



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

**July 2006**

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

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

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# Contents

Section	Page
<b>1.0 INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Background.....	1
1.2 Methodology .....	1
1.3 Summary of Findings .....	2
<b>2.0 SURVEY RESULTS .....</b>	<b>4</b>
2.1 Community Survey Results.....	4
<b>3.0 COMPARISON OF SURVEY RESULTS.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Appendix A.....</b>	<b>12</b>

## Tables

<b>Table No</b>	<b>Page</b>
Table 2-1 .....	4
Table 2-2 .....	4
Table 2-3 .....	5
Table 2-4 .....	5
Table 2-5 .....	6
Table 2-6 .....	6
Table 2-7 .....	7
Table 2-8 .....	7
Table 2-9 .....	7
Table 3-1 .....	11
Table 3-2 .....	11

## Figures

<b>Figure No.</b>	
Figure 3-1 .....	8
Figure 3-2 .....	9
Figure 3-3 .....	10

## **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. 2006 Survey questions 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 gauge public opinion about nuclear waste and nuclear energy.

### **1.2 Methodology**

Mineral County High School students conducted Approximately 170 face-to-face surveys in order to ascertain the views and knowledge of the repository program. This year Mineral County survey questions 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 2006 Yucca Mountain community survey for 2006. Mineral County High School students completed a total of 170 surveys. Almost 90 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).

Almost 74 percent of 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 higher than findings of national survey efforts (Figure 3-1). 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.

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). Such a level of support is even higher than national survey responses. 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 2-4). 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).

Mineral County survey respondents are becoming increasingly confident that spent nuclear fuel and high-level waste can be shipped safely. In 2006, approximately 70 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 2-5). The percentage of Mineral County survey respondents having this view increased from last year. In 2005, about 66 percent of the Mineral County survey respondents indicated that they were very confident or somewhat confident in the safety of nuclear waste shipments.

Finally, Mineral County survey respondents were asked whether they think it is possible for state, tribal and local governments to continue to challenge the Yucca Mountain project while developing a benefits package for Nevada. The majority of respondents (39.4 percent) answered yes. Almost a third of the respondents did not know. The results for this question from the 2005 Community Survey were similar to the results in 2006 (See Table 2-6).

## 2.0 SURVEY RESULTS

### 2.1 Community Survey Results

This section contains 2006 community survey results for Mineral County. The survey instrument used for the 2006 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 1: Are you familiar with the Yucca Mountain Project and the federal government's efforts to store spent nuclear fuel in Nevada?

<b>Table 2-1</b>		<b>Survey Respondent</b>	
<b>Response</b>	<b>Freq.</b>	<b>Percent</b>	
Yes	150	87.7	
No	21	12.3	

Question 2: 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?

<b>Table 2-2</b>		<b>Mineral County Survey Respondent</b>	
<b>Response</b>	<b>Freq.</b>	<b>Percent</b>	
Strongly favor	43	25.8	
Somewhat favor	80	47.9	
Somewhat oppose	23	13.8	
Strongly Oppose	21	12.5	

Question 3: 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?”

<b>Mineral County</b>		
<b>Table 2-3</b>		
<b>Survey Respondents</b>		
<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Strongly Agree	41	24.7
Somewhat Agree	69	41.6
Somewhat Disagree	35	21.1
Strongly Disagree	21	12.6

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?”

<b>Mineral County</b>		
<b>Table 2-4</b>		
<b>Survey Respondent</b>		
<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Extremely Important	121	72.5
Very Important	29	17.4
Somewhat Important	9	5.4
Not Very Important	6	3.6
Not at All Important	2	1.2

Question 5: 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?

<b>Mineral County Survey Respondent</b>		
<b>Table 2-5</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Response</b>		
Very Confident	55	33.1
Somewhat Confident	62	37.3
Not too Confident	33	19.9
Not Confident at All	16	9.6

Question 6: 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?

<b>Mineral County Survey Respondent</b>		
<b>Table 2-6</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Response</b>		
Yes	65	39.4
No	48	29.1
Don't Know	52	31.5
No Answer	1	1.4

Question 7: Age of Respondent (survey respondent)

<b>Mineral County Survey Respondents</b>		
<b>Table 2-7</b>		
<b>Response</b>		
Average Age	39.2 yrs	
Median Age	38 yrs	
55 year or older	35	22.0
25 to 55 years old	81	51.0
Less than 25 years	44	28.0

Question 8: Household Size

<b>Mineral County Survey Respondent</b>		
<b>Table 2-8</b>		
<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
1 person	25	15.5
2 person	44	27.3
3 person	33	20.5
4 person	32	19.9
More than 4 persons	27	16.8

Question 9: Sex of Respondent

<b>Mineral County Survey Respondent</b>		
<b>Table 2-9</b>		
<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Male	82	52.0
Female	79	48.0

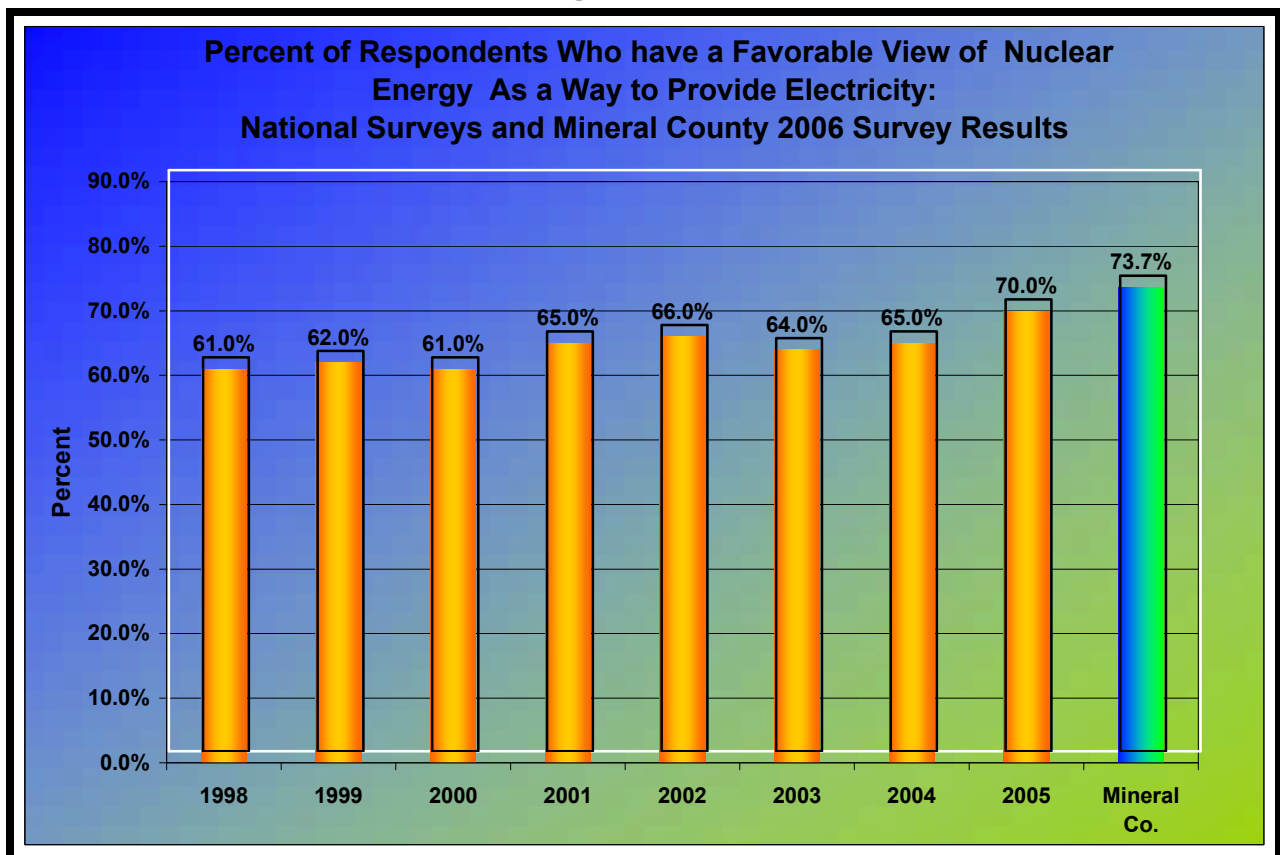
### 3.0 COMPARISON OF SURVEY RESULTS

Section 3.0 compares the result of the 2006 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**



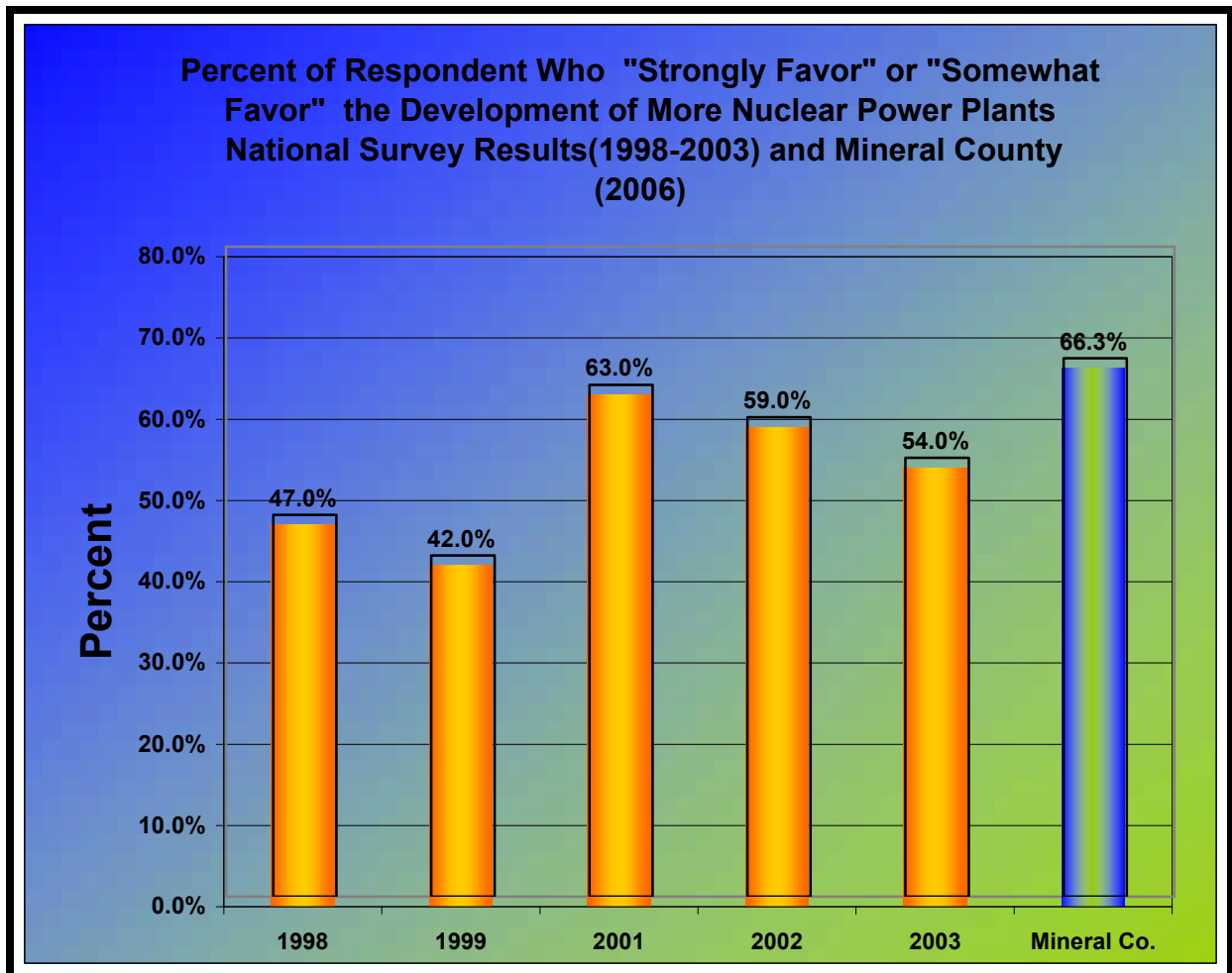
Source: NEI, 1998-2005, Mineral County, 2006

As compared to national survey results, Mineral County survey respondents have a more favorable view of nuclear energy as a source of electricity in the United States. Overall, there is an increasing favorable view of nuclear energy.

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**



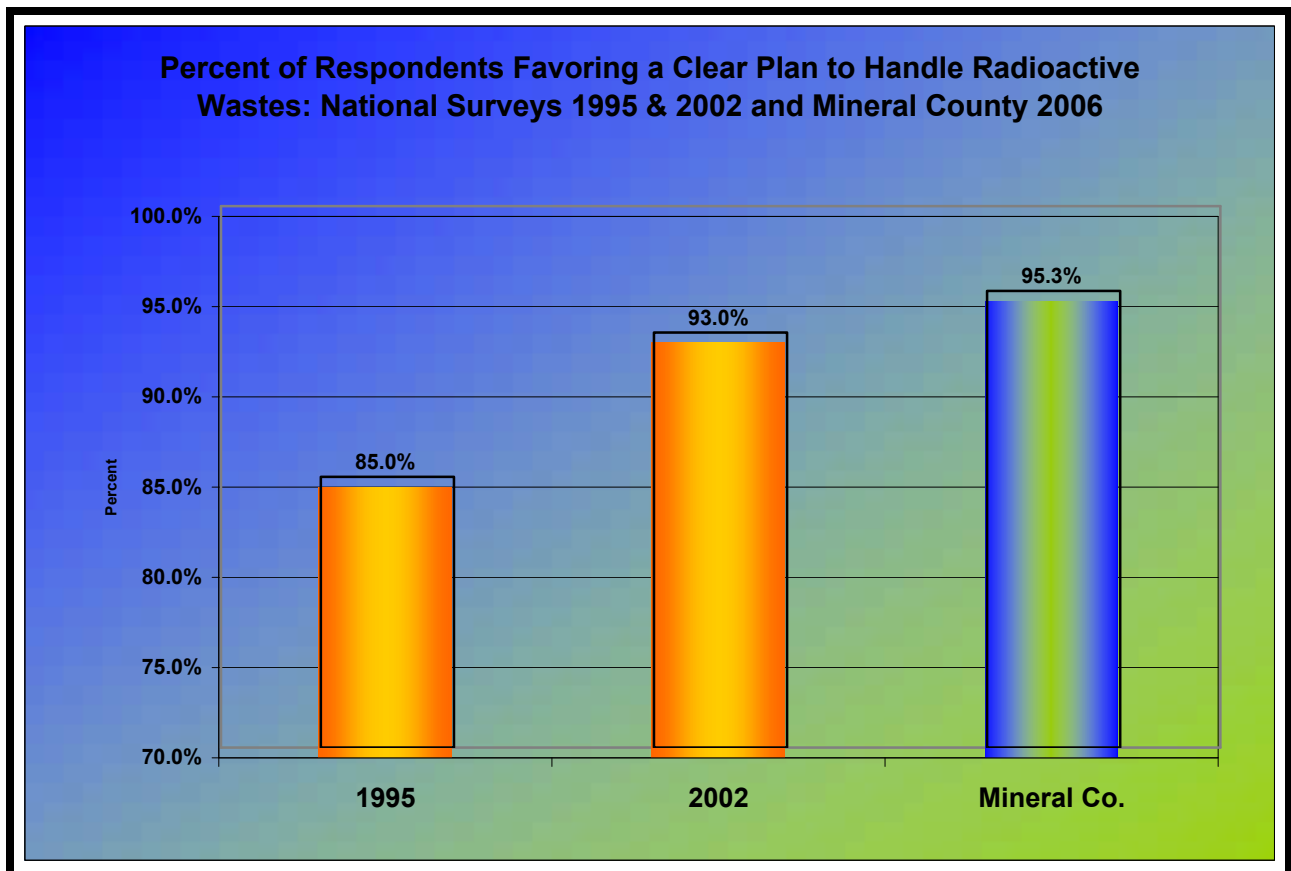
Source: NEI, 1998-2005, Mineral County, 2006

Again, Mineral County survey respondents appear to have even stronger support for development of new nuclear power plants as compared to national survey respondents.

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

Section 3.0 also compares the results from the 2006 Mineral County community survey against the results from previous community survey efforts, specifically those in 2005. The following two questions were asked in 2005 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?

<b>Table 3-1</b>	<b>2005 Mineral County Survey</b>		<b>2006 Mineral County Survey</b>	
	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Very Confident	44	28.4	55	33.1
Somewhat Confident	58	37.4	62	37.3
Not Too Confident	34	21.9	33	19.9
Not confident at all	19	12.3	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?

<b>Table 3-2</b>	<b>2005 Mineral County Survey</b>		<b>2006 Mineral County Survey</b>	
	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
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	-	-

## 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.

Are you familiar with the Yucca Mountain Project and the federal government's efforts to store spent nuclear fuel in Nevada?

Yes\_\_\_\_\_

No\_\_\_\_\_

Survey #\_\_\_\_\_

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 Favor \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. Somewhat Favor \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. Somewhat Oppose \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. Strongly Oppose \_\_\_\_\_

Question 3:

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 4

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?

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

Question 5:

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

- 1 Yes \_\_\_\_\_

2 No \_\_\_\_\_

3 Don't Know \_\_\_\_\_

**I. Demographic Questions**

1. Age of Respondent (Survey respondent)\_\_\_\_\_ Years

2. Total number of persons living in your household\_\_\_\_\_.

3. Sex of respondent\_\_\_\_\_.