

POLICY – POSTER #8

## **Investigating Perspectives of Rural Nevadans on Climate Change Solutions**

**Tricia Dutcher, [mynsterp@unlv.nevada.edu](mailto:mynsterp@unlv.nevada.edu)  
University of Nevada, Las Vegas**

Rural perspectives are important for the issue of climate change as they have high concentrations of conservative voters that do not accept the problem definition of anthropogenic climate change. Rural counties also have the potential to develop the natural resources found within them for large, utility scale renewable energy developments. This research was meant to determine if a policy or solution that would help stabilize the climate find favor amongst Americans who do not believe the climate needs to be addressed.

Interviews showed that Churchill County is a conservative county that does favor nuclear and fossil fuel development over renewable energy development, and the rationale for which energy technology to support is based on local financial benefits. Nuclear is seen as a clean technology and is associated with the idea that the Yucca Mountain Nuclear Waste Repository should be opened and exploited as a financial resource for the citizens of Nevada. Local renewable energy developments are a source of pride, but policy changes of the past several years have decreased local county revenues from these projects and local support for renewable energy in Nevada has decreased with them.

Literature shows that climate skeptics will only be more convinced of their position if given more information about climate change (Kahan et al., 2011). Churchill County citizens do not believe that a problem exists or that a changing climate is a threat to them. Climate literacy campaigns are viewed as being politically motivated by outsiders who they do not recognize as experts. Interview results suggest that proposed climate solutions should be addressed as economic solutions through trade magazines to garner support for policies that have multiple benefits in addition to climate stabilization rather than making climate change an agenda item.