

# perspective on public opinion

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## U.S. Public Support for Nuclear Energy Soars to Record High

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There has been an unprecedented leap in public support for nuclear energy and for building new nuclear power plants, a new survey reveals. A record high 74 percent of Americans surveyed in September favor nuclear energy, compared with 63 percent in an April survey. Those strongly in favor of nuclear energy outnumber those strongly opposed by nearly four to one (38 percent to 10 percent).

The Nuclear Energy Institute (NEI) has sponsored national public opinion surveys on nuclear energy issues for 25 years. Bisconti Research, Inc. conducted the latest survey Sept. 18-21 with GfK. In each case, a nationally representative sample of at least 1,000 U.S. adults was interviewed by telephone, with a margin of error of plus or minus 3 percentage points.

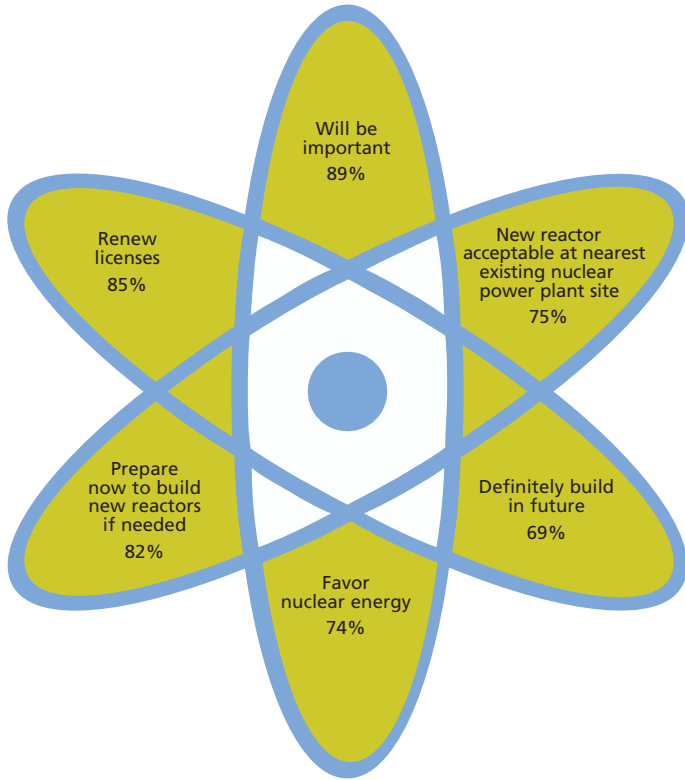
### Percent Who Favor, Oppose Nuclear Energy

"OVERALL, 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?"



<sup>1</sup> The complete questionnaire and results can be found at [http://www.nei.org](#)

## Opinions About Nuclear Power Plants



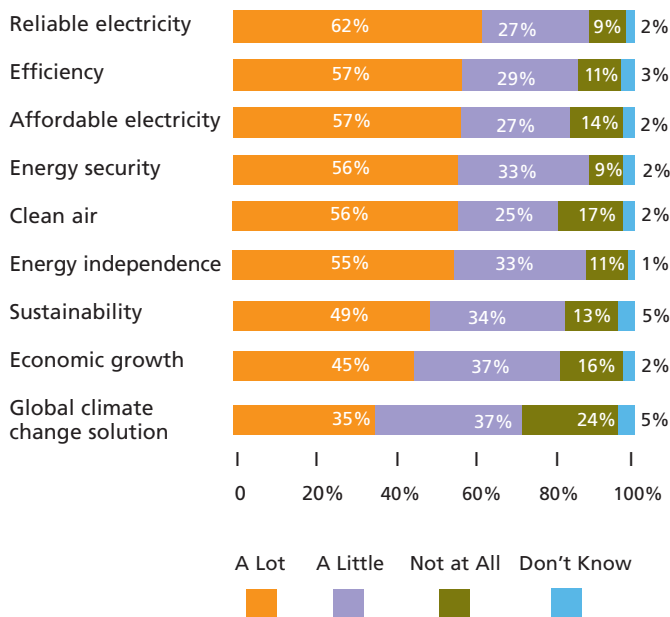
## More Favorable Opinions about Future Importance of Nuclear Energy, License Renewal and New Nuclear Plants

The latest national poll found that 89 percent of U.S. adults believe nuclear energy will be important for the future, and 85 percent agree with renewing the licenses of nuclear power plants that continue to meet federal safety standards. Since April, those saying nuclear energy will be very important increased 17 percentage points—from 35 percent to 52 percent. Strong agreement with license renewal increased 10 percentage points—from 44 percent to 54 percent.

The survey also finds significant increases in support for new nuclear power plants: 69 percent agree that the U.S. should definitely build more nuclear power plants in the future—up from 59 percent in April. Three-fourths (75 percent) said they would find it acceptable to add a new reactor at the nearest existing nuclear power plant site—up from 66 percent in April.

## Association of Nuclear Energy

“DO YOU ASSOCIATE NUCLEAR ENERGY A LOT, A LITTLE OR NOT AT ALL WITH ...”



## Energy Concerns Draw Public to Consider Nuclear Energy's Attributes

The unprecedented levels of support for nuclear energy found in this survey can be attributed to growing concerns about energy supply and the increased focus on energy alternatives. Those who favor nuclear energy cited these reasons most often: Americans need the energy (18 percent), nuclear energy is affordable (16 percent), nuclear energy is clean (16 percent), nuclear energy is needed for energy independence (13 percent), and nuclear energy is safe (11 percent).

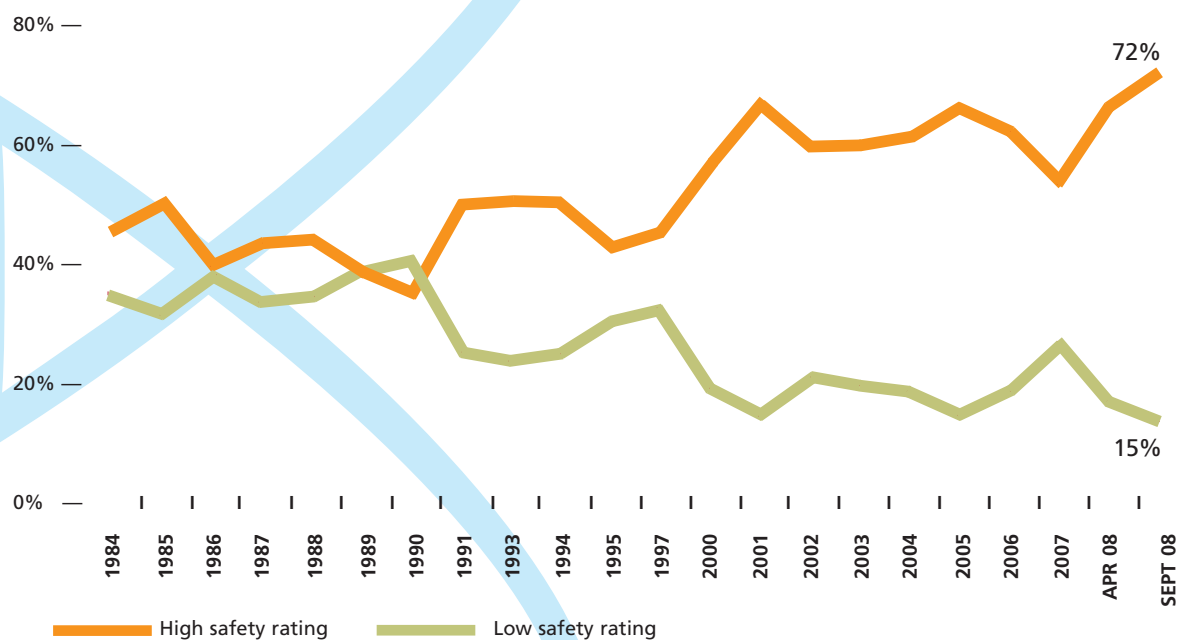
A majority of those surveyed associate nuclear energy with energy independence/security, reliability, efficiency, clean air and affordability. Those associating nuclear energy “a lot” with energy security has risen from 44 percent in April to 56 percent in September. At this time of widespread economic concerns, those associating nuclear energy “a lot” with affordable electricity has risen from 47 percent in April to 57 percent in September.

## Public Gives Nuclear Power Plant Safety Higher Marks

The public is increasingly comfortable with nuclear energy. Over the past 25 years, the percentage giving high ratings to the safety of nuclear power plants (5-7 on a 1-to-7 scale) has doubled—from 35 percent to 72 percent. Also, 78 percent in the latest survey agree that today's nuclear power plants are "safe and secure," up from 71 percent this April.

However, one-fourth of the public still has concerns about nuclear energy. Comments of those opposed to nuclear energy indicate that 25 percent of them hold a negative view because of concerns about the potential for danger and accidents. Another 19 percent of those opposed cited nuclear waste management issues, 18 percent think that other options can meet U.S. electricity needs, and 14 percent are concerned that nuclear power plants harm the environment.

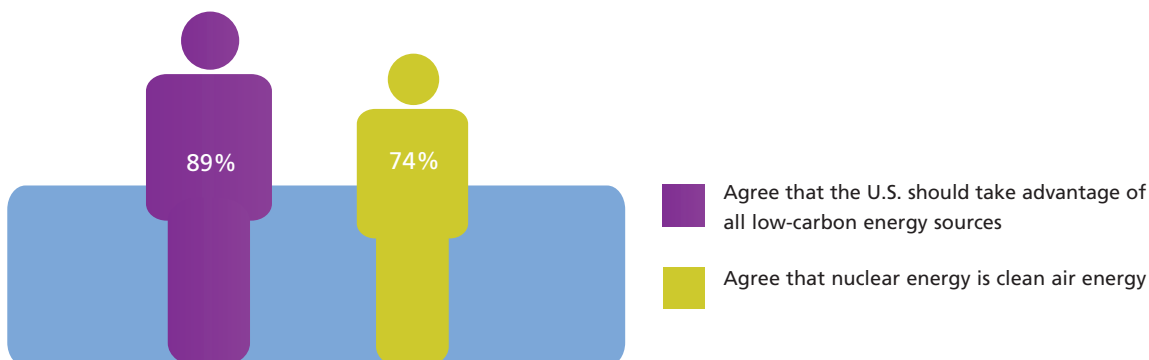
### Perceived Safety of Nuclear Power Plants



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## Carbon-Free Electricity Important to Public

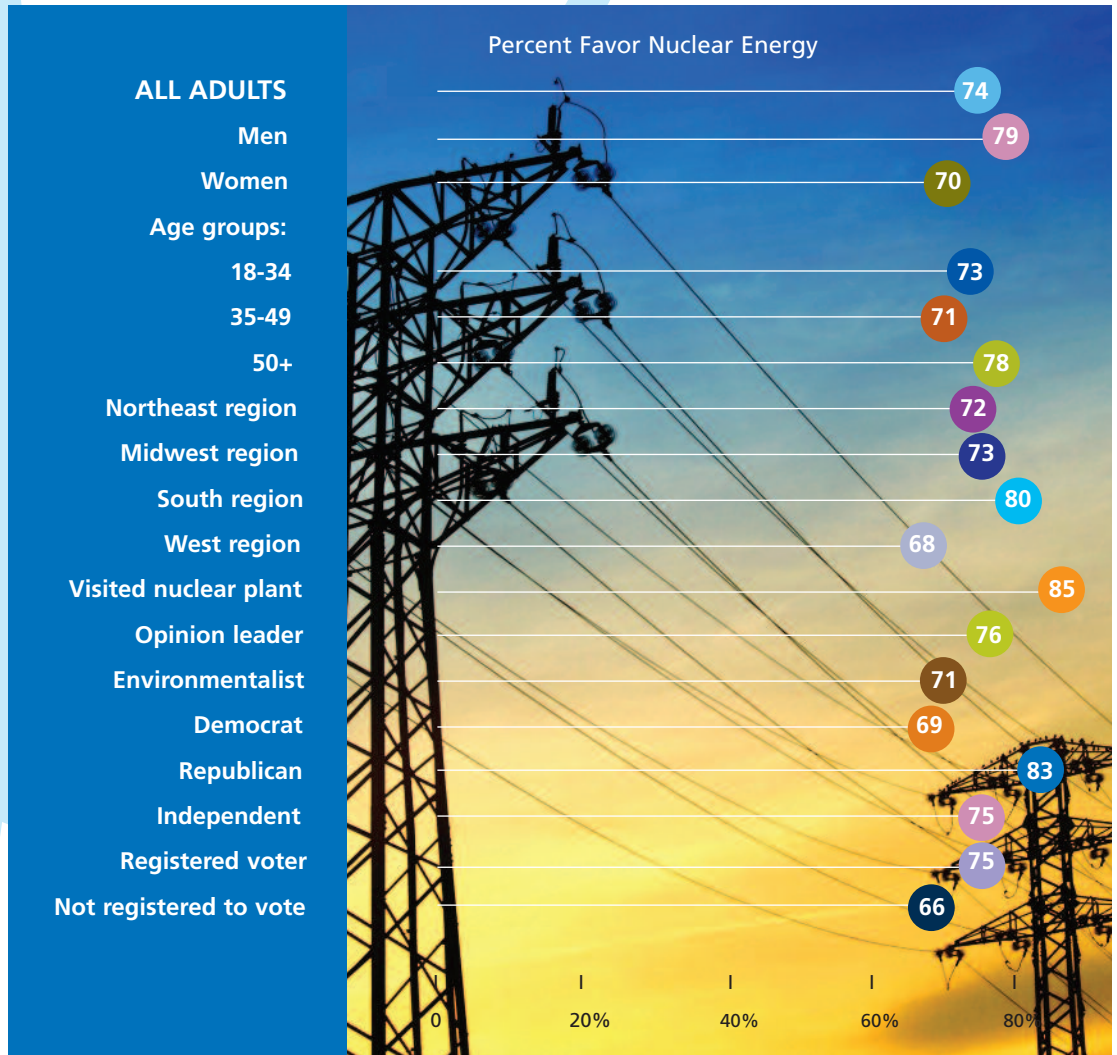
Even as economic and energy concerns dominate, the public shows strong interest in energy sources that help the environment, the survey finds. With near unanimity, 89 percent agree that the United States should take advantage of all low-carbon energy sources, including nuclear, hydropower and renewable energy, to produce the electricity needed while reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Also, 74 percent agree that nuclear energy is clean air energy.



## Momentum for Developing Reliable, Affordable, Domestic, Carbon-Free Energy Technology

The September survey continues to find that having a mix of electricity sources appeals to the public, especially a mix that can help reduce our reliance on fossil fuels and thus improve our situation regarding both energy independence and global climate change. Affordability and reliability also are very important to consumers in today's harsh economic climate. There is strong momentum for energy sources that are perceived to meet these criteria, such as nuclear energy.

### Who Favors Nuclear Energy?



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