

Research Title: Investigating Rural Nevadan Perspectives on Climate Change Solutions

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This research addresses the problem of science information, communication, skepticism, and the climate change crisis. Despite the scientific agreement that anthropogenic climate change is occurring and a threat (*IPCC, 2007*), there is a growing number of climate skeptics in America that do not support policies aimed at stabilizing the climate (Leiserowitz, Maibach, & Roser-Renouf, 2009). My research offers a case study approach to understanding some of the pitfalls and potentials of the climate communication process. I focus my analysis on the rural ranching area of Churchill County Nevada, whose residents rely on scarce hydrological resources that are particularly vulnerable to climate change (Safi, 2011). Using ethnographic field methods, such as interviews and, possibly, participant observation, I will investigate their attitudes, perceptions, and knowledge about climate change solutions and energy issues, the sources of their climate change information, and how they use climate change information to construct their beliefs and direct their actions toward climate change problems.

Previous studies have shown the region of the case study I have chosen to be almost uniformly conservative and skeptical about climate change, although the majority of them do support cleaner renewable energy, a primary technology to address climate change problems (Safi, 2011). In fact, Nevadans generally show far more support for renewables than conservative skeptics nationwide (Safi, 2011; Leiserowitz, Maibach, & Roser-Renouf, 2009). To gain stronger analytic purchase on climate change attitudes and perceptions, my research will delve deeper into Nevadans' support for renewable energy as a climate change mitigation strategy.