

December 14, 2009

Province releases results of nuclear consultation

Edmonton... Results of the Alberta nuclear consultation demonstrating a broad range of views on nuclear power and its potential role in the province were released today by the Alberta government.

“Albertans have told us that we shouldn’t be closed to new generation technologies that could provide clean, low-emission power,” said Energy Minister Mel Knight. “At the same time Albertans have identified concerns with nuclear power that potential future applicants will need to fully address.”

Among the key findings of the Alberta nuclear consultation was that most Albertans polled (45%) preferred that nuclear power plants be considered on a case-by-case basis. About one-fifth (19%) said the province should encourage proposals, while about one-quarter (27%) said the province should oppose proposals. Health, environment, and safety factors were identified as the most important issues Albertans expect government to consider.

“Alberta will maintain its existing policy where power generation options are proposed by the private sector in the province and considered on a case-by-case basis,” Knight added. “We will work with the federal government regarding any nuclear power application to ensure provincial rules and environmental standards are respected. Further, we will not invest public dollars in any nuclear power proposals.”

In Canada, the federal government has the authority and responsibility for approving and regulating all nuclear facilities and nuclear-related activities. Provincial approvals are also required for any energy project, based on the province’s constitutional responsibility for land and resources. Under Alberta’s electricity generation policy the Alberta government does not select the fuel or location of plants, and the decision to apply to build any generation facility is made by private sector companies.

The consultation included an online and mail-in questionnaire, randomly enrolled discussion groups, stakeholder discussion groups, and a telephone survey. Participants included 4,832 individual Albertans and a broad range of stakeholder groups. Results from the consultation were compiled by an independent research company, Innovative Research Group Inc., engaged by the Alberta government to manage the process. A copy of the consultation report is available at www.energy.alberta.ca.

The Alberta government has a clear plan for a strong economic recovery. An important part of *The Way Forward* is maintaining support for programs and services Albertans need most, such as health care, education and safe and vibrant communities. For more information on the plan visit Alberta.ca.

Backgrounder: Alberta nuclear consultation

Media inquiries may be directed to:

Jerry Bellikka
Director of Communications
Alberta Energy
780-422-3667

To call toll free within Alberta dial 310-0000.

December 14, 2009

Alberta Nuclear Consultation

Following the release of the Nuclear Power Expert Panel's report in March 2009, the Government of Alberta engaged Innovative Research Group Inc. to conduct the Alberta nuclear consultation. The consultation process identified the range of views that Albertans hold on nuclear power. A large telephone survey, statistically representative of the Alberta population, illustrated key findings.

Key findings included the following:

1. A plurality (45%) of Albertans preferred that nuclear power plants be considered on a case-by-case basis. About one-fifth (19%) said the province should encourage proposals, while about one-quarter (27%) said the province should oppose proposals. One in twelve (8%) said they didn't know.
2. Albertans' preference for a case-by-case review is based on conflicting underlying attitudes:
 - While most Albertans believe the province needs to grow, a minority believe growth is neither desirable nor inevitable. Albertans who share this view have a strong likelihood of opposing the consideration of nuclear power as an energy option for Albertans.
 - Albertans have conflicting views on nuclear specific attitudes. The typical Albertan is both confident that science and the industry have things under control yet fearful of the potential negative impacts of nuclear. Only Albertans who hold consistently positive views of science and the nuclear industry, and are less concerned by the potential for negative consequences, actually want to see the government encourage nuclear proposals.
 - Albertans who want to see nuclear proposals judged on a case-by-case basis share a belief that growth will require more electricity and have the conflicted views on nuclear described above. This middle ground is divided by several considerations. Some are strongly driven by a desire to keep electricity prices low no matter what. Others are passionate about growth and electricity's role in driving growth but hesitate over nuclear consequences.
3. In reviewing nuclear power plant proposals, Albertans want the government to focus primarily on the health, environment and safety aspects of the nuclear plants, including the handling and storage of nuclear waste. These priorities were inter-related. While a strong majority (79%) of Albertans believe it is critical to keep the price of electricity as low as possible, economic concerns such as cost and reliability of electricity supply and the economic benefits created by new power plants were generally raised only after health, environment and safety factors.

Overview of the Public Consultation Process:

The consultation process was conducted between April 21 and July 20, 2009. The initial phase included three streams of qualitative research to collect the full range of views on nuclear

power held by Albertans:

- Twenty randomly enrolled general population discussion groups in ten communities across the province (193 individuals);
- An online and mail back workbook and survey open to any Alberta resident who chose to participate with 3,615 completed responses;
- Meetings with individuals who are involved in stakeholder groups, representing diverse perspectives, across various sectors such as First Nations and Métis, community, business, and environmental groups.

The input collected from the qualitative phase was used to design a random telephone survey that allowed benchmarks to be established. The survey of 1,024 Albertans was conducted from July 8th to 20th, 2009 with a margin-of-error of 3.06%, 19 times out of 20.

More information on the consultation is available at www.energy.alberta.ca.

-30-

Media inquiries may be directed to:

Jerry Bellikka
Director of Communications
Alberta Energy
780-422-3667

To call toll free within Alberta dial 310-0000.

[Alberta Government](#) | [Newsroom](#) | [Ministries Listing](#) | [Energy Home Page](#) | [News Releases](#) | [Top of Page](#) |

[Send us your comments or questions](#)

Copyright(©) 2009 Government of Alberta

