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in the Future, Not a Lesser Role (25%)***



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New York, NY – Six in ten (56%) Americans support (29% strongly/28% somewhat) nuclear power as a way of producing energy, according to a new Ipsos Public Affairs poll conducted for the U.S. Women in Nuclear Conference held in Washington D.C. Conversely, four in ten (39%) oppose (23% strongly/15% somewhat) nuclear power.

The levels of support for nuclear energy are not consistent among all Americans, with a gender gap significantly dividing the opinions of men and women. While two in three men (65%) support nuclear energy for the production of power, the level of support drops to 48% among women, representing a 17-point gap.

While the overall support for nuclear energy is behind that of solar power (90%) and other fully renewable resources, support for nuclear energy (56%) is ahead of coal power (54%). Comparatively, support for nuclear energy is higher in the United States (56%) than it is in Canada (48%), for example.

Further, four in ten (42%) believe that nuclear power should play “more” of a role in the United States in the next few decades than it does today, compared to just 25% who believe its role should be “less.” Three in ten (29%) believe it should play the “same” role going forward as it does today.

Only one half (52%) of Americans agree (21% strongly/31% somewhat) that their state has enough energy to meet future needs. Moreover, six in ten (60%) believe (28% strongly/32% somewhat) that “conservation efforts by consumers will not offset the growing demand for energy,” meaning that additional sources of power will need to be brought on line to meet the growing demand.

To this effect, five in ten support (29% strongly/22% somewhat) building new nuclear power plants to help meet America’s future electricity demand, with 61% believing that we “need to invest in nuclear energy today in order to ensure we have an adequate supply of electricity in the future.” A similar proportion also believes (31% strongly/26% somewhat) that “renewable sources of energy, such as hydroelectric, wind and solar sources of energy, cannot on their own meet the rising demand for energy.”

With respect to safety and environmental considerations, the two areas that witness the greatest gender divide and likely at least partially explain the gap in overall support, two in three (63%) agree (27% strongly/36% somewhat) that “nuclear power plants operating in America are safe” (74% of men; 53% of women), while a majority (52%) is confident that “nuclear energy is environmentally clean” (60% of men; 44% of women). Similarly, while 62% of Americans overall believe that nuclear energy is an advanced and safe form of electricity generation, 69% of men feel this way compared to 55% of women.



For the survey, a nationally representative sample of 1,058 Americans was interviewed by telephone via Ipsos' U.S. Telephone Express omnibus from July 9 to 14, 2009. With a sample of this size, the results are considered accurate within ± 3.1 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what they would have been had the entire population of adults in the U.S. been polled. The margin of error will be larger within regions and for other sub-groupings of the survey population. These data were weighted to ensure the sample's regional and age/gender composition reflects that of the actual U.S. population according to data from the U.S. Census Bureau.

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