

2012

Community Survey Results-Update

Yucca Mountain Project

A compilation of community survey results in Churchill, Esmeralda, Lander and Mineral Counties, Nevada.



Introduction

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 would vote against a repository if they actually had a chance to vote on the project. 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 Nevada residents outside Clark County. The State survey results primarily reflect the opinions of Clark County residents with little or no insight of residents in other parts for the State.

As part of their impact assessment and oversight programs, several counties initiated community surveys to gauge opinions about the Yucca Mountain Project and nuclear power. Survey questions were directly related to the Yucca Mountain project, nuclear energy, and transportation of nuclear waste to Yucca Mountain. Several years of community survey results are available for comparison and trend analysis. In 2004 Lander County began an effort to track public opinion about the Yucca Mountain project. Mineral County has survey data from 2004 to current and Churchill County has four years of survey data. Esmeralda County only completed one community survey in 2007.

Additionally, survey data collected in Nevada can be compared against survey responses to national survey efforts. The Nuclear Energy Institute has more than a decade of monitoring public perspectives on nuclear energy, storage of waste and waste transportation.

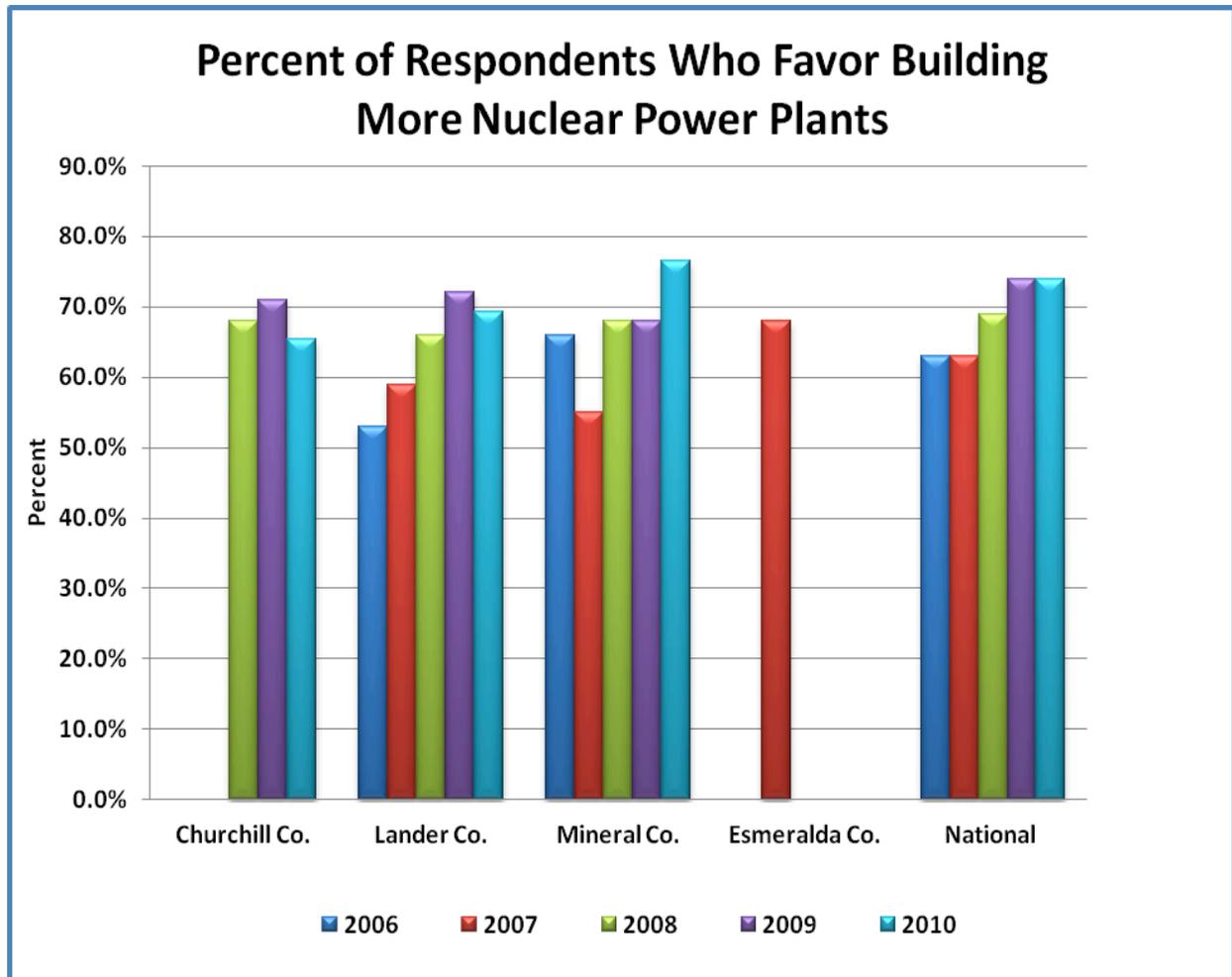
The comparison and trend analysis of community survey responses are intended to achieve the following:

- Identify trends toward nuclear power, transportation and waste storage;
- Compare national survey results against community survey results in Mineral, Lander, Churchill and Esmeralda Counties; and,
- Determine the extent to which trends in the four communities are similar to those found in national survey results.
- To show the combined survey results for Nevada counties participating in the survey efforts.

Views about Nuclear Power Generation

Two survey questions were used to gauge the support for nuclear power generation among survey respondents. The results from various survey efforts over the last 5 years are shown in Figure 1 and Figure 2. The first survey question asked whether respondents in the counties and nationally favored building more nuclear power plants.

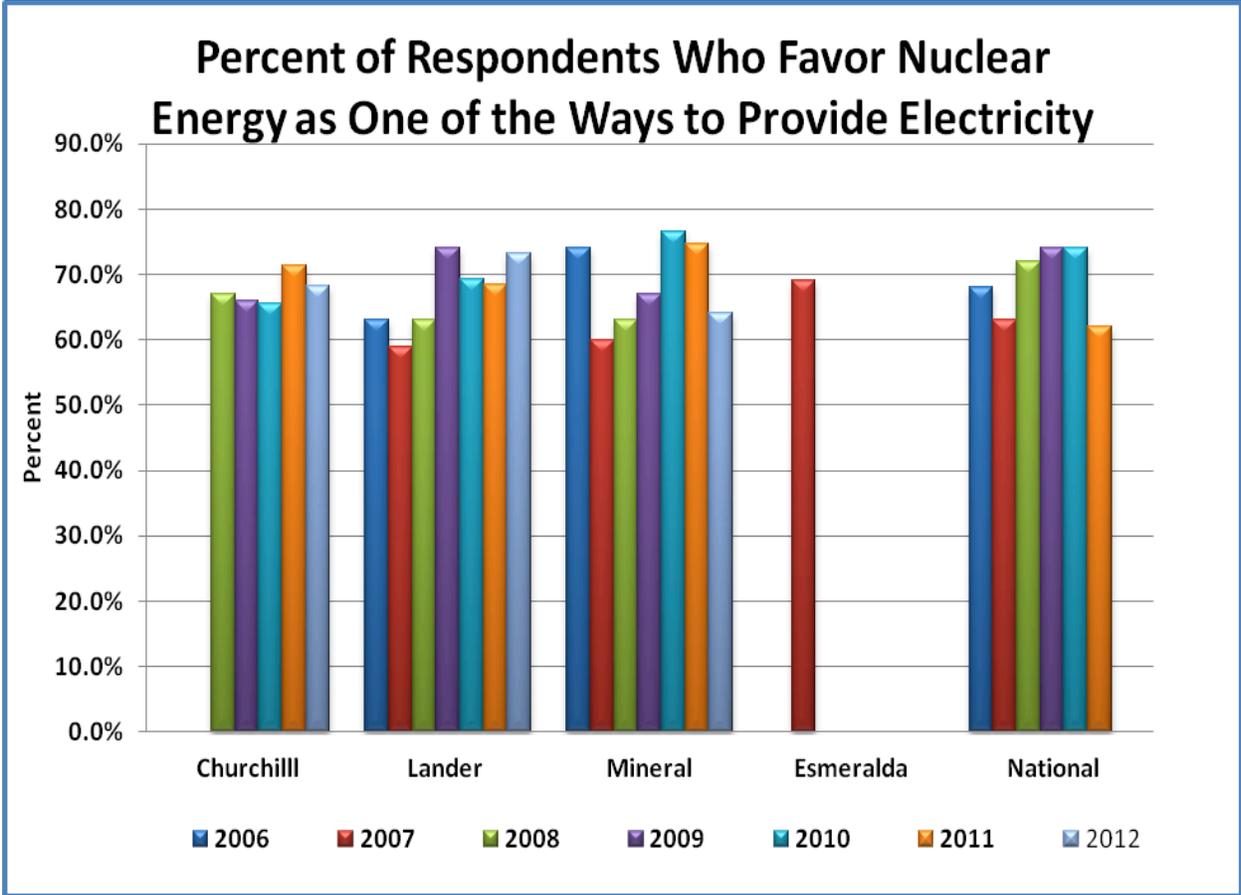
Figure 1



National survey results in Figure 1 were collected by the Nuclear Energy Institute and represent responses from across the United States. Esmeralda County conducted only one survey in 2007. By 2009 the percentage of survey respondents who favor building more nuclear power plants is generally above 70 percent.

Figure 2 shows survey results for another question regarding the support for nuclear power. Specifically, Figure 2 shows the percent of respondents in the counties and nationally who favor nuclear energy as one of the ways to provide electricity.

Figure 2



The survey results in Figure 1 and Figure 2 demonstrates the following:

- There has been a general increase in support for nuclear power over the last several years in Nevada communities and across the nation.
- The support for nuclear power is similar among all communities being surveyed.
- Support for nuclear power generation and the construction of more power plants is generally above 70 percent.
- From 1998 to 2010 national support for nuclear power generation has grown from 60 percent to nearly 75 percent.

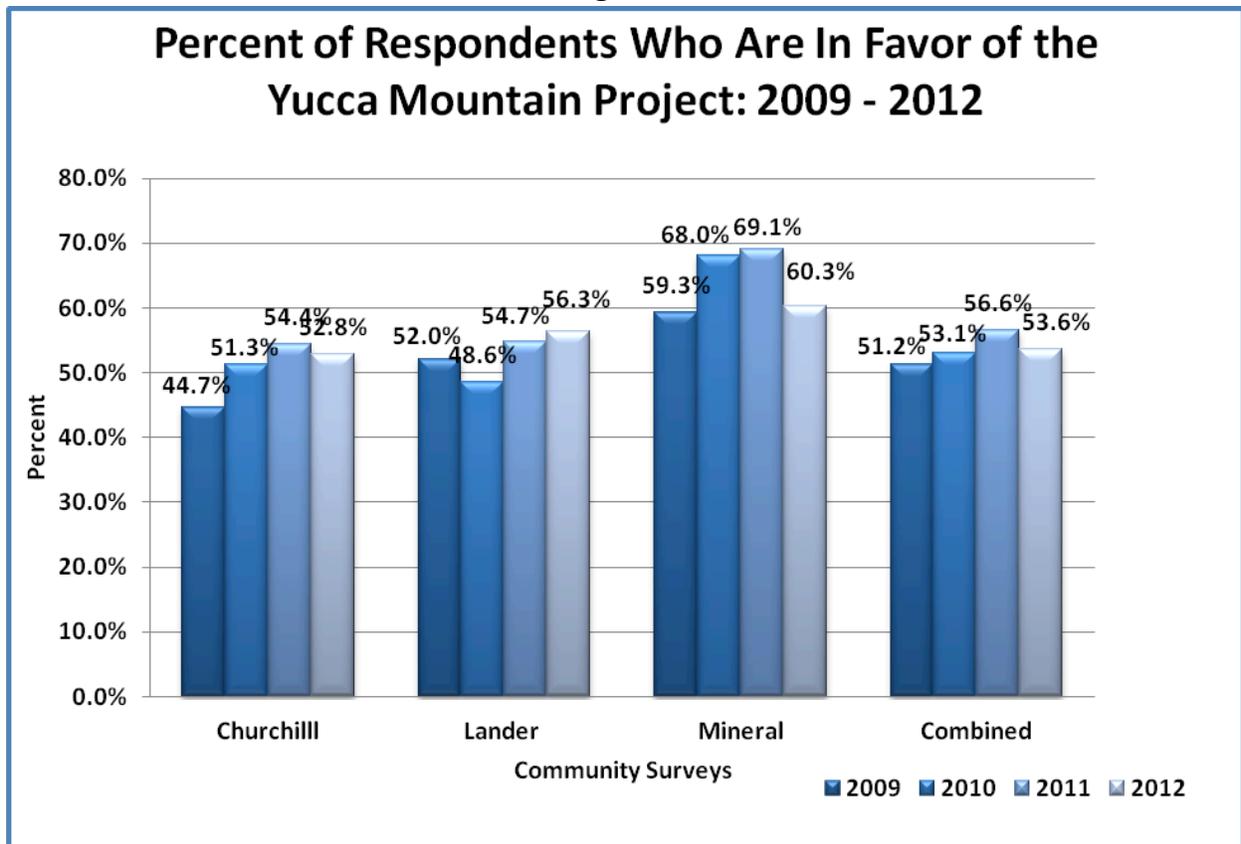
- Nevada communities show similar levels of support for nuclear power generation as compared to national survey results.
- In 2012 support for nuclear power declined nationally. The decline in support was largely due to events occurring at the Fukushima nuclear power plant in Japan. In Nevada support remained fairly high with small declines reported in Mineral County.

There is no reason to believe that Nevada survey respondents have views toward nuclear power generation that are any different from those across the United States.

Survey Respondents In Favor or Opposed to Yucca Mountain

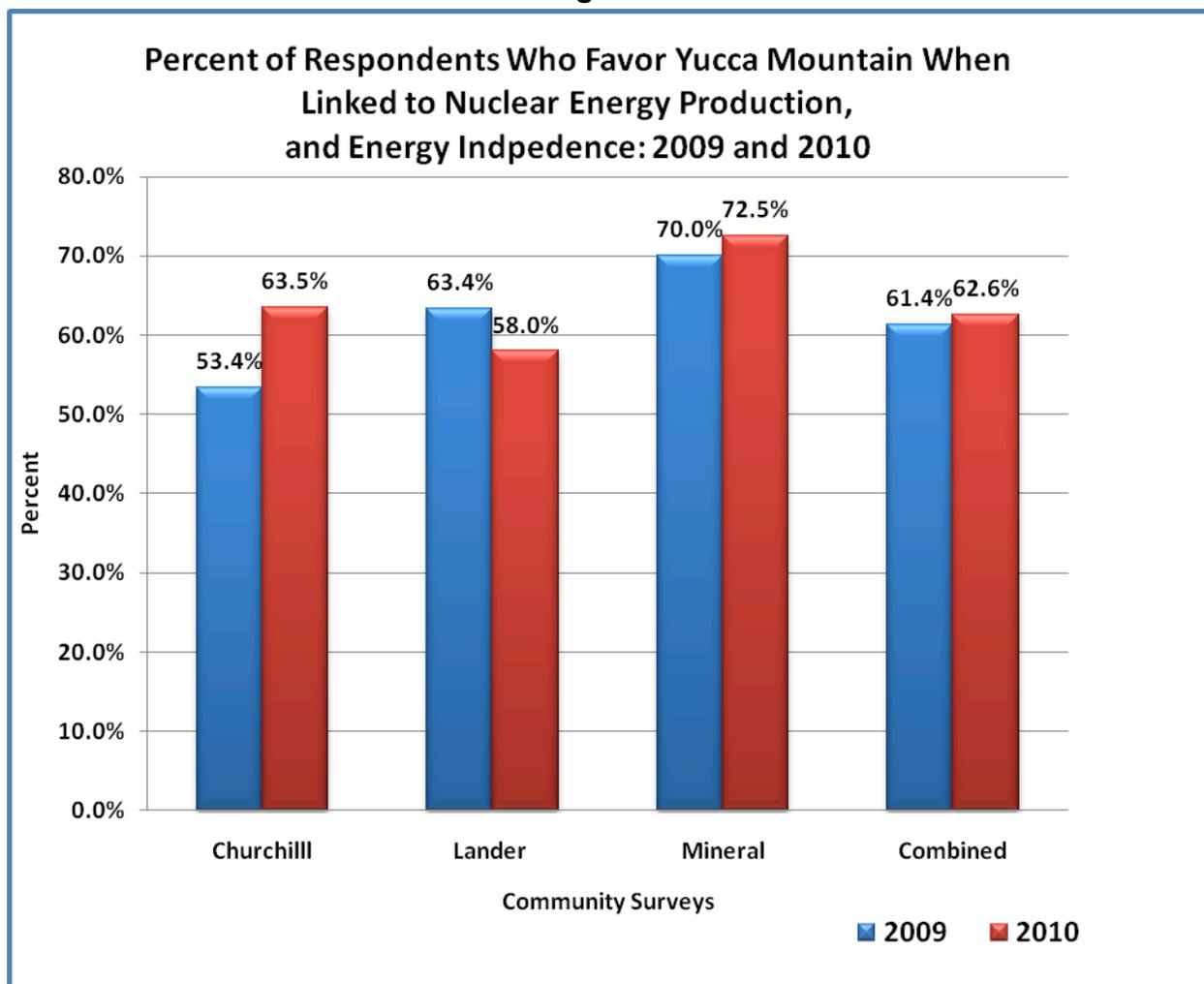
The communities of Lander, Churchill and Mineral Counties asked survey respondents whether they were in favor or against Yucca Mountain. It is the fourth time community survey respondents were asked directly about their views toward Yucca Mountain. The results shown in Figure 3 show the combined total of all survey respondents who favored the Yucca Mountain Project in 2009, 2010, 2011, and 2012. In 2012 combined results show that nearly 54.3 percent of the survey respondents support Yucca Mountain.

Figure 3



When the Yucca Mountain project was linked to nuclear power production and energy independence, the opposition to the Yucca Mountain project declined among survey respondents. Support for the project surges an average of approximately 10 percent as compared to results in Figure 3. Figure 4 shows the results when Yucca Mountain is linked or described as part of the energy production.

Figure 4



The survey questions used in Figure 4 were not used in the 2011 and 2012. The results in Figure 3 and Figure 4 demonstrate the following:

- A slight majority of survey respondents favor the Yucca Mountain project when the results are aggregated. Just over 53 percent of 1,081 survey respondents favored the project in 2010 reaching nearly 60 percent in 2012 (See Figure 3).

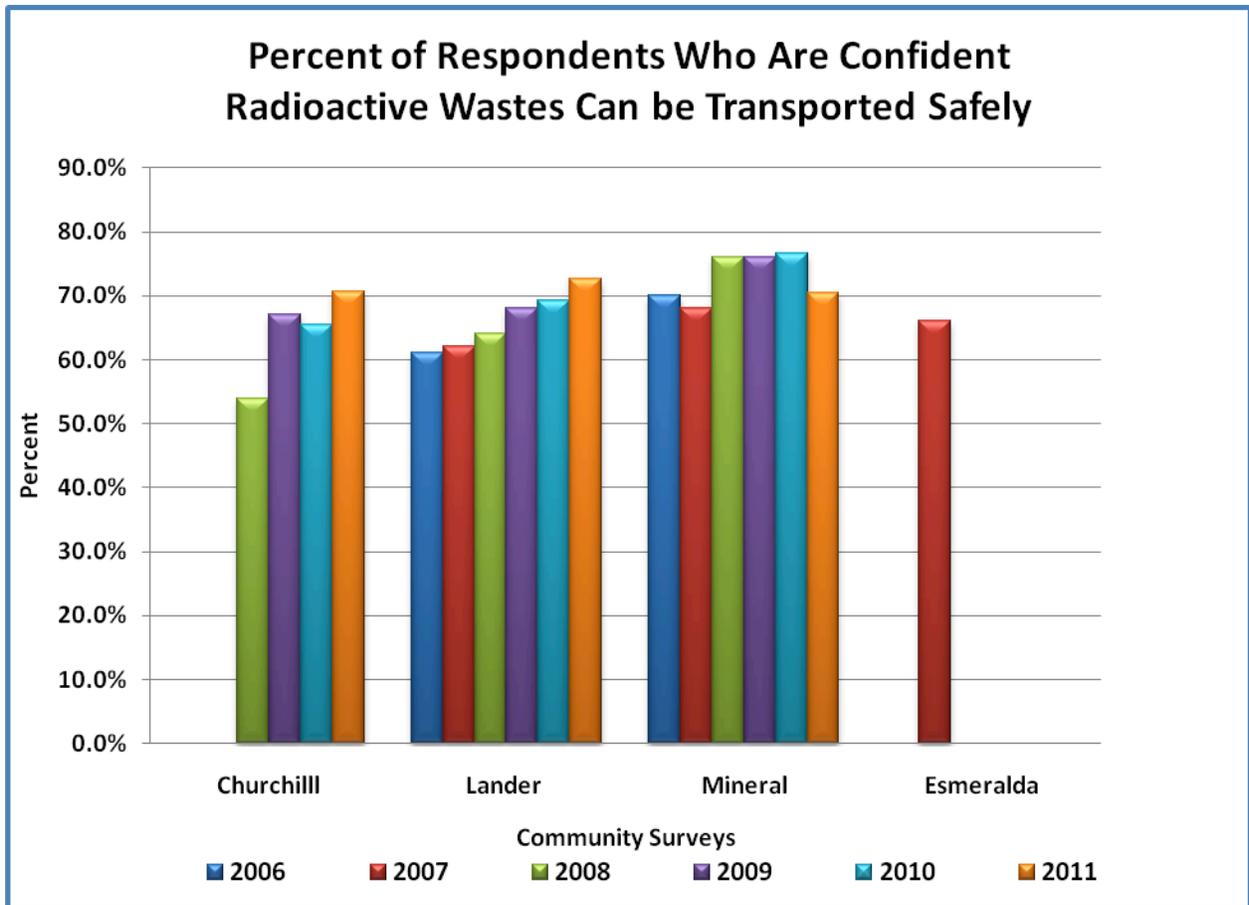
- When linking Yucca Mountain to nuclear power production and energy independence, the percentage of respondents who support the project increased approximately 10 percent across all three survey communities (See Figure 4).

It is important to note that a certain percentage of survey respondents are unlikely to ever change their opinion toward the Yucca Mountain project. As support for the project reaches 60 and 70 percent levels, there are probably a limited number of people likely to change their opinions about the project in the future.

Views Concerning Nuclear Waste Transportation

Survey respondents have always been concerned about the risks associated with nuclear waste transportation. However, when informed about the historic safety record of nuclear waste shipments, the percentage of survey respondents who are confident radioactive wastes can be transported safely increased to nearly 70 percent in 2011 (Figure 5).

Figure 5



It is also interesting to see the correlation between the percentage of those who are confident that radioactive wastes can be transported safely and the percentage of respondents who have a favorable view of nuclear power. The trends for survey questions have moved in the same direction over the last several years.

Support for Yucca Mountain Licensing

Figure 6 shows the percentage of survey respondents who support the continuation of the Yucca Mountain licensing review. Support for the continuation of licensing increased substantially over the last 12 months. Combined, nearly three quarters of survey respondents support continuation of the Yucca Mountain license review.

Figure 6

