

***Community
Survey Results
June 2010***

**Prepared For:
Churchill County
Board of County Commissioners**

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INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

The characterization of Yucca Mountain as a potential site for the first high-level nuclear repository is opposed by the State of Nevada. Responses to surveys conducted by the State of Nevada (most recently 2006) suggest that roughly 70 percent of Nevada residents who vote against a repository if they actually had a chance to vote on the project. The State survey results primarily reflect the opinions of Clark County residents.

The State survey was intended to represent the views of the State in general, but provides little or no insight about the opinions and beliefs held by Churchill County residents with respect to the repository program. In 2008 Churchill County began an effort to track public opinion.

As part of its impact assessment and oversight program, Churchill County initiated a community survey to gauge opinion about the Yucca Mountain Project and nuclear power. Survey questions were directly related to the Yucca Mountain project and more generally related to nuclear energy, and transportation of nuclear waste to Yucca Mountain. The 2010 Survey questions can be found in Appendix A. Several of the questions used in this year's survey were the same as those used by the Nuclear Energy Institute to gauge public opinion about nuclear waste and nuclear energy. One major difference this year was a direct question asking respondents whether they are in favor or opposed to Yucca Mountain.

1.0 METHODOLOGY

Churchill County High School students randomly selected 397 local residents in order to ascertain the views and knowledge of the repository program. This year the Churchill County survey focused on issues that have been the subject of national survey efforts related to Yucca Mountain. Churchill County reviewed several national survey efforts and selected questions relevant to Yucca Mountain. Churchill County High School Students completed survey interview questions by phone and face to face interviews.

When available the Churchill County survey responses from the last two years will be compared with responses from national survey efforts. Using similar questions allows for comparability with other survey results concerning the Yucca Mountain project. Such comparisons can be found in Section 3.0 of this report.

1.3 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

This section summarizes the responses from the 2010 Yucca Mountain community survey. Churchill County High School students completed a total of 397 surveys. Approximately 88 percent of the survey respondents were familiar with the Yucca Mountain Project and the federal government's efforts to store spent nuclear fuel in Nevada (Table 2-1).

Churchill County survey respondents were asked whether they are in favor or opposed to a nuclear waste repository at Yucca Mountain, Nevada. Approximately 51.3 percent of survey respondents were in favor of a repository (Table 2-2). Those favoring the repository increased more than six (6) percent over the 2009 results. Using this response as a base comparison, survey respondents were then told that increasing energy production requires a permanent geologic repository at Yucca Mountain. They were told a repository could also reduce the Nation's energy costs and dependence on foreign energy sources. Knowing this would survey respondents be in favor or opposed to repository? Approximately 65.3 percent of Churchill County survey respondents would favor a repository at Yucca Mountain (Table 2-3), an increase of 10 percent over 2009 results. Tying Yucca Mountain to energy production influences favorable opinions of the project.

Support for Yucca Mountain grew substantially when the repository program was linked to economic growth and a reduction and global warming. Just over 80 percent of the respondents would favor a repository under those conditions (Table 2-4).

Approximately 65 percent of community survey respondents either strongly favored or somewhat favored nuclear energy as one of the ways to provide electricity in the United States (Table 2-5). The percent of Churchill County survey respondents favoring nuclear energy as a means to provide electricity is similar to national survey results (Figure 3-1). In 2009, national surveys showed a surge in support for nuclear energy. Approximately 70 percent of national survey respondents either strongly supported or somewhat supported nuclear energy as one of the ways to provide electricity.

The majority of survey respondents believe that nuclear power and Yucca Mountain play a critical role in the Nation's energy future, they are equally convinced that radioactive waste can be transported safely to Yucca Mountain. Approximately 57.0 percent of respondents were very confident or somewhat confident that waste could be transported safely (Table 2-6) in 2010 no change from the 2009 survey results.

Respondents were then told about the safety record of nuclear waste shipments in the United States over the last 35 years. After hearing the safety record, nearly 66 percent of survey respondent became more confident in the safety of nuclear waste shipments (Table 2-7). Confidence in the safety of waste shipments over the last two years has increased by almost 12 percent among Churchill County survey respondents. However, there was no change in the percentage of respondents to this questions from 2009 to 2010.

2.0 SURVEY RESULTS

2.1 COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS

This section contains community survey results for Churchill County. A complete community survey can be found in Appendix A. Survey respondents were first asked whether or not they were familiar with the Yucca Mountain Project. About 88 percent of survey respondents indicated that they were familiar with the project. Frequency tabulations are shown for each survey question.

Question Are you familiar with the Yucca Mountain Project and the federal government’s efforts to store spent nuclear fuel in Nevada?

Table 2-1		Survey Respondent	
Response	Frequency	Percent	
Yes	349	87.9	
No	48	12.1	

Question 1. Are you in favor or opposed to a nuclear waste repository at Yucca Mountain, Nevada?

Table 2-2		Survey Respondent	
Response	Frequency	Percent	
In Favor	202	51.3	
Opposed	192	48.7	

Question 2. Increasing energy production requires a permanent geologic repository at Yucca Mountain. It could also reduce the Nation’s energy costs and dependence on foreign energy sources. Knowing this would you be in favor or opposed to a repository?

Response	Survey Respondent	
	Frequency	Percent
In Favor	250	63.5
Opposed	144	36.5

Question 3. Would you still oppose a repository, if increasing nuclear energy production would solve climate change and increase economic growth?

Response	Survey Respondent	
	Frequency	Percent
Yes	312	80.6
No	75	19.4

Question 4. Do you strongly favor, somewhat favor, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose the use of nuclear energy as one of the ways to provide electricity in the United States?

Response	Survey Respondent	
	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Favor	160	40.4
Somewhat Favor	98	24.7
Somewhat Oppose	74	18.7
Strongly Oppose	64	16.2

Churchill County survey respondents show a similar level of support for nuclear energy as national survey respondents. In 2009, 70 percent of national survey respondents strongly favored or somewhat favored nuclear energy.

Question 5. How confident are you that radioactive waste from America’s nuclear power plants will be transported safely to the Yucca Mountain disposal site? Are you very confident, somewhat confident, not too confident, or not confident at all?

Table 2-6		Survey Respondent	
Response	Frequency	PERCENT	
		Very Confident	127
Somewhat Confident	97	24.6	
Not too confident	84	21.3	
Not confident at all	86	21.8	

Question 6. Radioactive waste is transported in rugged vault-like containers, under strict regulations, using cautious procedures, and in collaboration with state agencies. In the past 35 years, there have been more than 3,000 shipments of this radioactive waste across a total of nearly 2 million miles, and no radiation leaks. After hearing this statement, how confident are you that the radioactive waste from America’s nuclear power plants will be transported safely to the proposed Yucca Mountain disposal site?

Table 2-7		Survey Respondent	
Response	Frequency	Percent	
		Very Confident	157
Somewhat Confident	102	25.8	
Not too Confident	68	17.2	
Not Confident at All	68	17.2	

Question 7. Age of Respondent (survey respondent)

Table 2-8		Survey Respondents	
Response			
Average Age	54.2 yrs		
Median Age	53 yrs		
60 year or older	144	37.0	
25 to 60 years old	224	58.0	
Less than 25 years	20	5.0	

Question 8. Household Size

Table 2- 9		Survey Respondent	
Response	Frequency	Percent	
1 person	41	11.7	
2 person	153	43.8	
3 person	66	18.9	
4 person	44	12.6	
More than 4 persons	45	12.9	

Question 9. Length of Residency in Churchill County

Table 2-10		Churchill County Survey Respondents	
Response	Frequency	Percent	
Average Length	24.5 yrs		
Median Length	20 yrs		
1-10 years	70	20.4	
10-20 years	99	28.9	
More than 20 years	174	50.7	

Question 10 Sex of Respondent

Table 2-11		CHURCHILL COUNTY SURVEY RESPONDENT	
Response	Frequency	Percent	
Male	175	44.2	
Female	221	55.8	

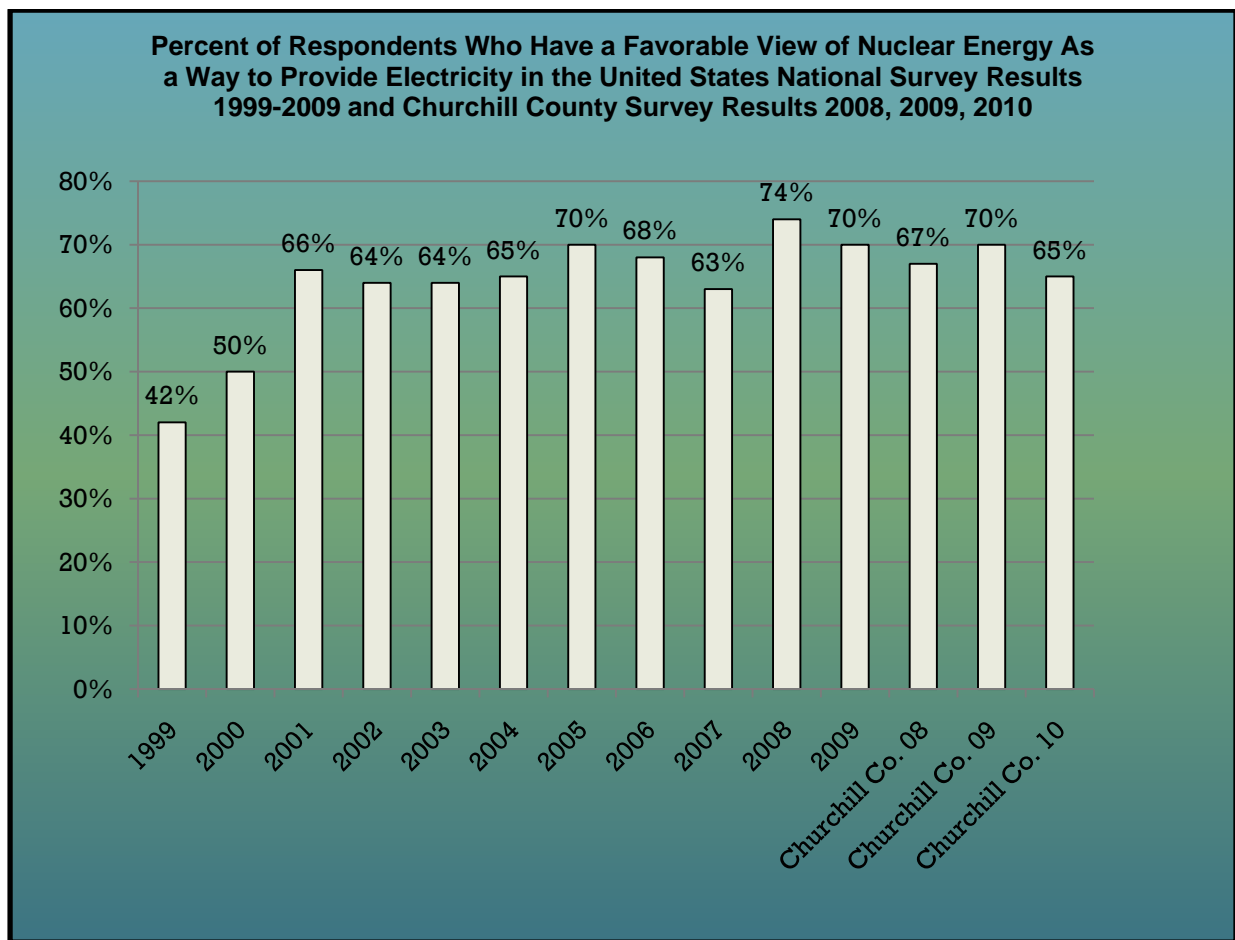
3.0 COMPARISON OF SURVEY RESPONSES

Section 3.0 compares the result of the 2010 Churchill County survey to national survey responses and survey responses from past community survey results. The Nuclear Energy Institute conducted a number of survey efforts related to Yucca Mountain and nuclear energy use over the last several years. Among national and Churchill County survey respondents, support for nuclear power remains strong.

Question:

Do you strongly favor, somewhat favor, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose the use of nuclear energy as one of the ways to provide electricity in the United States?

Figure 3-1



As compared to national survey results, Churchill County survey respondents have a slightly less favorable view of nuclear energy as a source of electricity in the United States. Overall, there is an increasing favorable view of nuclear energy among national and Churchill County survey respondents.

Question. Are you in favor or opposed to a nuclear waste repository at Yucca Mountain, Nevada?

Table 3-1	2010 Churchill County Survey		2009 Churchill County Survey		
	Response	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
	In Favor	202	51.2	144	44.7
	Opposed	192	48.8	178	55.3

Question Radioactive waste is transported in rugged vault-like containers under strict regulations using cautious procedures, and in collaboration with state agencies. In the past 35 years, there have been more than 3,000 shipments for this radioactive waste across a total of nearly 2 million miles, and no radiation leaks.

After hearing this statement how confident are you that the radioactive waste from America’s nuclear power plants will be transported safely to the proposed Yucca Mountain disposal site?

Table 3-2	2010 Churchill County Survey		2009 Churchill County Survey		2008 Churchill County Survey		
	Response	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
	Very Confident/Somewhat Confident	259	65.6	219	66.6	181	54.0
	Not Too Confident/ Not Confident at All	136	34.4	110	33.4	155	46.0

In 2009 over two-thirds of Churchill County survey respondents were very confident and somewhat confident that waste could be transported safely to Yucca Mountain. Survey respondents indicating that they were very confident to somewhat confident increased by 11.6 percent from 2008 to 2010.

Appendix A: Survey

Churchill County is conducting this survey as part of its oversight responsibilities of the Yucca Mountain project. Funding for the survey is provided by the Yucca Mountain Oversight Program. Churchill County High School students have volunteered to conduct this survey. All responses will remain confidential.

Survey # _____

I would like to begin by asking the following questions:

Are you familiar with the Yucca Mountain Project and the federal government's efforts to store spent nuclear fuel in Nevada?

Yes _____

No _____

Question 1.

Are you in favor or opposed to a nuclear waste repository at Yucca Mountain, Nevada?

In Favor _____

Opposed _____

If you responded "In Favor" to question 1, skip to Question 4

Question 2

Increasing nuclear energy production requires a permanent geologic repository at Yucca Mountain. It could also reduce the Nation’s energy costs and dependence on foreign energy sources. Knowing this would you be in favor or opposed to a repository ?

In Favor _____

Opposed _____

If you responded “In Favor” to question 2, skip to Question 4

Question 3:

Would you still oppose a repository, if increasing nuclear energy production would help solve climate change and increase economic growth?

1. Yes _____

2. No _____

Question 4:

Do you strongly favor, somewhat favor, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose the use of nuclear energy as one of the ways to provide electricity in the United States?

1. Strongly Favor _____

2. Somewhat Favor _____

3. Somewhat Oppose _____

4. Strongly Oppose _____

Question 5:

How confident are you that radioactive waste from America's nuclear power plants will be transported safely to the Yucca Mountain disposal site. Are you very confident, somewhat confident, not too confident, or not confident at all?

1. Very Confident _____

2. Somewhat Confident _____

3. Not too Confident _____

4. Not Confident at All _____

Question 6:

Radioactive waste is transported in rugged vault-like containers, under strict regulations, using cautious procedures, and in collaboration with state agencies. In the past 35 years, there have been more than 3,000 shipments of this radioactive waste across a total of nearly 2 million miles, and no radiation leaks. Yucca Mountain shipments will have security escorts, tracking systems and operate under reduced speeds.

After hearing this statement, how confident are you that the radioactive waste from America's nuclear power plants will be transported safely to the proposed Yucca Mountain

disposal site? Are you very confident, somewhat confident, not too confident, or not confident at all?

- 1. Very Confident _____
- 2. Somewhat Confident _____
- 3. Not too Confident _____
- 4. Not Confident at all _____

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS-SURVEY RESPONDENTS

- 1. Age of Respondent (Survey respondent)_____Years
- 2. Length of residency in Churchill County_____ years.
- 3. Male_____ Female_____