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**Annual statewide survey shows Nevadans are increasingly opposed
to a nuclear waste dump at Yucca Mountain**
Nearly 77 percent oppose it, with 73 percent saying don't make any deals

CARSON CITY – Results of an annual statewide survey show that nearly 73 percent of all Nevadans believe the state should continue fighting, rather than seek some sort of deal with the federal government, in Nevada's battle against the proposed high-level nuclear waste repository at Yucca Mountain.

If given the chance to vote on the project, the survey found that nearly 77 percent of all Nevadans would vote against it, with only 19 percent saying they would vote for it. The poll shows opposition increasing since 2003, when 76 percent said they would vote against storing the nation's high-level nuclear waste at Yucca Mountain and 22 percent said they would vote for it.

The survey of more than 402 randomly selected Nevadans was conducted between Oct. 7 and 18 by Northwest Survey and Data Services, which is based in Eugene, Ore. and affiliated with the University of Oregon. It has a margin of error of plus or minus 4.8 percent. Survey results were released today by Nevada Attorney General Brian Sandoval and the state's Agency For Nuclear Projects.

Sandoval said this survey is more credible and consistent than others on this topic since the same methodology, sample size and core questions have been used since 1989. He also noted the lack of any biasing preliminary questions or qualifying statements, noting that the question on whether the state should continue its opposition to Yucca Mountain or make a deal for benefits was the second question asked, right after the straightforward question about voting for or against the project.

The poll found that Nevadans remain adamantly opposed to a nuclear waste dump planned for Yucca Mountain, about 100 miles northwest of Las Vegas. In 2003, with the same research firm asking the same questions, the survey found that 65 percent of all respondents favored continuing opposition to the project and rejecting any negotiations with the federal government for benefits in exchange for accepting the project. That year, 30 percent of those polled favored making a deal with the government.

(more)

In response to the same question this year, 67 percent said the state should keep fighting and turn down any possible benefits, with only 29 percent wanting to deal.

The survey found that only 36 percent of all Nevadans are aware that a federal court decision this summer in Nevada’s lawsuit against the U.S. Department of Energy “will make it very difficult for the federal government to move ahead with the project.”

When informed by pollsters that this court decision “found that the federal government did not use proper standards for long-term storage at Yucca Mountain,” the number of Nevadans favoring continued opposition increased to 73 percent. Knowing the result of the state’s lawsuit, only 25 percent said the state should stop opposing the project and make a deal.

In addition to reaffirming strong opposition to Yucca Mountain and support for continuing to combat the project, the survey found that two of every three Nevadans (or 67 percent) support the state’s lawsuits aimed at stopping the project and support the state water engineer’s denial of water permits for it.

“These results show that people throughout the state are even more opposed than in past years to this misguided project,” Sandoval said. “With a federal court decision that can kill the project, Nevadans understand that the dump is far from a done deal. This is good news for Nevada and more bad news for the Department of Energy and the nuclear industry.”

The survey also showed a growing distrust of the DOE in Nevada. Asked if the DOE “can be trusted to live up to any benefits agreement the federal government would make with Nevada,” 27 percent agreed and 69 percent disagreed. That’s up from 2003, when 64 percent said the DOE cannot be trusted.

Robert Loux, executive director of Nevada’s Agency for Nuclear Projects, said Nevada’s opposition to Yucca Mountain has remained close to or above 70 percent since the state began commissioning such surveys in 1989. He said Nevadans have been just as consistent in opposing any deals that would weaken the state’s opposition, despite all the time and money the nuclear industry has poured into Nevada.

“When you look at these survey findings and compare them with past survey results, the people of Nevada are sending a clear and consistent message to DOE and the commercial nuclear power industry,” Loux said. “They are saying, ‘We don’t want this and we won’t be fooled into cutting any deals.’”

People in Nevada continue to view Yucca Mountain as a risk to public health, safety and the economy. Respondents identified rail and truck shipments to the site as the greatest risk (85 percent rated this as moderate to high risk). The second highest risk is seen as the risk of radioactive contamination from the repository (81 percent), followed by the risk of property value losses to homes and businesses (76 percent), adverse health effects for Nevada residents (76 percent), risk of damaging Nevada’s reputation (64 percent), risk of economic damage to major Nevada industries such as gaming and conventions (62 percent), and risk of loss of public revenues due to declines in tourists and visitors (62 percent).

For complete survey results, please visit www.state.nv.us/nucwaste or contact George McCabe at Brown & Partners Public Relations at (702) 967-2222, (702) 325-7358 or gmccabe@brown-partners.com.