

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

**July 2005**

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

**Prepared By:  
Lander County  
Yucca Mountain Oversight Program**

**Lander County  
Business Survey Results  
Yucca Mountain Project  
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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 strongly opposed by the State of Nevada. Surveys conducted by the State indicate that roughly 70 percent of Nevadans oppose the development of the repository at Yucca Mountain. The State survey results strongly reflect the opinions of Clark County, Nevada due to the population distribution in the State and the survey methodology. For example, in the 1991 State telephone survey only 19 of the 504 respondents were from affected units of local government (AULGs) other than Clark County. It is possible that none of the respondents in the 2002 State survey were from Lander County.

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 Lander County residents with respect to the repository program. To date, Lander County has completed a public opinion survey that provides vastly different survey responses as compared to state survey efforts. As part of the impact assessment and oversight program, Lander County Board of Commissioners decided to initiate a new public survey targeted at business owners in Lander County. Survey questions were directly related to the Yucca Mountain project and associated transportation elements of the repository. Survey questions can be found in Appendix A.

### **1.2 Methodology**

Approximately 71 face to face surveys were conducted by Lander County High School students in order to ascertain the views and knowledge of the repository program. Business owners in Lander County, principally those in Battle Mountain and Austin, were interviewed. The survey questions duplicated many of those used by the State of Nevada in their efforts over the last several years. 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. Also, Section 3.0 compares the survey results of business owner to the community wide Lander County survey results from 2003.

### **1.3 Summary of Findings**

This section summarizes the responses of Lander County business owners based upon interviews conducted in 2005. A total of 71 local business owners were interviewed.

If given the chance the majority of business owners in Lander County would vote against the repository (Table 2-1). Most of those respondents who said they would vote against the repository were strongly opposed to the program (See Table 2-2). A sizable number of respondents did indicate that they did not know whether they would vote for or against.

The majority of business owners did not believe high-level radioactive waste could be transported by truck in an acceptably safe manner (Table 2-3). However, the respondents were evenly split as to the question of safe waste transportation by rail (Table 2-4). Again there were a sizeable number of “don’t know” responses.

Although the majority of business survey respondents, appear to be against the repository in Nevada and question the safety of waste shipments, the majority of respondents did not believe that the construction of a repository or waste shipments through Nevada and Lander County would adversely affect their business operations (See Table 2-7, 2-8, 2-9 and Table 2-10). In fact the majority of respondents who directly answered the question about impacts to current business operations believe the repository and or waste transportation would have no affect or a beneficial affect to current business operations.

Business owners were equally split on the question of whether or the State to negotiate for benefits and stop opposition to the repository. This is a particularly interesting result given that the majority of respondent said they would vote against the repository in question 1.

## 2.0 SURVEY RESULTS

### 2.1 Business Survey Results

Section 2.0 contains the survey results for Lander County. A complete survey can be found in Appendix A. Survey respondents were first asked whether or not they were familiar with the Yucca Mountain Project. Nearly 90 percent indicated that they were familiar with the project. Frequency tabulations are shown for each survey question beginning with question 1.

Question 1 Suppose the Department of Energy selected the Yucca Mountain site for the nation's first high-level radioactive waste repository, but it would not be located there unless state residents voted in favor of it. If this were the case would you vote for it or against it?

<b>Table 2-1</b>		<b>Business Owners</b>	
<b>Response</b>	<b>Freq.</b>	<b>Percent</b>	
For	16	22.5	
Against	40	56.3	
Wouldn't Vote	0	0.00	
No Answer	15	21.1	
Don't Know	0	0.0	

Question 2. You have said you would vote "against" the Yucca Mountain Project. Would you say you are somewhat oppose or strongly oppose the repository?

<b>Table 2-2</b>		<b>Business Owners</b>	
<b>Response</b>	<b>Freq.</b>	<b>Percent</b>	
Somewhat Opposed	12	27.9	
Strongly Opposed	27	62.8	
Refused	0	0.0	
Don't Know	3	7.0	
No Answer	1	2.3	

Question 3. Do you think nuclear waste could be transported by truck in a way that would be acceptably safe?

<b>Table 2-3 Business Owners</b>		
<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Yes	21	30.4
No	37	53.6
Refused	0	0.0
Don't Know	11	15.9
No Answer	0	0.0

Question 4. Do you think nuclear waste could be transported by rail in a way that would be acceptably safe?

<b>Table 2-4 Business Owners</b>		
<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Yes	26	36.6
No	30	42.3
Refused	0	0.00
Don't Know	15	21.1



Question 5 Some people think Nevada should stop opposition to the repository and instead try to make an agreement with the federal government for benefits. Other people believe Yucca Mountain is a poor choice, and that state resistance should not be weakened or compromised by entering into an agreement for benefits. Do you believe the state should stop its opposition and make an agreement, or do you think the state should continue to do all it can to oppose the repository, even if that means turning down benefits that may be offered by the federal government.

<b>Table 2-5 Business Owners</b>		
<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Stop Opposition/ Make Agreement	26	36.6
Continue Opposition	27	38.0
Refused	2	2.8
Don't Know	15	21.1
No Answer	1	1.4

Eliminating the "Don't Know" and the "No Answer" responses and considering only those who answered directly, shows that survey respondents were equally divided on this question.

Question 6 Do you believe the construction and operation of a nuclear waste repository at Yucca Mountain will affect your current business operations in Lander County?

<b>Table 2-6 Business Owners</b>		
<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Yes, adverse impact	11	15.5
Yes, beneficial impact	6	8.5
No affect	40	56.3
Refused	0	0.0
Don't know	13	18.3
No Answer	1	1.4

Question 7. Do you believe that transportation of high-level nuclear waste and spent nuclear fuel through Nevada will affect your current business operations in Lander County?

<b>Table 2-7</b>		
<b>Business Owners</b>		
<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Yes, adverse impact	17	23.9
Yes, beneficial impact	5	7.0
No affect	28	39.4
Refused	0	0.0
Don't Know	19	26.8
No Answer	2	2.8

Question 8. Do you believe that transportation of high-level nuclear waste and spent nuclear fuel through Lander County by rail will affect your current business operations in Lander County?

<b>Table 2-8</b>		
<b>Business Owners</b>		
<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Yes, adverse impact	15	21.1
Yes, beneficial impact	6	8.5
No affect	31	43.7
Don't know	0	0.0
No Answer	17	23.9
Don't Know	2	2.8

Question 9. Do you believe that transportation of high-level nuclear waste and spent nuclear fuel through your community by rail or truck and within 1 mile of your location will affect your current business operations in Lander County?

<b>Table 2-9</b>			<b>Business Owners</b>	
<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>		
Yes, adverse impact	21	29.6		
Yes, beneficial impact	5	7.0		
No affect	26	36.6		
Refused	0	0.00		
Don't Know	15	21.1		
No answer	4	5.6		

Question 10: Age of Business Survey Respondents

<b>Table 2-10</b>			<b>Business Owners</b>	
<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>		
Less than 10 years	9	12.9		
10 to 20 years	17	24.3		
More than 20 years	44	62.9		
No response	0	0.0		

Question 11. Type of Business

<b>Table 2-11</b>		<b>Business Owners</b>	
<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	
Agriculture	2	2.9	
Mining	1	1.4	
Wholesale/Retail Trade	22	31.4	
Trucking/Transportation	2	2.9	
Services	20	28.6	
Tourism/Gaming	9	12.9	
Finance/Ins. Real Estate	0	0.0	
Manufacturing	0	0.0	
Other	14	20.0	

### 3.0 COMPARISON OF SURVEY RESULTS

Section 3.0 compares the results from the 2005 Lander County survey against the results of the State of Nevada survey conducted in the Summer of 2002, and the 2003 Lander County survey.

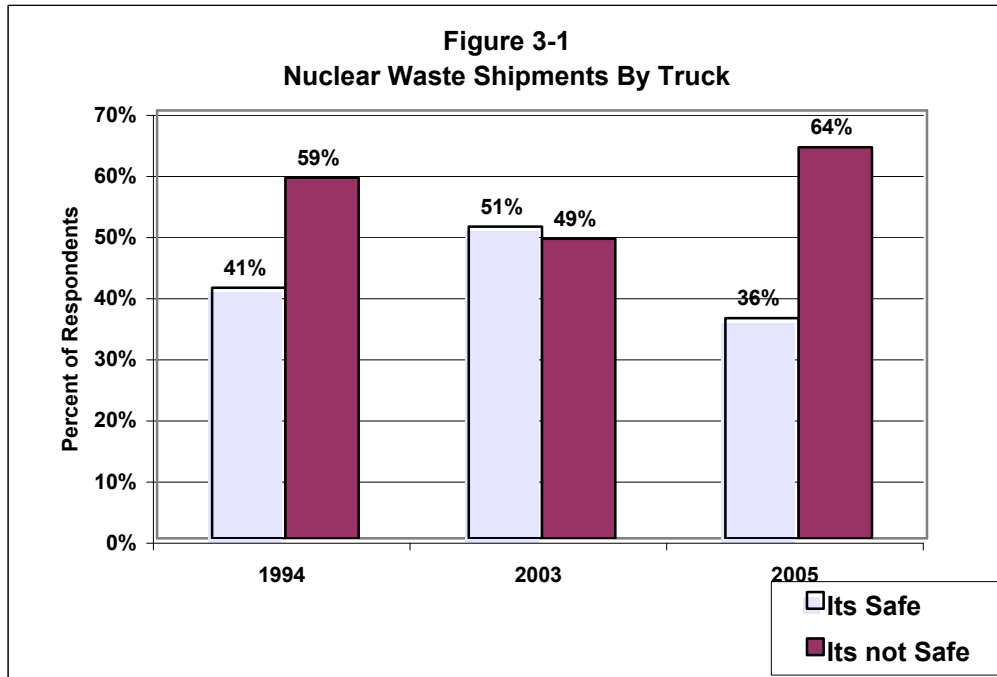
Question: Suppose the Department of Energy selected the Yucca Mountain site for the nation's first high-level radioactive waste repository, but it would not be located there unless state residents voted in favor of it. If this were the case would you vote for it or against it?

<b>Table 3-1</b>	<b>Lander County Business Survey 2005</b>	<b>Lander County High School Survey 2004</b>	<b>Lander County Community Survey 2003</b>	<b>State Survey 2002</b>
<b>Response</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Percent</b>
For	22.5	25.0	34.0	20.30
Against	56.3	49.0	45.0	76.24
Refused	0.0	1.0	15.0	
No Answer	21.1	19.0	0.9	3.22
Don't Know	0.0	6.0	0.4	0.25

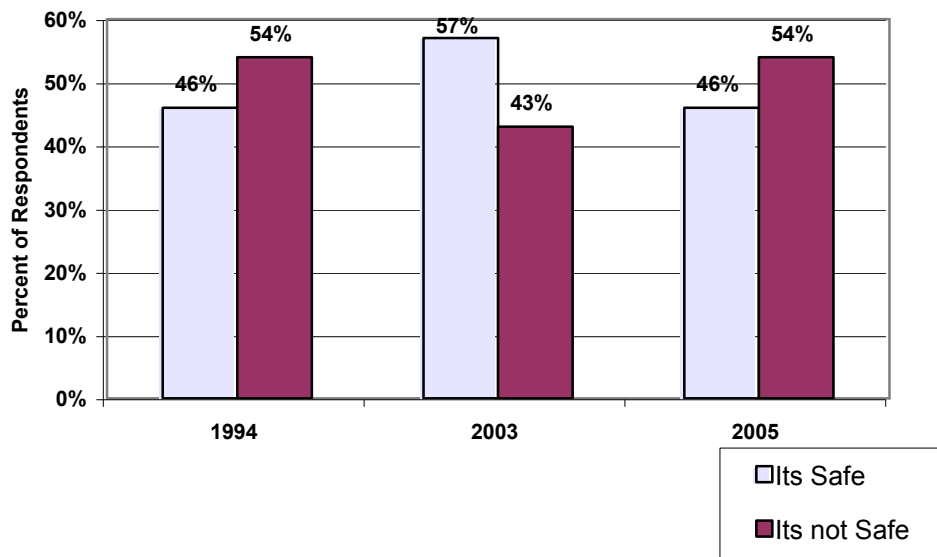
Question 5 Some people think Nevada should stop opposition to the repository and instead try to make an agreement with the federal government for benefits. Other people believe Yucca Mountain is a poor choice, and that state resistance should not be weakened or compromised by entering into an agreement for benefits. Do you believe the state should stop its opposition and make an agreement, or do you think the state should continue to do all it can to oppose the repository, even if that means turning down benefits that may be offered by the federal government.

<b>Table 3-2</b>	<b>Lander County Business Survey 2005</b>	<b>Lander County High School Survey 2004</b>	<b>Lander County Community Survey 2003</b>	<b>State Survey 2002</b>
<b>Response</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Stop Opposition/ Make Agreement	36.6	38.2	41.0	30.9
Continue Opposition	38.0	32.3	34.0	65.1
Refused	2.8	2.8	1.0	0.3
Don't Know	21.1	19.4	10.0	3.7
No Answer	1.4	11.8	14.0	0.0

Figure 3-1 and Figure 3-2 compare questions about the safety of high-level radioactive waste shipments by truck and rail. Overall, the responses from the 2003 community survey, the 2004 school survey, and the 2005 business survey are very consistent.



**Figure 3-2  
Nuclear Waste Shipments By Rail**



## Appendix A:

### Lander County Business Survey

Lander 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. Lander 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 high-level nuclear waste in Nevada?

Yes\_\_\_\_\_

No\_\_\_\_\_

Question 1:

The federal Department of Energy (DOE) wants to build the nation's first high-level radioactive waste repository at Yucca Mountain in southern Nevada. If given the opportunity to vote on this matter, would you vote for or against locating a nuclear waste repository at Yucca Mountain?

1 Vote For

2 Vote Against

7 REFUSED

8 DON'T KNOW

9 NO ANSWER

If you would vote for the repository skip to question 3, otherwise answer question 2.

Question 2:

You have said that you would vote "against" the Yucca Mountain repository project. Are you somewhat opposed or strongly opposed to the repository?

1 somewhat oppose

2 strongly opposed

7 REFUSED

8 DON'T KNOW

9 NO ANSWER



Question 3:

Do you think nuclear waste can be transported by truck in a way that would be acceptably safe?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 7 Refused
- 8 Don't Know
- 9 No Answer

Question 4:

Do you think nuclear waste could be transported by rail in a way that would be acceptably safe?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 7 Refused
- 8 Don't Know
- 9 No Answer

Question 6:

Some people think Nevada should stop opposition to the repository and instead try to make an agreement with the federal government for benefits. Other people believe Yucca Mountain is a poor choice, and that state resistance should not be weakened or compromised by entering into an agreement for benefits. Do you believe the state should stop its opposition and make an agreement, or do you think the state should continue to do all it can to oppose the repository, even if that means turning down benefits that may be offered by the federal government.

- 1 Stop opposition and make an agreement
- 2 Continue opposition/turn down benefits
- 7 REFUSED
- 8 DON'T KNOW
- 9 NO ANSWER

Question 7:

Do you believe the construction and operation of nuclear waste repository at Yucca Mountain will affect your current business operations in Lander County?

1. Yes, adverse affect
2. Yes, beneficial affect
3. No affect
7. Refused
8. Don't Know
9. No Answer

Question 8:

Do you believe that transportation of high-level nuclear waste and spent nuclear fuel through Nevada will affect your current business operations in Lander County?

1. Yes, adverse impact
2. Yes, beneficial affect
3. No affect
7. Refused
8. Don't Know
9. No Answer

Question 9:

Do you believe that transportation of high-level nuclear waste and spent nuclear fuel through Lander County by rail will affect your current business operations in Lander County?

1. Yes, adverse impact
2. Yes, beneficial affect
3. No affect
7. Refused
8. Don't Know
9. No Answer

Question 10:

Do you believe that transportation of high-level nuclear waste and spent nuclear fuel through your community by rail or truck and within 1 mile one mile of your location will affect your current business operations in Lander County?

1. Yes, adverse impact
2. Yes, beneficial affect
3. No affect
7. Refused
8. Don't Know
9. No Answer

**I. Demographic/Business Questions**

11. How Long have you lived in Nevada?

1. Less than 10 years \_\_\_\_\_
2. 10 to 20 years \_\_\_\_\_
3. More than 20 years \_\_\_\_\_
4. No response \_\_\_\_\_

12. Type of Business

1. Agriculture \_\_\_\_\_
2. Mining \_\_\_\_\_
3. Wholesale/Retail Trade \_\_\_\_\_
4. Trucking/Transportation \_\_\_\_\_
5. Services \_\_\_\_\_
6. Tourism/Gaming \_\_\_\_\_
7. Finance/Ins. Real Estate \_\_\_\_\_
8. Manufacturing \_\_\_\_\_
9. Other \_\_\_\_\_

