



**COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS
YUCCA MOUNTAIN PROJECT
MINERAL COUNTY, NEVADA**

June 2007

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

**Prepared By:
Mineral County
Office of Nuclear Projects**

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 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 suggest that roughly 70 percent of Nevadans oppose the development of the repository at Yucca Mountain. The State survey results primarily reflect the opinions of Clark County, Nevada due to the population distribution in the State and the survey methodology. Over the last several years, Mineral County has monitored local public opinion through a variety of survey efforts.

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 Mineral County residents with respect to the repository program. To date, Mineral County has completed a number of public opinion surveys that provide somewhat different results using similar questions found in the State's survey.

As part of its impact assessment and oversight program of Yucca Mountain, Mineral County initiated a new community survey using a revised set of questions that are substantially different from previous Yucca Mountain survey efforts. 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 2007 survey 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 gage public opinion about nuclear waste and nuclear energy.

1.2 Methodology

Mineral County High School students conducted approximately 225 face-to-face surveys in order to ascertain the views and knowledge of the repository program. This year the Mineral County survey focused on questions and issues that have been the subject of national survey efforts related to Yucca Mountain. Mineral County reviewed several national survey efforts and selected questions relevant to Yucca Mountain.

The purpose of using these questions is to compare Mineral County survey responses with responses from a national survey sample. 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 2007 Yucca Mountain community survey. Mineral County High School students completed a total of 225 surveys. Just over 83 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), a decline from 2006 levels.

Almost 60 percent of 2007 community survey respondents either strongly favored or somewhat favored nuclear energy as one of the ways to provide electricity in the United States (Table 2-2). The percent of Mineral County survey respondents favoring nuclear energy as a means to provide electricity is lower than findings of national survey efforts (Figure 3-1) and is lower than the 2006 survey results. In 2005, national surveys showed that approximately 70 percent of respondents either strongly supported or somewhat supported nuclear energy as one of the ways to provide electricity. In 2007, 64.2 percent of Mineral County survey respondents favored nuclear power over other sources of energy such as coal or oil (Table 2-3).

Similarly, Mineral County respondents appear to support the construction of new nuclear power plants. In 2006, just over 66 percent of Mineral County respondents either strongly agreed or somewhat agreed that more nuclear power plants should be built in the future (Table 2-3). In 2007 about 55 percent of survey respondents agreed that more nuclear power plants should be built. As recent as 2003, approximately 54 percent of national survey respondents either strongly favored or somewhat favored the development of new nuclear power plants (Figure 3-2).

A vast majority of Mineral County community survey respondents said it was extremely important or very important to have a clear plan of action for handling the high-level radioactive waste from America's 103 electricity-generating nuclear power plants (Table 2-5). The number of Mineral County survey respondents who felt that having a clear plan for handling high-level nuclear waste was important, is similar to national survey responses (Figure 3-3). Nearly 90 percent of survey respondents also indicated that Nevada should receive a benefits package or compensation if the Yucca Mountain project is built (Table 2-6).

Mineral County survey respondents became somewhat less confident that spent nuclear fuel and high-level waste can be shipped safely. In 2007, approximately 60.3 percent of Mineral County respondents were either very confident or somewhat confident that nuclear waste from America's nuclear power plants could be safely transported to Yucca Mountain (Table 2-6). The percentage of Mineral County survey respondents having this view decreased from last year. In 2006, about 70 percent of the Mineral County survey respondents indicated that they were very confident or

somewhat confident in the safety of nuclear waste shipments. The change in attitude toward waste shipment may be attributed to DOE's decision to evaluate a potential rail corridor through Mineral County.

After reading a statement regarding the safety record of nuclear waste shipments, nearly 70 percent of respondents were either very confident or somewhat confident that waste could be transported safely.

Even more interesting is that the only a small majority of survey respondents (56.6%) believed that there is more risk in shipping high-level radioactive wastes as compared to gasoline or other industrial chemicals (Table 2-8). Although a full 83.3 percent of survey respondents were aware of the Yucca Mountain project (Table 2-1), only 65.9 percent were aware of plans to ship wastes through Mineral County (Table 2-9). This finding is somewhat concerning given DOE's recent efforts to study the Mina Rail corridor.

2.0 SURVEY RESULTS

2.1 Community Survey Results

This section contains 2007 community survey results for Mineral County. The survey instrument used for the 2007 survey can be found in Appendix A. Survey respondents were first asked whether or not they were familiar with the Yucca Mountain Project. Nearly 88 percent indicated that they were familiar with the project. Frequency tabulations are shown for each survey question beginning with question 1.

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	185	83.3
No	37	16.7

Question 1. 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?

Table 2-2	Mineral County Survey Respondent	
Response	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Favor	46	21.3
Somewhat Favor	82	38.0
Somewhat Oppose	43	19.9
Strongly Oppose	45	20.8

Question 2. Please tell me if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with the following statement: “We should definitely build more nuclear energy plants in the future?”

Table 2-3	Mineral County Survey Respondents		
	Response	Frequency	Percent
	Strongly Agree	38	17.6
	Somewhat Agree	80	37.0
	Somewhat Disagree	51	23.6
	Strongly Disagree	47	21.8

Question 3. Please tell me if you strongly favor, somewhat favor, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose building new nuclear power plants to reduce reliance on oil or coal?

Table 2-4	Mineral County Survey Respondent		
	Response	Freq.	Percent
	Strongly Favor	51	23.7
	Somewhat Favor	87	40.5
	Somewhat Oppose	39	18.1
	Strongly Oppose	38	21.8

Question 4. How important is it to have a clear plan of action for handling the high-level radioactive waste from America’s 103 electricity-generating nuclear energy plants? Is it extremely important, very important, somewhat important, not very important, or not at all important?”

Table 2-5	Mineral County Survey Respondent		
	Response	Frequency	Percent
	Extremely Important	145	66.8
	Very Important	34	15.7
	Somewhat Important	21	9.7
	Not Very Important	13	6.0
	Not at All Important	4	1.8

Question 5 Should Nevada receive a benefits package or compensation from the federal government, if the Yucca Mountain Project and the Mina Rail line are built?

Table 2-6	Mineral County Survey Respondent	
	Response	Frequency
Yes	190	88.4
No	25	11.6

Question 6 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 2-7	Mineral County Survey Respondent	
	Response	Frequency
Very Confident	45	20.7
Somewhat Confident	86	39.6
Not too Confident	53	24.4
Not Confident at all	33	15.2

Question 7 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 2-8	Mineral County Survey Respondent	
Response	Frequency	Percent
Very Confident	69	31.8
Somewhat Confident	79	36.4
Not too Confident	47	21.7
Not Confident at All	22	10.1

Question 8 Would you say you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree with the statement, " there is more risk in shipping high-level radioactive waste than shipping gasoline or other industrial chemicals"?

Table 2-9	Mineral County Survey Respondent	
Response	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	40	18.5
Agree	82	38.0
Disagree	67	31.0
Strongly Disagree	27	12.5

Question 9 Are you familiar with the Department of Energy's plans to evaluate a potential rail shipping route through Mineral County to Yucca Mountain for the purpose of transporting nuclear waste?

Table 2-10	Mineral County Survey Respondent	
Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	143	65.9
No	74	34.1

Question 10 Age of Respondent (survey respondent)

Table 2-11	Mineral County Survey Respondents	
Response		
Average Age	41.1 yrs	
Median Age	41 yrs	
55 year or older	51	23.3
25 to 55 years old	116	53.0
Less than 25 years	52	23.7

Question 11 Household Size

Table 2-12	Mineral County Survey Respondent	
Response	Frequency	Percent
1 person	43	19.6
2 person	72	32.9
3 person	40	18.3
4 person	45	20.5
More than 4 persons	19	8.7

Question 12 Length of Residency in Mineral County

Table 2-13	Mineral County Survey Respondents	
Response		
Average Length	19.3 yrs	
Median Length	15 yrs	
1-10 years	92	41.8
10-20 years	52	23.6
More than 20 years	76	34.6

Question 13 Sex of Respondent

Table 2-14	Mineral County Survey Respondent	
Response	Frequency	Percent
Male	100	54.3
Female	119	45.7

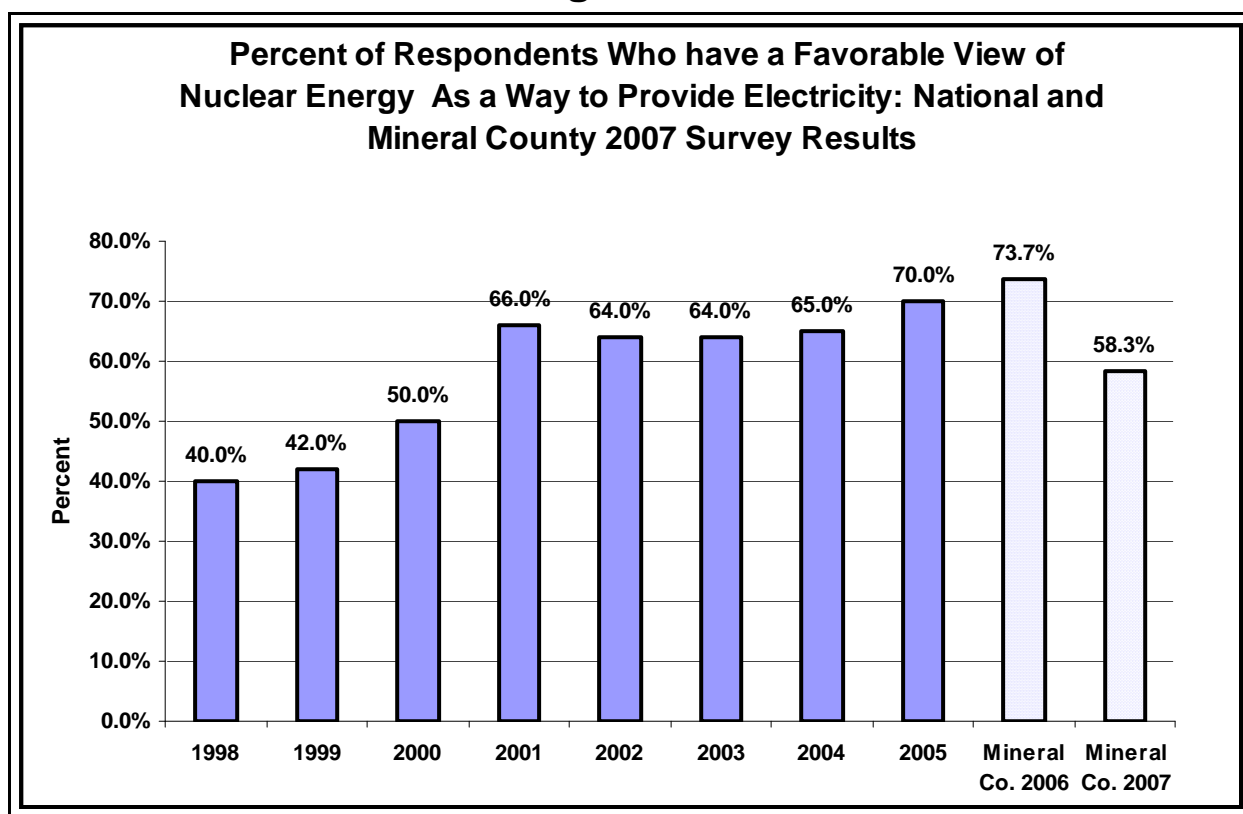
3.0 COMPARISON OF SURVEY RESULTS

Section 3.0 compares the result of the 2006 and 2007 Mineral County survey to national survey responses. The Nuclear Energy Institute conducted a number of survey efforts related to Yucca Mountain and nuclear energy use over the last several years.

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



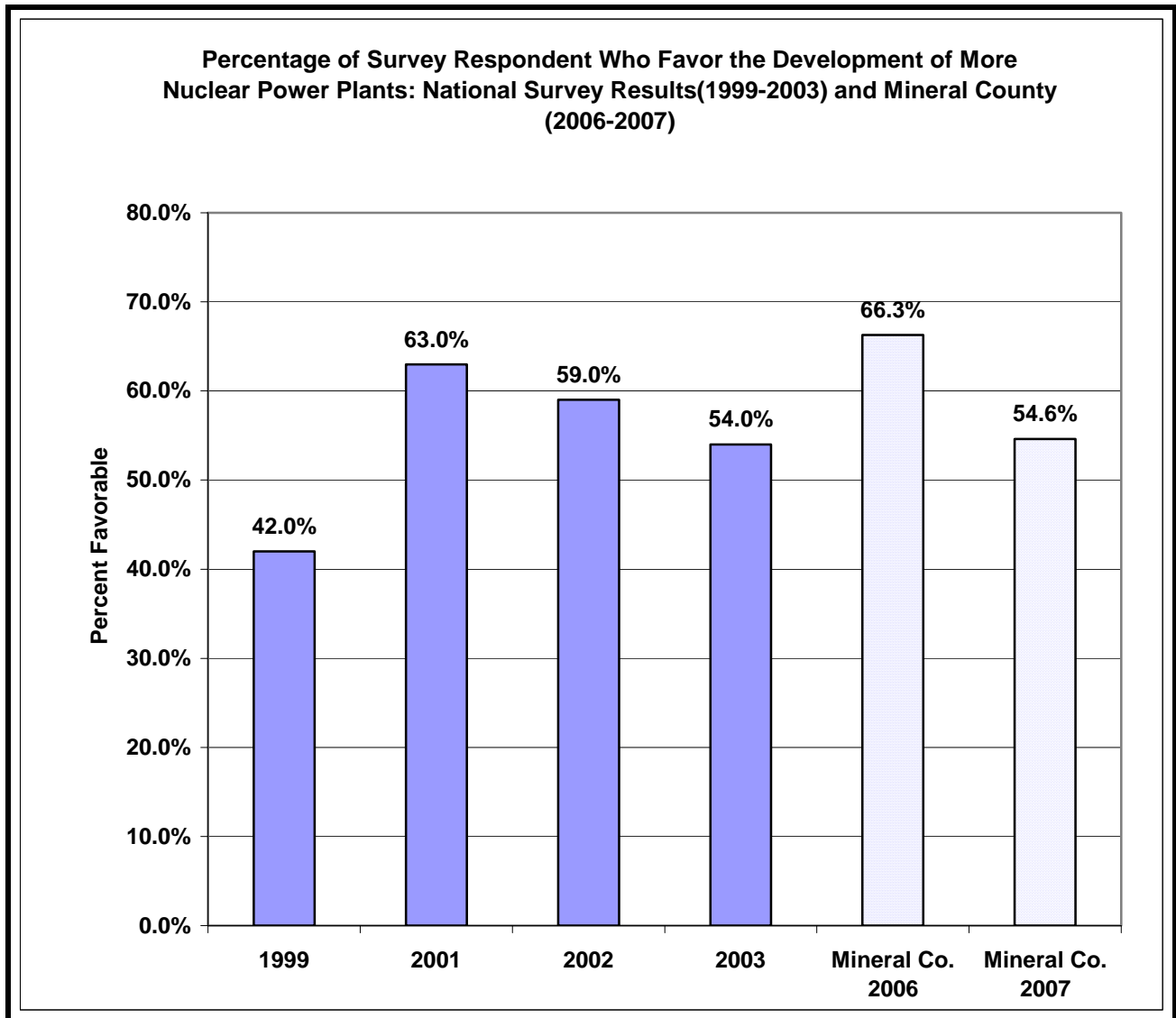
Source: NEI, 1998-2005, Mineral County, 2006

As compared to national survey results, Mineral County survey respondents have a somewhat 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. However, just over 64 percent of Mineral County respondents favor nuclear power over oil and coal.

Question:

Please tell me if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with the following statement: “We should definitely build more nuclear energy plants in the future?”

Figure 3-2



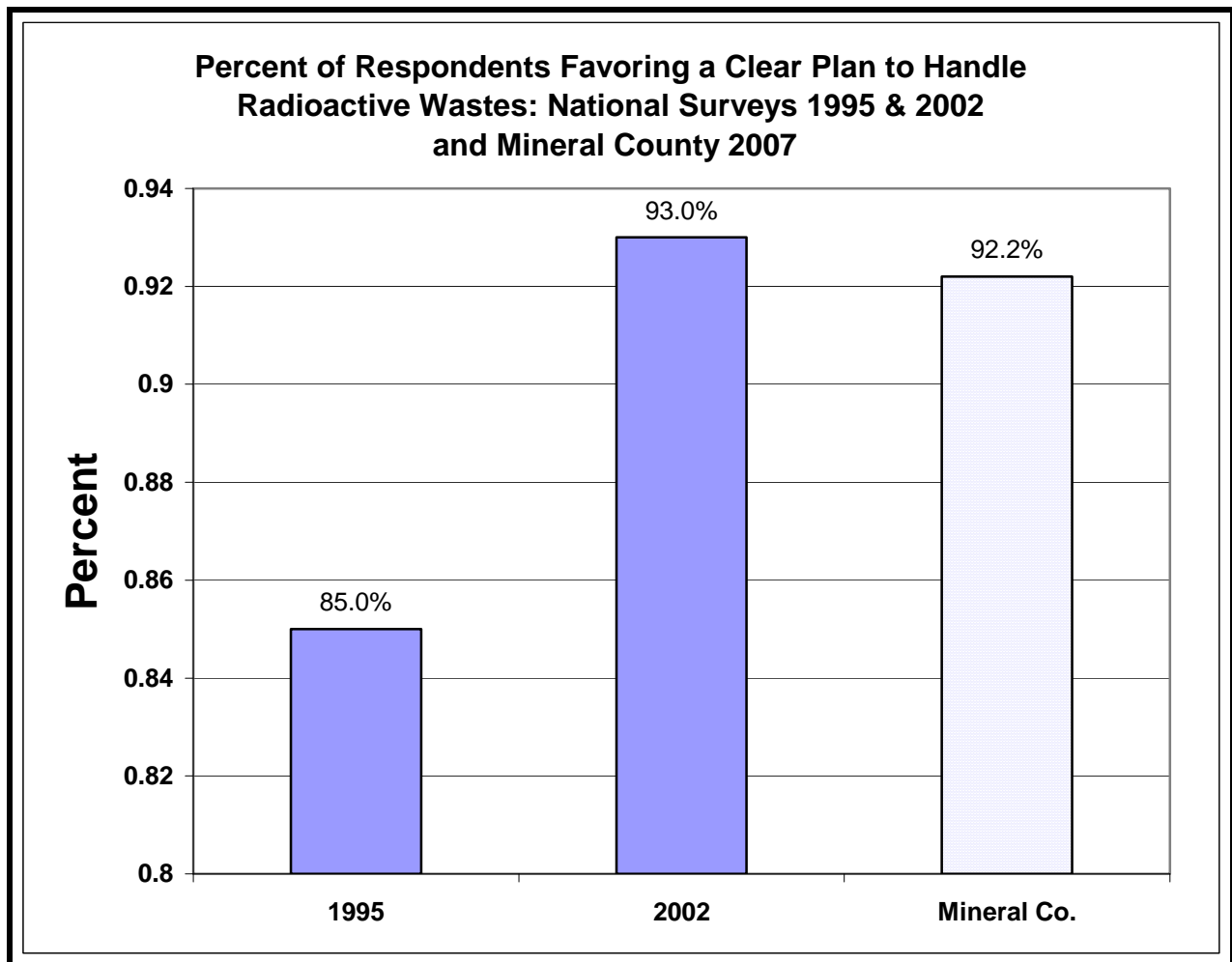
Source: NEI, 1998-2005, Mineral County, 2006 and 2007

Again, Mineral County survey respondents appear to consistently support development of new nuclear power plants similar to views held nationally.

Question:

How important is it to have a clear plan of action for handling the high-level radioactive waste from America's 103 electricity-generating nuclear energy plants? Is it extremely important, very important, somewhat important, not very important, or not at all important?

Figure 3-3



Source: NEI and Mineral County, 2006 and 2007

Section 3.0 also compares the results from the 2007 Mineral County community survey against the results from previous community survey efforts, specifically those in 2006. The following two questions were asked in 2007 and 2006.

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 3-1	2007 Mineral County Survey		2006 Mineral County Survey	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Very Confident	69	31.8	55	33.1
Somewhat Confident	79	36.4	62	37.3
Not Too Confident	47	21.7	33	19.9
Not confident at all	22	10.1	16	9.6

Question Do you think it is possible for the state, tribal and local governments to continue to challenge the Yucca Mountain Project while developing a benefits package for Nevada?

Table 3-2	2005 Mineral County Survey		2006 Mineral County Survey	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Yes	69	43.9	65	39.4
No	21	13.4	48	29.1
Don't Know	7	4.4	52	31.5
Refused	50	31.8	1	1.4
No Answer	10	6.4	-	-

In 2007 over 88 percent of Mineral County respondents believe that the State of Nevada should receive a benefits package or compensation from the federal government if the Yucca Mountain project and the Mina rail line are built.

Appendix A:

Mineral County is conducting this survey as part of its oversight responsibilities of the Yucca Mountain project. Funding for the survey is provided by a grant from the U.S. Department of Energy. Mineral County High School students have volunteered to conduct this 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:

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 2:

Please tell me if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with the following statement: "We should definitely build more nuclear energy plants in the future?"

1. Strongly Agree _____

2. Somewhat Agree _____

3. Somewhat Disagree _____

4. Strongly Disagree _____

Question 3:

Please tell me if you strongly favor, somewhat favor, somewhat oppose or strongly oppose building new nuclear power plants to reduce reliance on oil or coal?

- 1. Strongly favor _____
- 2. Somewhat favor _____
- 3. Somewhat Oppose _____
- 4. Strongly Oppose _____

Question 4:

How important is it to have a clear plan of action for handling the high-level radioactive waste from America's 103 electricity-generating nuclear energy plant? Is it extremely important, very important, somewhat important, not very important, or not at all important?"

- 1. Extremely Important _____
- 2. Very Important _____
- 3. Somewhat Important _____
- 4. Not Very Important _____
- 5. Not at all important _____

Question 5:

Should Nevada receive a benefits package or compensation from the federal government, if the Yucca Mountain Project and the Mina Rail line are built?

- 1. Yes _____
- 2. No _____

Question 6:

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 7:

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?

1. very confident _____
2. somewhat confident _____
3. not too confident _____
4. not confident at all _____

Question 8:

Would you say you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with the statement, "there is more risk in shipping high-level radioactive wastes than in shipping gasoline or other industrial chemicals"?

1. Strongly Agree _____
2. Agree _____
3. Disagree _____
4. Strongly disagree _____

Question 9:

Are you familiar with the Department of Energy's plans to evaluate a potential rail shipping route through Mineral County to Yucca Mountain for the purpose of transporting nuclear waste?

Yes_____

No_____

I. Demographic Questions

1. Age of Respondent (Survey respondent)_____Years
2. Total number of persons living in your household_____.
3. Length of residency in Mineral County_____ years.
4. Male or Female_____.