

# Utahns back nuclear power

*57% in poll supportive of N-energy; 32% aren't*

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By a strong majority, Utahns who know about the issue favor nuclear power as part of the state's energy future.

A Dan Jones and Associates poll conducted for the Deseret Morning News and KSL-TV from Feb. 19 to Feb. 21 shows strong support for atomic power. The poll, with 412 completed interviews, has a possible error rate of plus or minus 5 percent.

The question was, "Do you favor or oppose nuclear power being part of the future energy mix for this state?" Those strongly favoring the proposition were 33 percent, and somewhat favoring were 24 percent, for a 57 percent favorable rating. Somewhat opposed were 10 percent and strongly opposed amounted to 22 percent, for a combined rating of 32 percent opposed.

Another 10 percent of the sampling said they didn't know.

"I think it confirms what we expected all along, that Utahns believe nuclear power has to be part of the mix for the future," said Rep. Aaron Tilton, R-Springville.

Tilton is a principal in Transition Power Development, which plans to build a two-unit nuclear generating plant, totaling 3,000 megawatts. The project has acquired needed water rights. Officials are in the final stages of negotiations about where to site the plant, Tilton said.

Steve Erickson, a longtime anti-nuclear activist with the Citizens Education Project in Salt Lake City, said of the results: "Some people just aren't making the connections between the past and the future, the players and where the money goes to."

He summarized one problem for nuclear power with, "Where's the water?"

Erickson added, "Only a gambler would put money down on a nuclear power plant. The finances just don't add up."

The Jones organization found a gender gap in this issue.

Men who strongly favor N-power were 49 percent, and those who somewhat favored were 24 percent, for a total of 73 percent of men in favor. Men who somewhat opposed were 8 percent and strongly opposed were 13 percent, for a total of 21 percent against.

Women were not nearly as united as men on the matter. They were equally divided: 18 percent strongly favor nuclear power, 25 percent somewhat favoring, for a combined result of 43 percent in favor. Eleven percent of women polled were strongly opposed and 31 percent were somewhat, for 42 percent total — essentially the same percentage of those in favor,

Political ideas also come into play, but there was not a direct spectrum. Generally, conservatives were more in favor of the notion, and Utahns who are strongly liberal were evenly divided between support and opposition to nuclear power. Those identifying themselves as somewhat liberal were slightly more opposed than favorable toward the idea.

Those who identified themselves as "very conservative" were in favor of nuclear power, 69 percent to 22 percent, with 9 percent saying they did not know. "Somewhat conservative" residents favored nuclear power 53 percent to 36 percent, with 11 percent not knowing. Moderates were 61 percent in favor, 33 percent opposed, 6 percent "don't know." Somewhat liberal people were 34 percent in favor, 40 percent opposed, 25 percent uncertain. "Very liberal" Utahns were 45 percent in favor and 46 percent opposed, with 9 percent unsure.