

Survey Reveals 84% of Those Living Near Plants Favor Nuclear Energy

SUGAR LAND--August 10, 2009--Researched by Industrial Info Resources (Sugar Land, Texas)--According to a recent public opinion survey of 1,152 randomly selected adults living in the vicinity of nuclear power plants in the United States, 84% were in favor of nuclear energy, with 58% strongly in favor of nuclear power. In addition, 90% of respondents viewed their local power station favorably, while 76% supported development of a nuclear reactor near their neighborhoods.

The telephone survey was conducted in mid-July by Bisconti Research Incorporated (Chevy Chase, Maryland) in alliance with Quest Global Research Group (Toronto, Canada). The 1,152 participants were chosen by a random selection of 18 adults living within 10 miles of each of the 64 nuclear power plant sites in the U.S. Commissioned by the Nuclear Energy Institute (Washington, D.C.), this was the third nationwide biennial survey conducted since 2005 to gauge attitudes toward nuclear energy in neighborhoods near nuclear power plants.

The survey found that most plant neighbors held favorable views about nuclear energy, with 92% believing that nuclear power would play an important role; 86% open to development of more nuclear power facilities; and 87% agreeing that electric utilities should soon commence with preparations to allow for new nuclear power plants to be built in the next decade.

The survey also said that 88% of the respondents gave a "high" safety rating to their nearest nuclear power plant, while 91% expressed confidence in the plant operator's ability to run the facility safely. Also, 86% believed that the company was doing a good job of protecting the environment; 83% said that the power plant operator "is involved in the community"; and 93% were in favor of license renewal for power plants that comply with federal safety standards.

On the issue of nuclear waste, only 56% believed that nuclear waste could be stored safely at the plant site until moved to a permanent disposal facility, while 85% said that nuclear waste should be moved to volunteer sites for more secure and efficient storage. Also, 91% of the respondents were in favor of the U.S. recycling spent fuel to generate more electricity and reducing the amount of nuclear waste, and 82% were in favor of the government developing the Yucca Mountain site as a national nuclear waste disposal facility, so long as the facility met the standards set by the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

In terms of nuclear power plants and associated benefits to the local economy, 90% believed that the facility aided local economic growth, while 89% said that nuclear power facilities provided good employment opportunities at the site and benefitted nearby businesses that provided services to the plants.

Nuclear energy was associated "a lot" with reliability by 72% of the respondents, while 71% were found to be aware of the clean-energy aspects of nuclear power. In a similar survey conducted in 2007, 65% of the respondents found nuclear energy to be reliable "a lot," while 61% had read or heard about the clean-air benefits of nuclear power. The survey concluded that awareness of the advantages of nuclear energy had increased significantly during the past two years.

The survey also found a significant overall approval of nuclear energy. Of the 84% of respondents in favor, 58% expressed strong support. Only 5% were strongly opposed to nuclear energy. Among plant neighbors, 90% viewed their neighboring nuclear plants favorably, with 63% rating the facilities near their neighborhoods as "very favorable." Only 9% of the respondents were not in favor, with 3% rating nuclear operations near their neighborhoods as "very unfavorable."

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