

may
2007

Public Supports Climate Change Action, But Is Unclear on Nuclear Energy's Role in Preventing Greenhouse Gases

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With the emergence of climate change as a public policy issue, a majority of Americans believes that action should be taken now. Missing in the discussion of possible actions, however, is a clear understanding of how much the use of nuclear energy already helps prevent greenhouse gas emissions and the role it could play in the future, a new national survey finds.

Four in 10 Americans believe that climate change is a serious problem and that immediate action is necessary, the survey found. Another 26 percent believe that climate change could be a serious problem and that we should take some action now, according to a nationwide public opinion survey conducted March 30-April 1 by Bisconti Research Inc. with GfK.

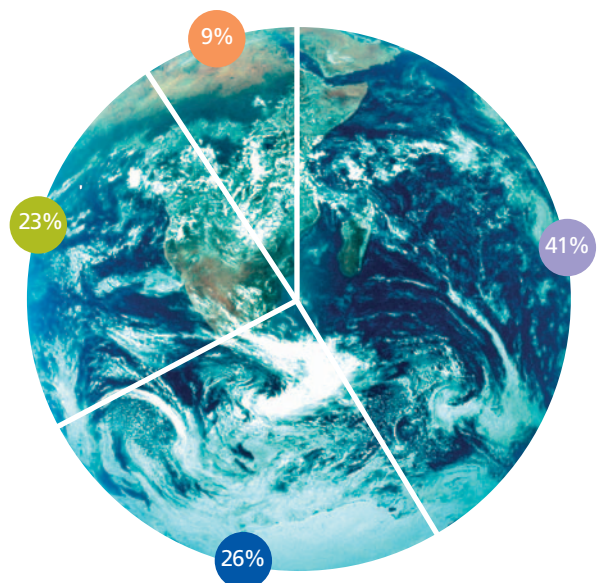
A March Gallup survey also found that 41 percent of Americans worry a great deal about the greenhouse effect or global warming—up 15 percentage points since 2004.

In the context of this growing concern, 57 percent in the Bisconti Research poll heard or read some information during the past year about the need for nuclear energy. However, fewer (46 percent) heard or read about the clean-air benefits of nuclear energy, and even fewer (39 percent) heard or read anything about nuclear energy as “a way to fight global warming and climate change.”

The survey, sponsored by the Nuclear Energy Institute, was based on telephone interviews with a representative sample of 1,000 U.S. adults age 18 and older. The poll's margin of error is plus or minus three percentage points.

“Which of the following statements is closest to your opinion on climate change and global warming?”

- IT IS A SERIOUS PROBLEM, AND IMMEDIATE ACTION IS NECESSARY.
- IT COULD BE A SERIOUS PROBLEM, AND WE SHOULD TAKE SOME ACTION NOW.
- MORE RESEARCH IS NEEDED BEFORE ACTION IS TAKEN.
- IT IS NOT A PROBLEM AND DOES NOT REQUIRE ANY ACTION.



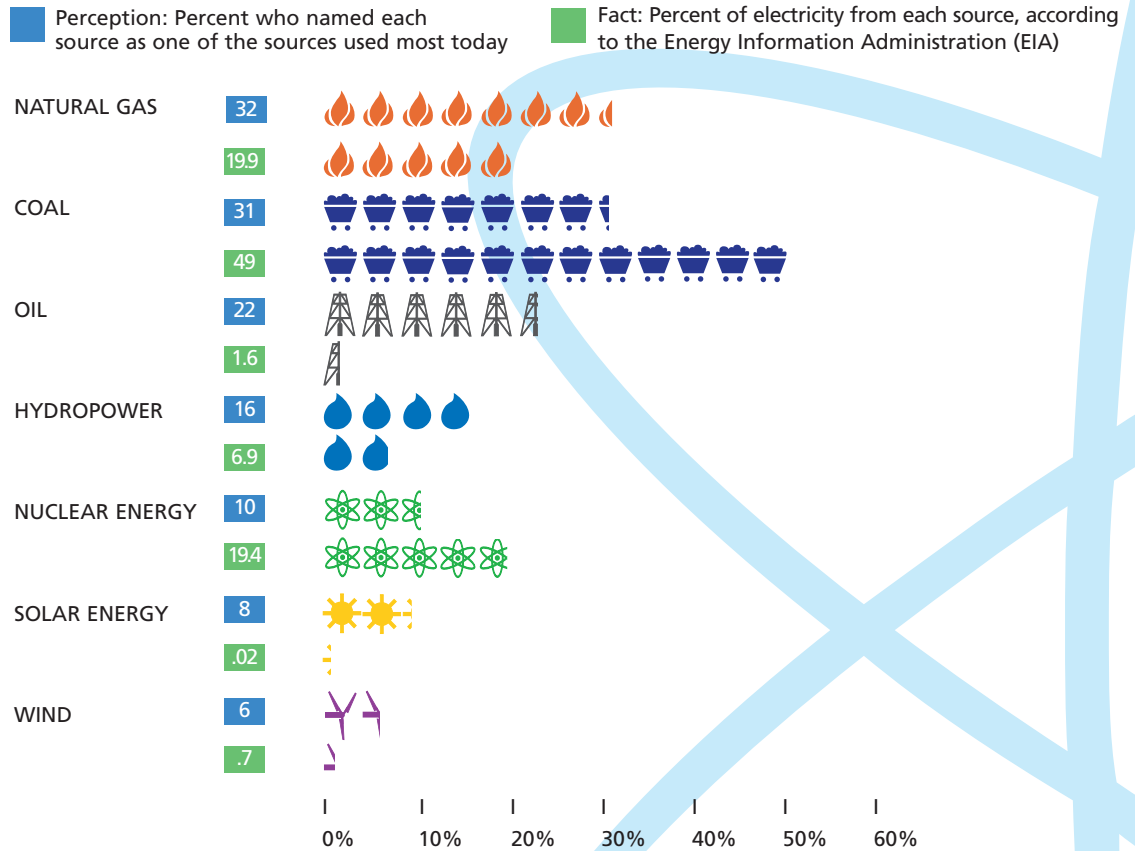
Solar and Nuclear Energy Seen as Fuels of The Future, Not The Present

Nuclear energy, like solar energy, is viewed as a fuel of the future, not of the present. When asked which electricity sources are used most today and which will be used most 15 years from now, the public put solar and nuclear energy at the top of the list for the future, but near the bottom today. In fact, only 10 percent mentioned nuclear energy as one of the sources used most today.

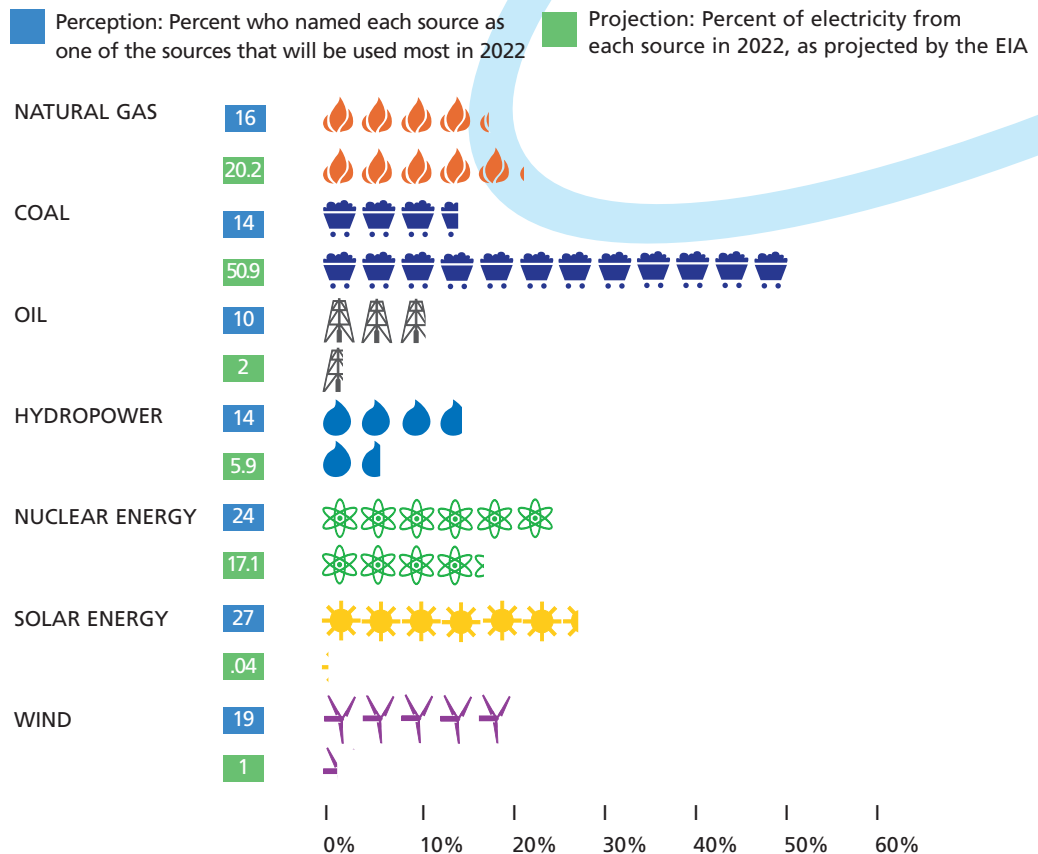
Nuclear energy generates power for nearly one of every five U.S. homes and businesses. Because nuclear energy produces such a large amount of electricity without emitting carbon dioxide or air pollutants, it accounts for 71 percent of all the electricity produced by clean-air sources.

for more information on public opinion about nuclear energy issues, please visit www.nei.org

Electricity Sources Today: Perceptions and Facts



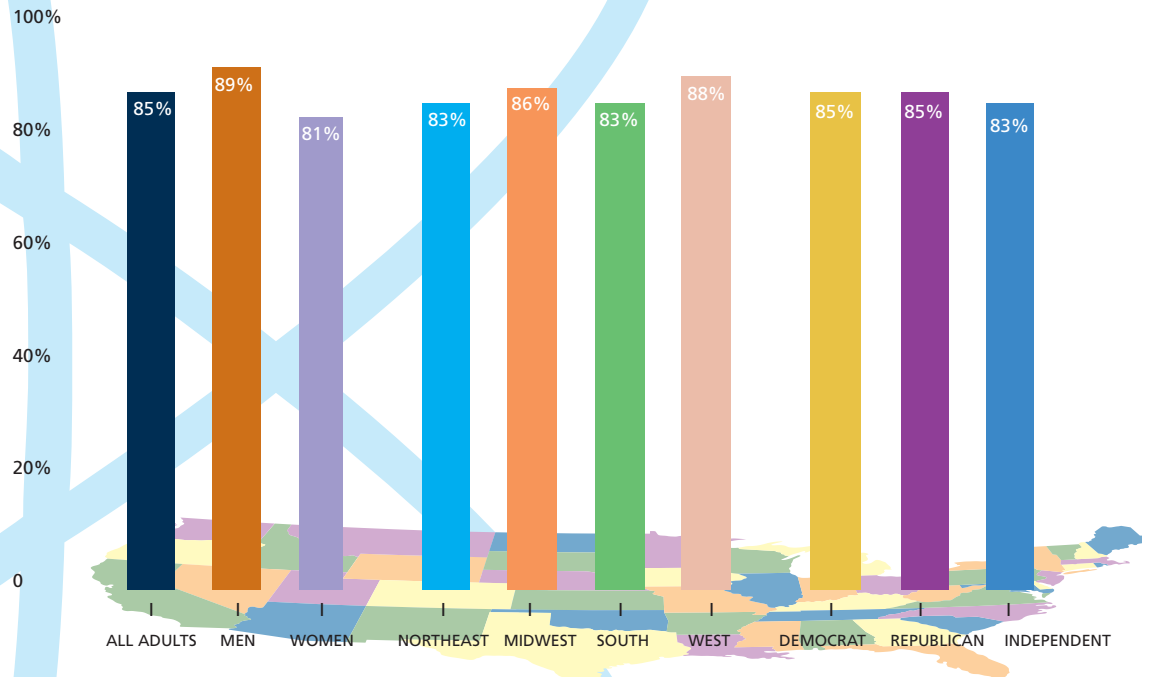
Electricity Sources in 15 Years: Perceptions and Projections



Public Supports Nuclear and Renewable Energy in Low-Carbon Mix

Using a mix of low-carbon sources, including nuclear energy and renewables, makes sense to the public for producing the electricity we need while limiting greenhouse gases. There is near consensus (85 percent) on this concept, and this consensus encompasses the range of demographic groups.

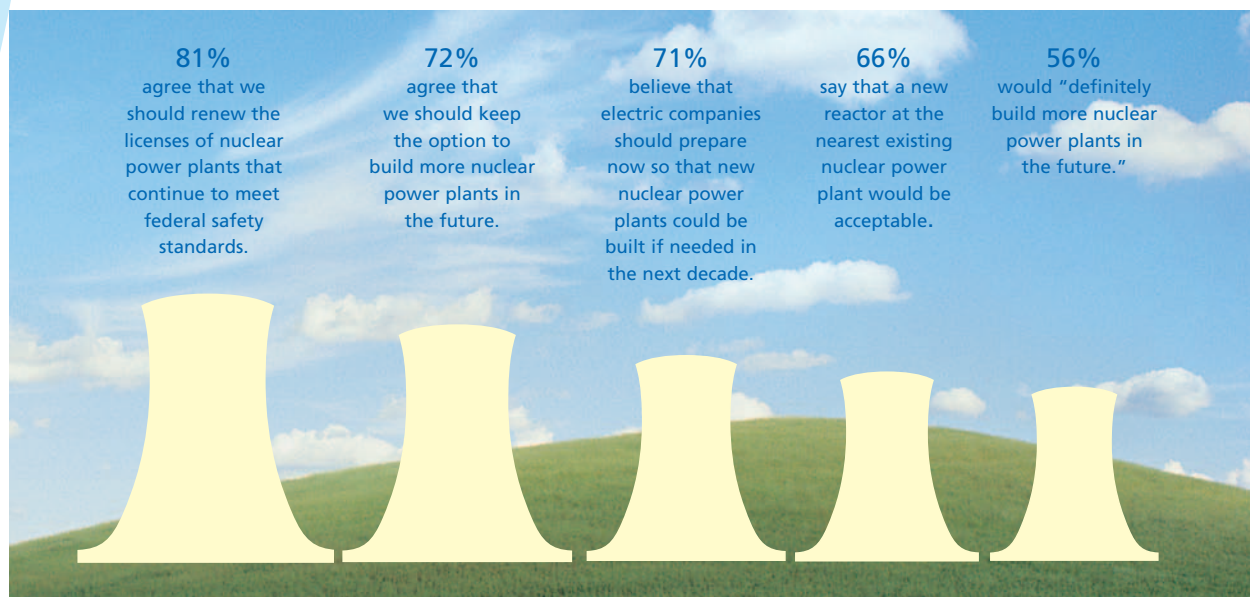
“We should take advantage of all low-carbon energy sources, including nuclear, hydro and renewable energy, to produce the electricity we need while limiting greenhouse gas emissions.”



Support for License Renewal and Steps to New Nuclear Plants

Although understanding nuclear energy's role in preventing greenhouse gases is not widespread, public support continues for license renewal of today's nuclear power plants and steps toward building new nuclear plants.

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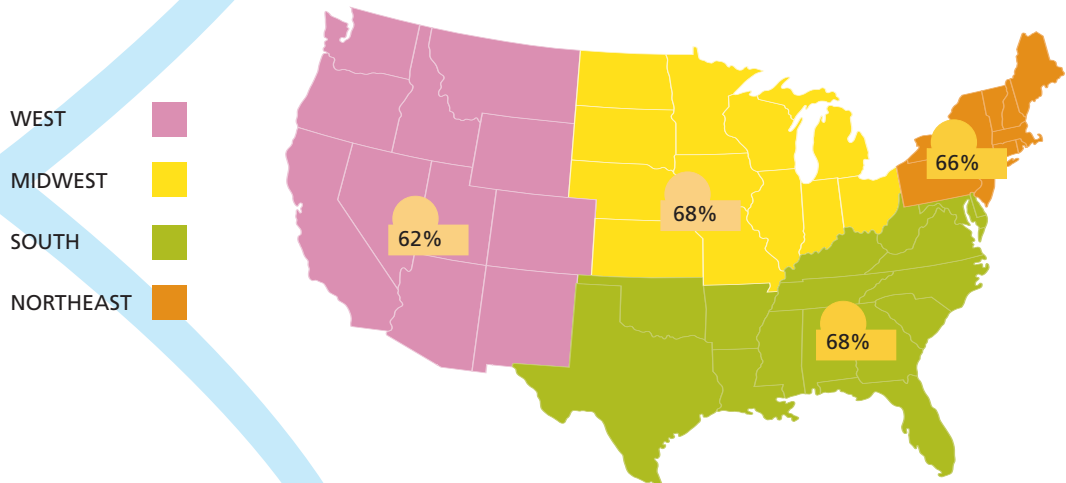


Support for New Nuclear Power Plants Extends Across Regions

Majorities in all regions support a new reactor at the nearest nuclear power plant site. The most likely locations for new reactors is at existing plant sites.

Percent Saying New Reactor Would Be Acceptable Next to the Nearest Operating Nuclear Plant

"IF A NEW POWER PLANT WERE NEEDED TO SUPPLY ELECTRICITY, WOULD IT BE ACCEPTABLE TO YOU OR NOT ACCEPTABLE TO YOU TO ADD A NEW REACTOR AT THE SITE OF THE NEAREST NUCLEAR POWER PLANT THAT IS ALREADY OPERATING?"



Favorability Keyed to Clear Understanding of Nuclear Energy's Role

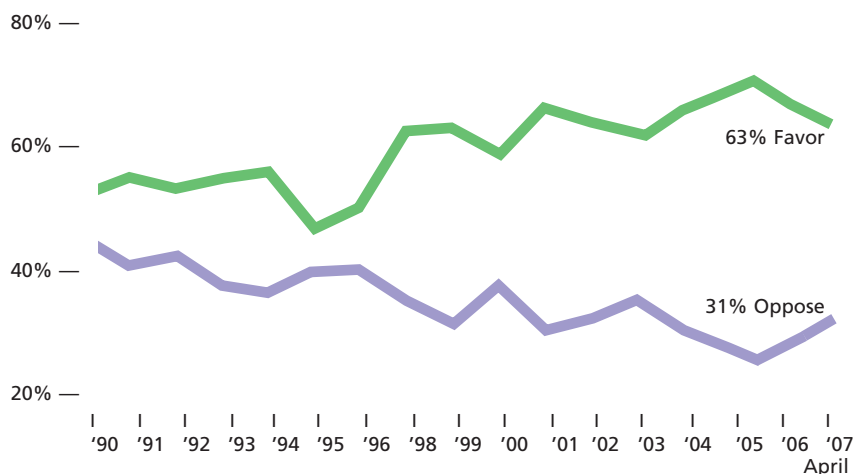
Although the survey shows solid support for nuclear energy, the number favoring nuclear energy declined since last year. Now, 63 percent favor the use of nuclear energy, down from a high of 70 percent in 2005 and 68 percent in 2006.

Considering nuclear energy's role in addressing global climate change and the increasing media and public policy attention given to climate change, the public does not grasp the full scope of measures that would reduce greenhouse gases.

Hearing about nuclear energy's clean-air benefits makes a substantial difference in attitudes. Of those who said they heard or read about nuclear energy's clean-air role in the past year, 73 percent favor the use of nuclear energy. Among those who had not heard this information, 49 percent favor the use of nuclear energy.

Percent Who Favor/ Oppose Nuclear Energy

"OVERALL, 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?"



Counting the Clean-Air Benefits of Nuclear Energy

Nuclear power plants do not burn anything in the production of electricity, so they do not produce any greenhouse gases or air pollutants controlled under the Clean Air Act, such as sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxides.

- In 2005, U.S. nuclear plants prevented the discharge of 682 million metric tons of carbon dioxide—nearly as much carbon dioxide as is released from all U.S. passenger cars.

- Without nuclear power plants, emissions of sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxides from the electric sector would be 33 percent and 29 percent higher, respectively.

Sources: Energy Information Administration, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency