



NUCLEAR ENERGY INSTITUTE

Public Support for Consolidated Storage of Used Nuclear Fuel Is Strong

- 84 percent of Americans favor interim storage
- 62 percent feel used nuclear fuel is safely stored at plants
- 86 percent believe federal government should develop final repository

April 1, 2015—Consolidating the storage of used nuclear fuel at centralized interim facilities finds strong support among the American public, a new national public opinion survey finds.

Eighty-four percent of the poll's respondents agree that the United States should consolidate the storage of used fuel from nuclear plants to interim storage centers while the nation develops a permanent disposal facility.

The survey also found 62 percent of those polled agreeing that used nuclear fuel is stored safely at nuclear power plant sites.

A higher number—86 percent—believe the federal government should develop a final repository for used nuclear fuel “as long as the facility meets U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission regulations.”

Centralizing the interim storage of used fuel is among the [recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Commission on America's Nuclear Future](#) to the Department of Energy for a revised radioactive waste management policy. The commission, which released its findings in 2012 after the Obama administration shuttered the Yucca Mountain repository program, said having interim storage facilities does not preclude the need for geologic repositories to permanently dispose of used fuel and high-level radioactive waste.

The commission also suggested the establishment of an independent federal authority with a corporate-style board of directors to manage the national program. Fifty-four percent of those polled agreed that such an entity would be more effective than a federal government agency. Thirty-nine percent favored a federal government agency to manage the program.

“The public may express changing views about who should manage the storage facilities, but support for consolidating used nuclear fuel has been constant for a long time,” Bisconti Research President Ann Bisconti said. Bisconti’s company conducted the survey for the Nuclear Energy Institute with Quest Global Research,

The survey was conducted from Feb. 18 through March 1, prior to the introduction of [Senate legislation to reform used fuel management](#) (for more detail, see [Nuclear Energy Overview, April 1](#)). The legislation’s provisions—for an independent waste management administration and for consent-based development of interim storage facilities and one or more repositories—all show broad public support in the survey.

The poll interviewed a nationally representative sample of 1,000 U.S. adults by landline and cell phone. The results have a margin of error of plus or minus three percentage points.

For the survey’s wider findings on the public’s rising support for nuclear energy, see [Nuclear Energy Overview, March 19](#).