allowing small-scale or on-site renewable energy systems (**such as solar installations serving individual homes, farms, or businesses**) for onsite use, in Agricultural zones?*

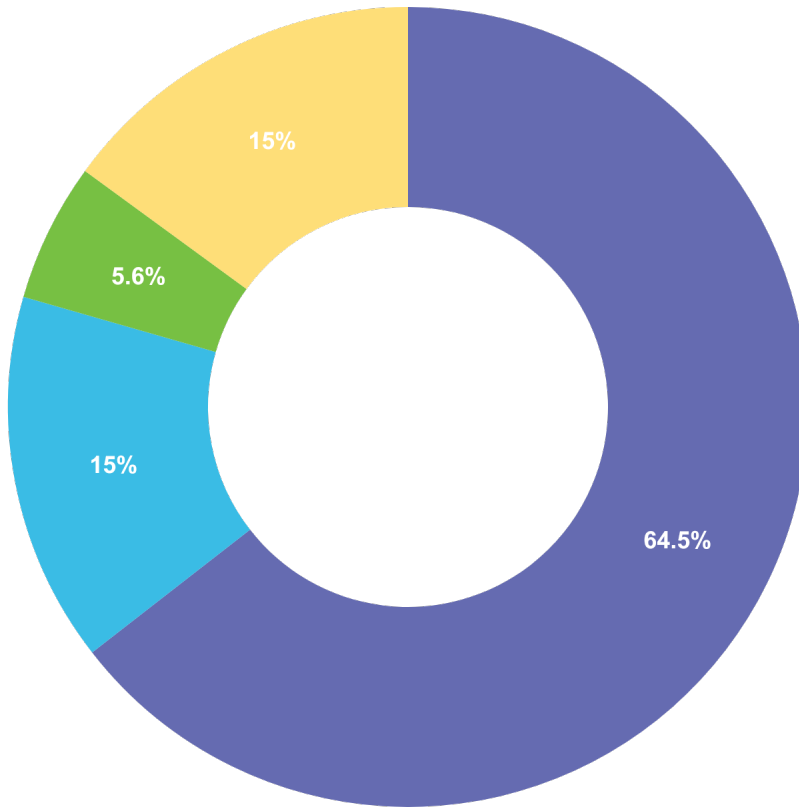


Answered: 83 Unanswered: 0 Average Rating: 3 - Neutral

Choice	Total	Rating
 1 - Strongly Support	6	6
 2 - Support	38	76
 3 - Neutral	18	54
 4 - Oppose	6	24
 5 - Strongly Oppose	15	75

Q5 Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS)

Considering BESS is being planned in Southern Idaho, how concerned are you about safety or environmental risks associated with lithium or other potentially hazardous battery energy storage facilities?*

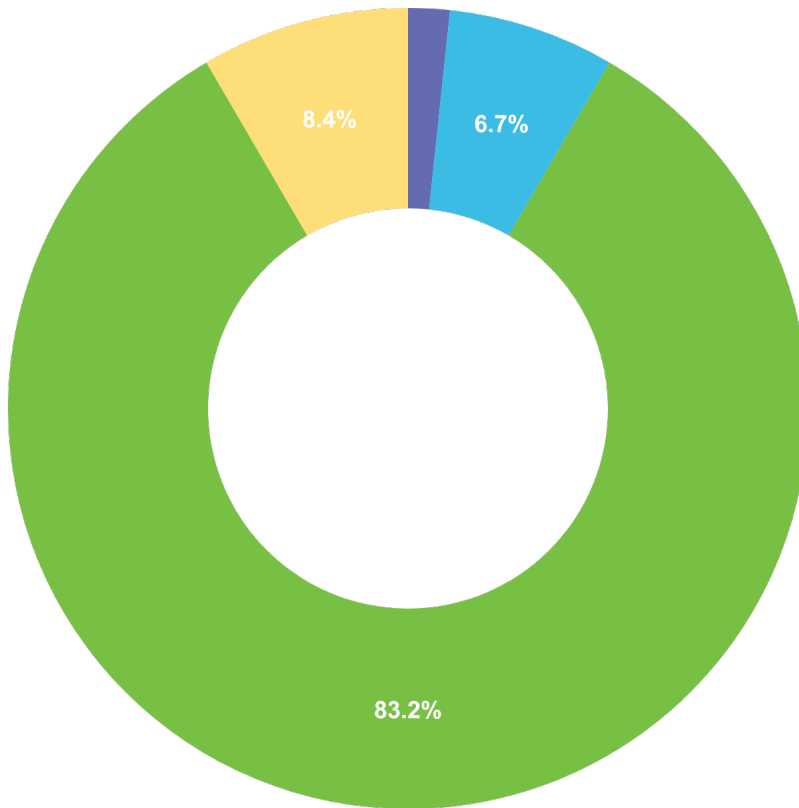


Answered: 83 Unanswered: 0 Average Rating: 1 - Very Concerned

Choice	Total	Rating
1 - Very Concerned	69	69
2 - Somewhat Concerned	8	16
3 - Slight Concerned	2	6
4 - Not Concerned	4	16

Q6 Required Studies & Protections

For wind, Solar, and other energy facilities, how important are specific guidelines regarding, noise, glare, traffic, stormwater, and emergency response studies. In your opinion, are these requirements?*

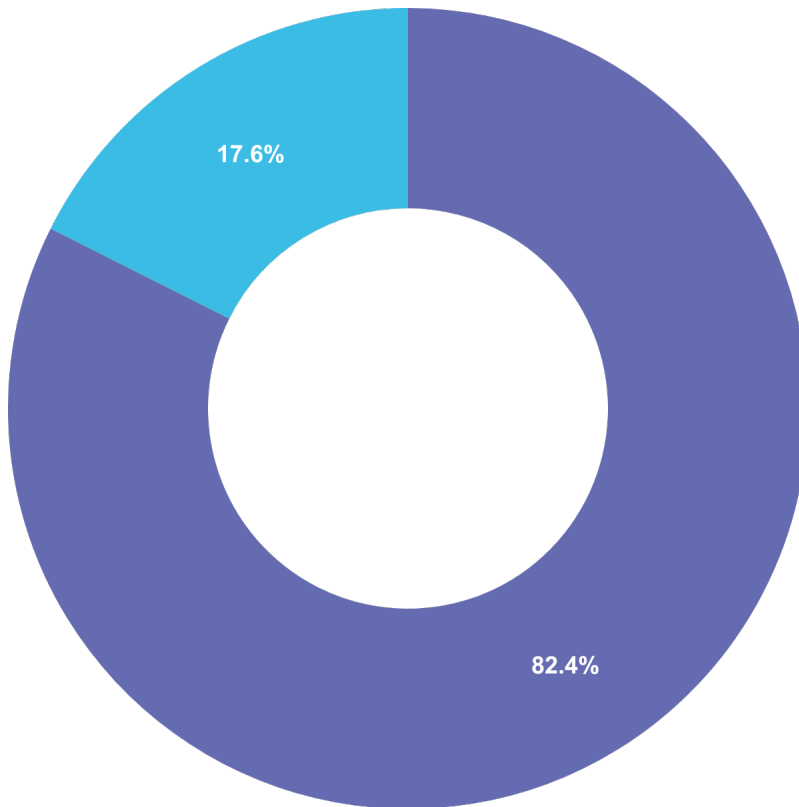


Answered: 83 Unanswered: 0 Average Rating: 3 - Not strict enough

Choice	Total	Rating
1 - More than sufficient	4	4
2 - Appropriate	8	16
3 - Not strict enough	66	198
4 - Unsure	5	20

Q7 Notification & Public Input Radius

Current Jerome County Planning and Zoning only require notification of property owners within one mile of a proposed large-scale energy facility or AI Data Center. Do you believe that all Jerome County residents should be notified?*

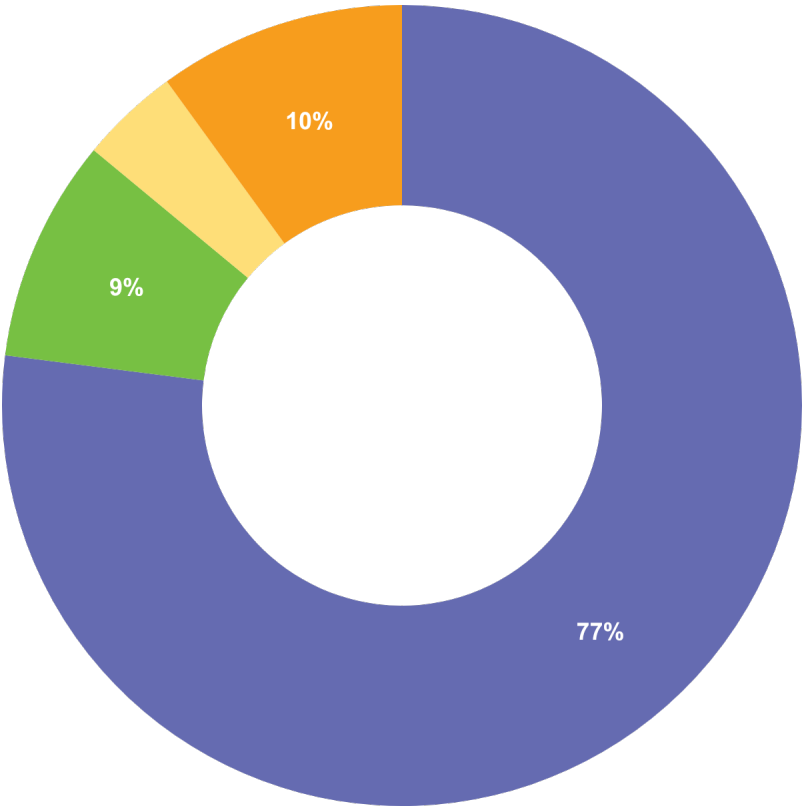


Answered: 83 Unanswered: 0 Average Rating: 1 - Yes

Choice	Total	Rating
● 1 - Yes	75	75
● 2 - No	8	16

Q8 Decommissioning & Reclamation

Do you believe that having operators provide financial assurance to ensure facility removal and land restoration after closure is important?*



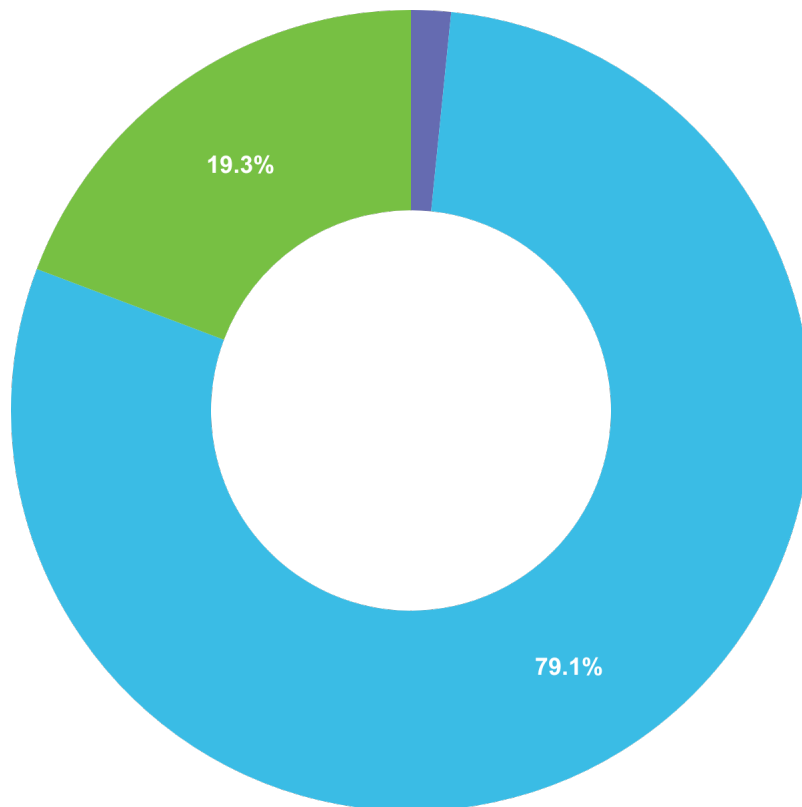
Answered: 83 Unanswered: 0 Average Rating: 1 - Extremely Important

Choice	Total	Rating
1 - Extremely Important	77	77
2 - Not Very Important	0	0
3 - Moderately Important	3	9




Choice	Total	Rating
4 - Slightly Important	1	4
5 - Not Important	2	10

Q9 **Economic Considerations **

Which statement best reflects your view?*

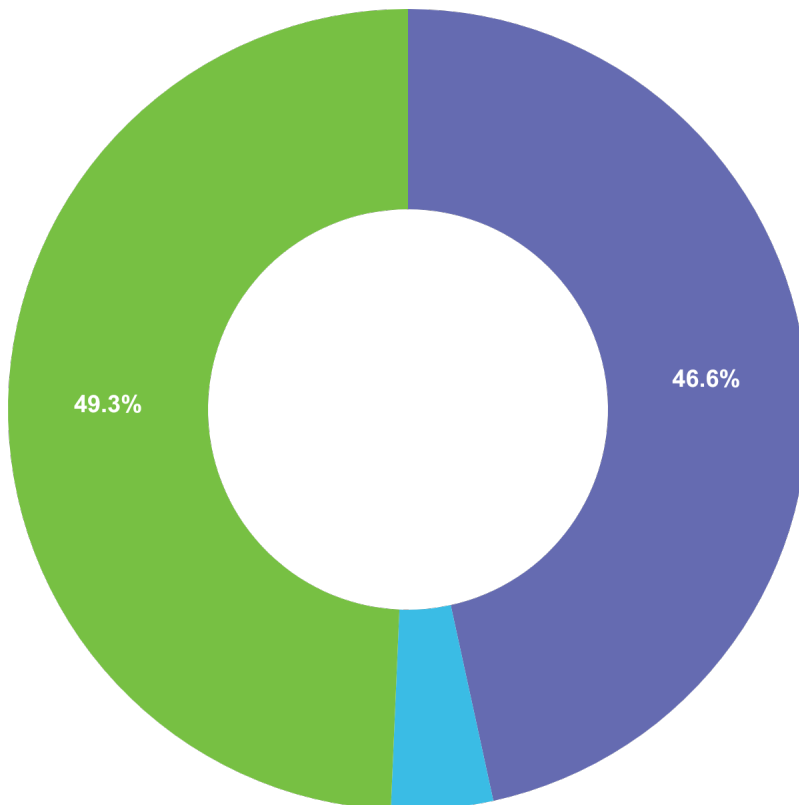


Answered: 83 **Unanswered:** 0 **Average Rating:** 2 - Energy development should be limited to protect farmland and rural character.

Choice	Total	Rating
 1 - Energy development should be expanded to increase county tax revenue at the expense of agriculture land.	3	3
 2 - Energy development should be limited to protect farmland and rural character.	74	148
 6 - Usure	6	36

Q10 Overall Position

Do you believe the approach to allow large- and small-scale energy development anywhere in rural Jerome County strikes the right balance between energy development and farmland preservation?*



Answered: 83 Unanswered: 0 Average Rating: 2 - It is well balanced

Choice	Total	Rating
<input checked="" type="radio"/> 1 - It needs significant revision	68	68
<input type="radio"/> 2 - It is well balanced	3	6
<input type="radio"/> 6 - Unsure	12	72