

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY MUNICIPALITIES ENERGY SURVEY

REPORT OF RESULTS

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FOR THE

NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

January 2016



AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS

Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources

Introduction

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln Department of Agricultural Economics and the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), with the assistance of the League of Nebraska Municipalities, conducted an online survey of city officials in the state about their opinions about energy sources and the Clean Power Plan. This report details 85 responses to the survey.

Survey Methodology

City/village clerk members of the League of Nebraska Municipalities were surveyed about their opinions about energy sources and the Clean Power Plan through an online survey conducted in November and December 2015 by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Department of Agricultural Economics. The link to the online survey was sent to 381 members via email from staff at the League of Nebraska Municipalities.

A 22% response rate was achieved by sending two emails approximately two weeks apart that contained the URL of the online survey.

The percentages presented in this report may not always add to 100 percent due to rounding.

Respondent Profile

Over one-half (56%) of the city officials are in communities with populations less than 1,000. Twenty-nine percent are in communities with populations ranging from 1,000 to 4,999. Sixteen percent are in communities with populations of 5,000 or more.

Six in ten respondents are city clerks (60%). Four percent are council/board members and three percent are mayors. Approximately one-third (34%) of the respondents marked other. Those respondents were mostly city administrator/managers or utility superintendents/directors.

Most of the respondents (60%) reported their community's source of electricity as purchased wholesale in-state. Seventeen percent have community owned utilities and three percent purchase their electricity wholesale out-of-state. Just over two in ten respondents (22%) marked other.

Knowledge of Clean Power Plan and Perceptions of Impacts

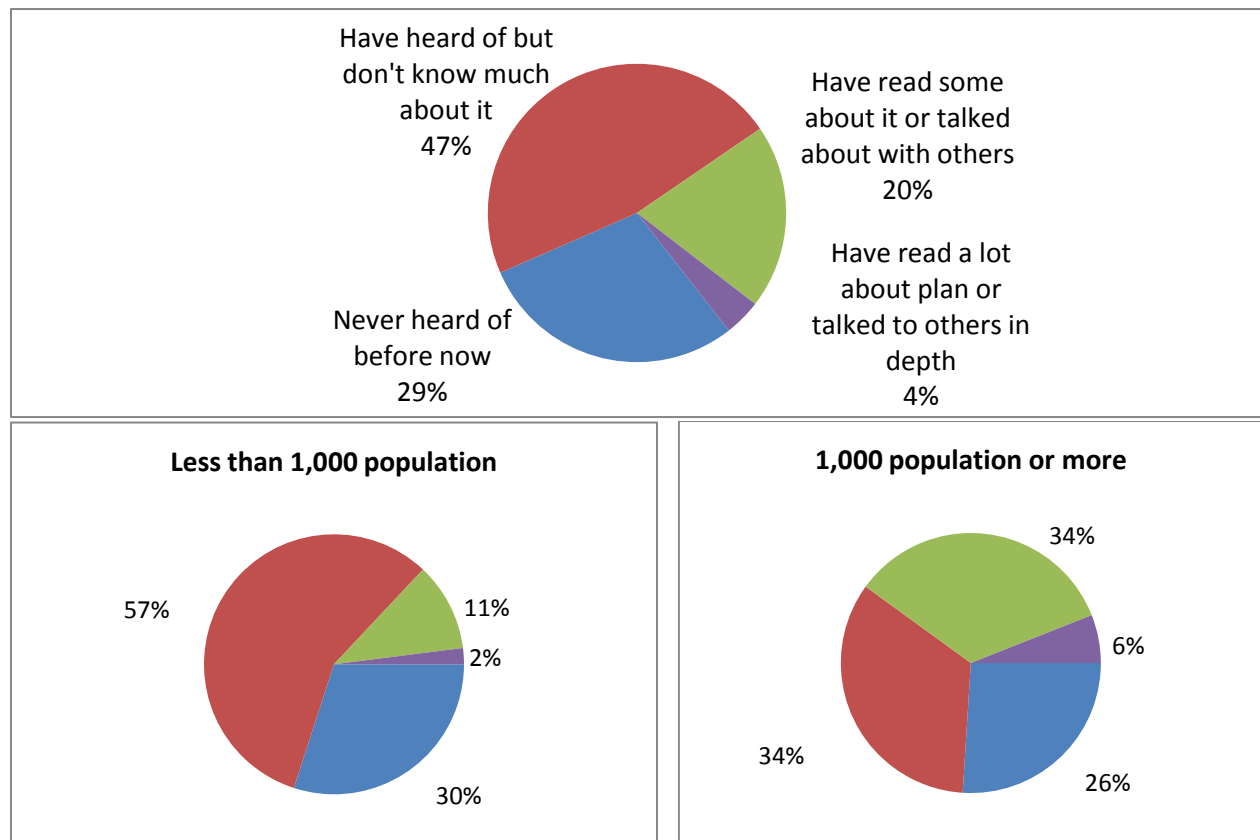
The following paragraph served as an introduction to the survey:

In August, 2015, the federal government announced the Clean Power Plan which establishes guidelines for states to use in developing plans to reduce carbon dioxide emissions from existing power plants that use coal or natural gas to produce electricity. The Clean Power Plan requires states to begin complying with initial emission reductions in 2022-2024, with a goal of cutting carbon dioxide emissions nationwide by about 30% in 2030 and beyond.

How familiar are you with these new regulations?

Almost three in ten respondents (29%) say they have never heard of the Clean Power Plan before receiving the survey. Almost one-half (47%) say they have heard of the Clean Power Plan but don't know much about it. Twenty percent have read some about the Clean Power Plan or talked about it with others. Only four percent have read a lot about the Plan or talked about it with others in depth.

Knowledge of Clean Power Plan by Community Size

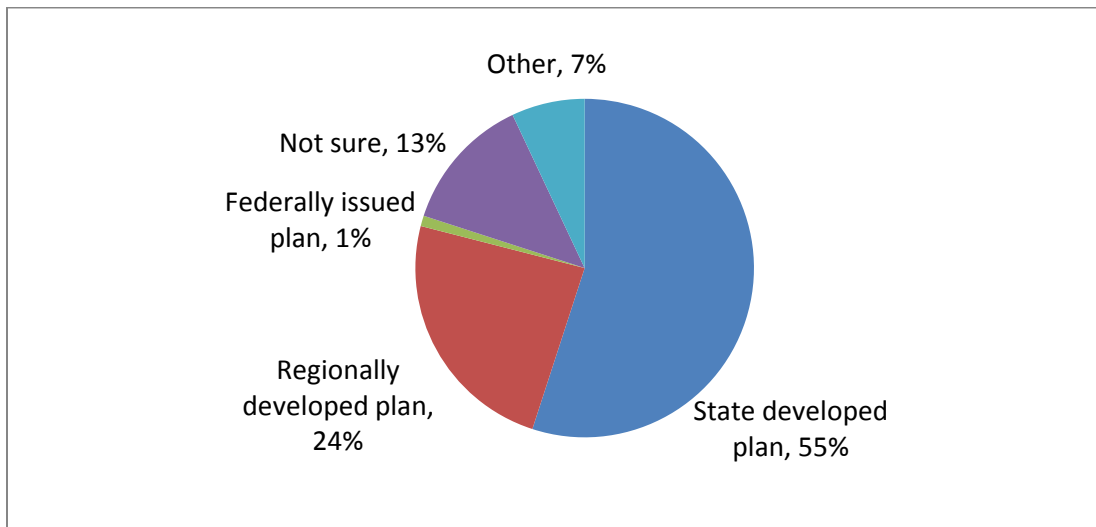


Overall, the city officials in larger communities are more familiar with the Clean Power Plan than are officials in smaller communities. Four in ten (40%) respondents from communities with populations of 1,000 or more have read some or a lot about the Clean Power Plan, compared to only 13 percent of the officials from communities with populations under 1,000.

States will need to develop a plan, either individually or regionally (with other states), that complies with the Clean Power Plan and limits carbon dioxide emissions. If a state fails to submit an approvable plan, the federal government can issue a plan for the state. Which of these options do you think would be most preferable for Nebraska?

More than one-half (55%) of the respondents chose a state developed plan. Just under one-quarter (24%) think a regionally developed plan (with other states) would be best and one percent chose a federally issued plan. Thirteen percent are not sure and seven percent chose the other response.

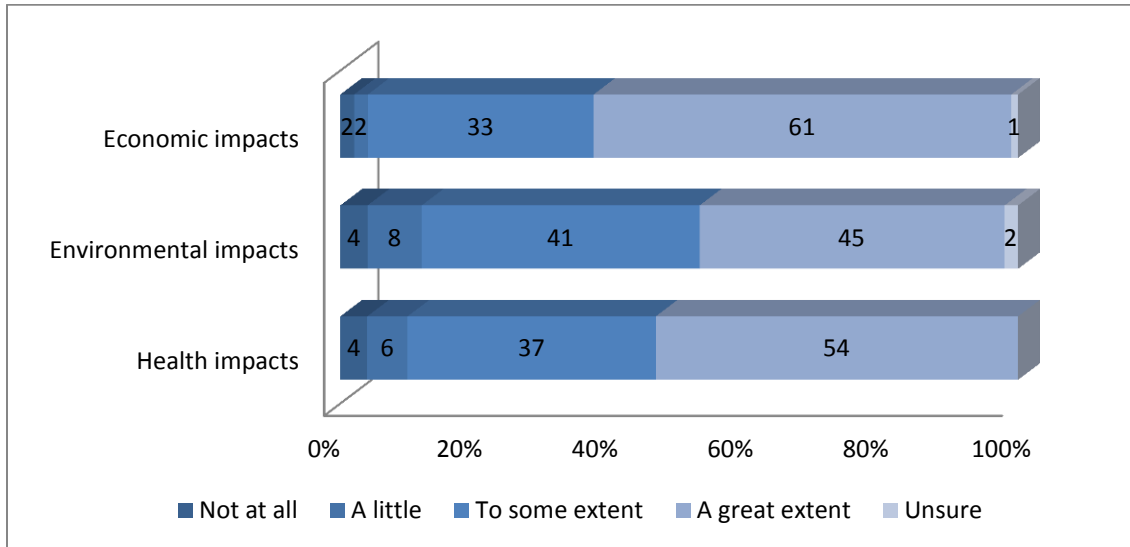
Type of Plan Preferable for Nebraska



As Nebraska begins to evaluate how to comply with the Clean Power Plan, how much should the following items be considered?

Most of the respondents believe the economic impacts of reducing carbon dioxide emissions (61%) and the health impacts of reducing carbon dioxide emissions (54%) should be considered to a great extent. Forty-five percent of respondents think the environmental impacts of reducing carbon dioxide emissions should be considered to a great extent.

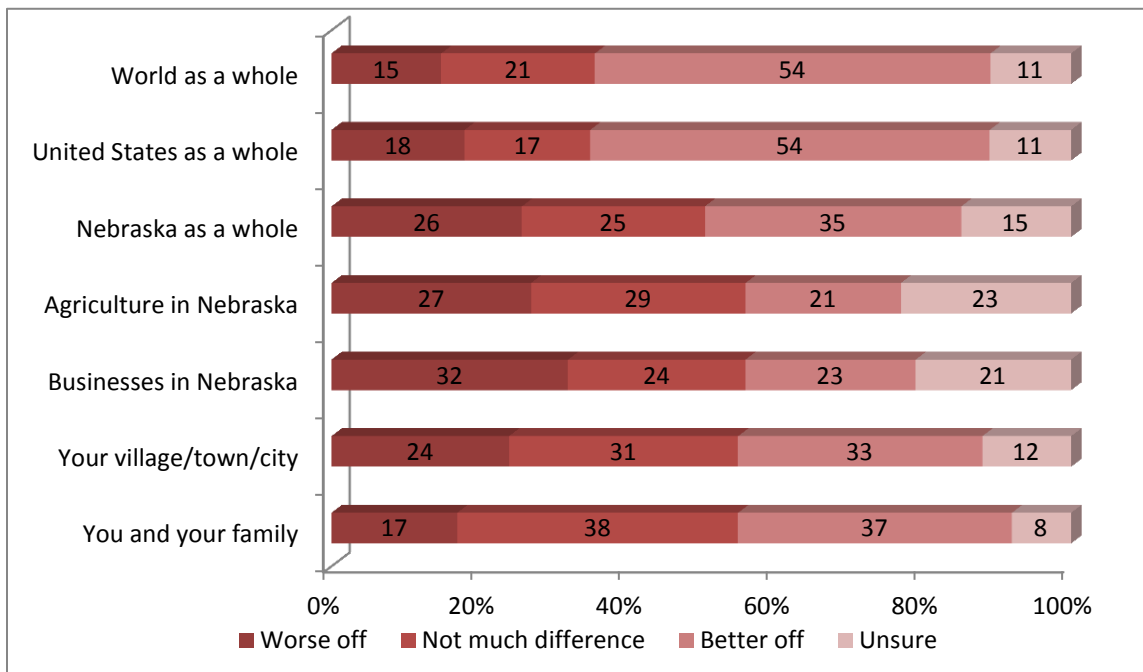
Extent Items Should be Considered in Complying with Clean Power Plan



In the long term, do you think the following groups will be better or worse off under the Clean Power Plan?

Most of the respondents believe the United States as a whole and the world as a whole would be better off in the long term under the Clean Power Plan. Almost one-third of respondents (32%) believe businesses in Nebraska would be worse off in the long term under the Plan.

Perceived Impacts of Clean Power Plan



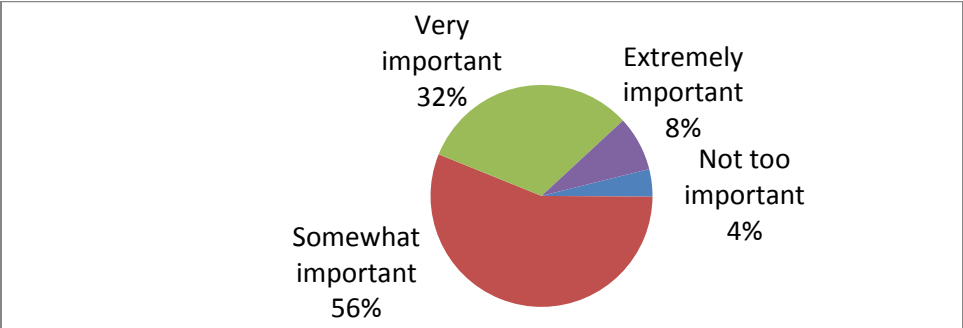
Opinions about Energy Sources

The city officials were also asked a series of questions that examine their opinions about energy sources.

How important is conserving energy in your community?

Just over one-half (56%) of the respondents said conserving energy is somewhat important in their community, 32 percent said it is very important and 8 percent answered extremely important. None of the respondents said conserving energy was not at all important.

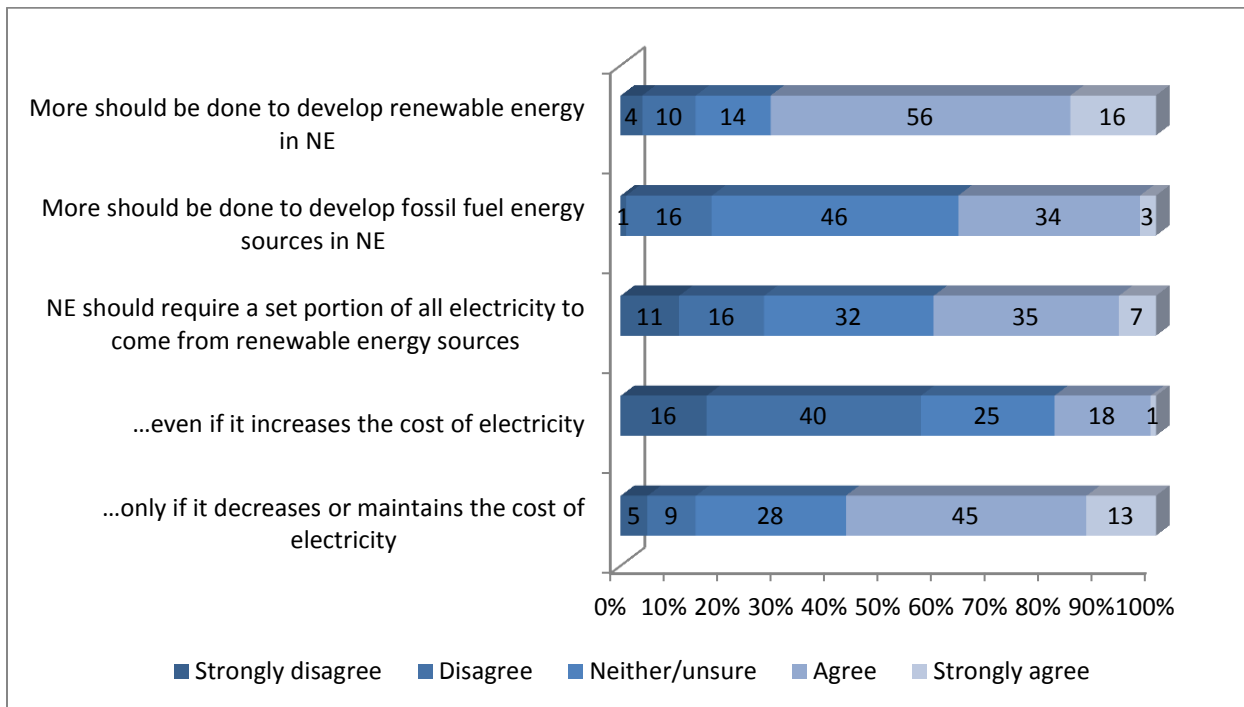
Importance of Conserving Energy in Community



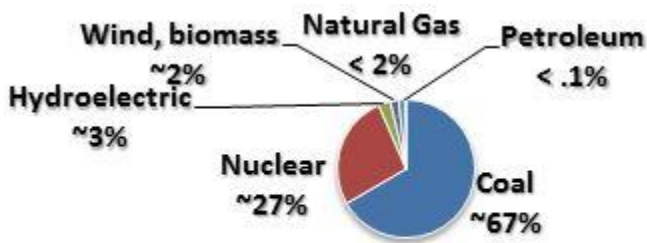
People have different opinions on the types of energy sources that should be used in Nebraska. Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with each of the following statements.

Most of the respondents agree or strongly agree that more should be done to develop renewable energy (such as wind and solar) in Nebraska. Fifty-six percent agree with that statement and 16 percent strongly agree. However, most of the respondents agree that Nebraska should require a set portion of all electricity to come from renewable energy sources only if it decreases or maintains the cost of electricity. Most of the respondents *disagreed* that a set portion of all electricity should be required to come from renewable energy sources even if it increases the cost of electricity.

Opinions about Energy Sources in Nebraska



Respondents were next shown the following graphic that depicts the proportion of Nebraska’s electricity that came from various sources during 2001-2014.

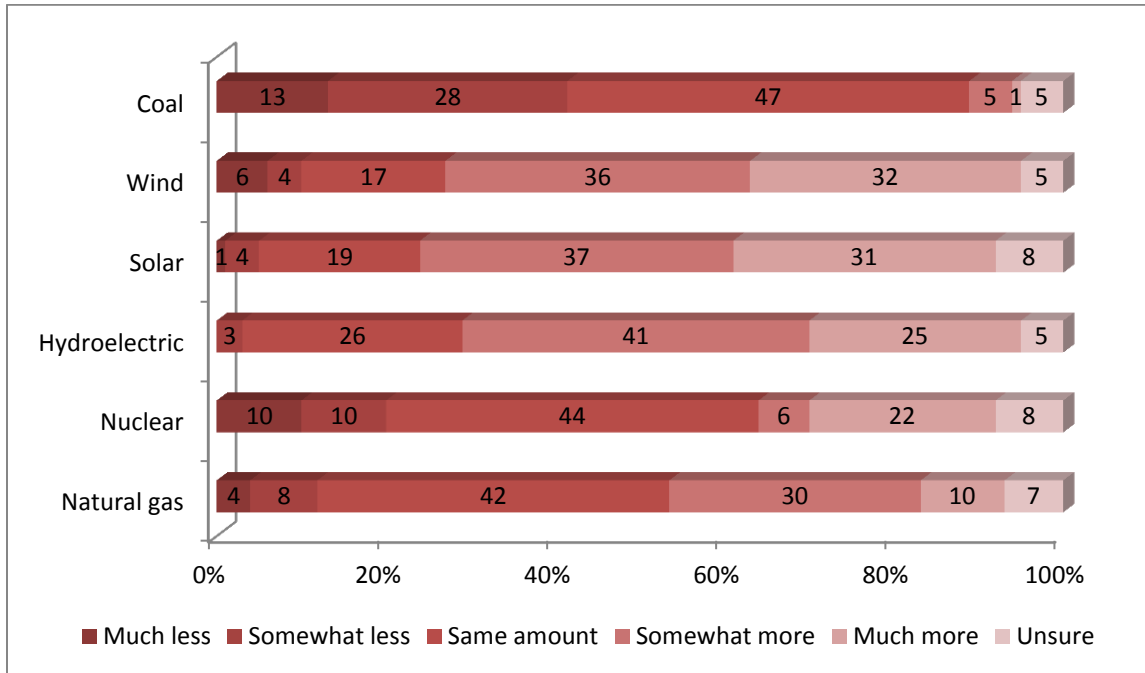


Source: U.S. Energy Information Administration

As shown above, electricity can come from many different sources. Over the next several years, do you think Nebraska should invest less, more or about the same in each of the following sources of electrical energy?

Most of the respondents believe Nebraska should invest either somewhat more or much more in the following sources of electricity over the next several years: wind, solar, and hydroelectric. Just over four in ten respondents (41%) believe Nebraska should invest much less or somewhat less in coal over the next several years. And, over four in ten respondents believe the state should invest the same amount in nuclear (44%) and natural gas (42%).

Amount of Investment Nebraska Should Put in Various Sources of Electricity over Next Several Years

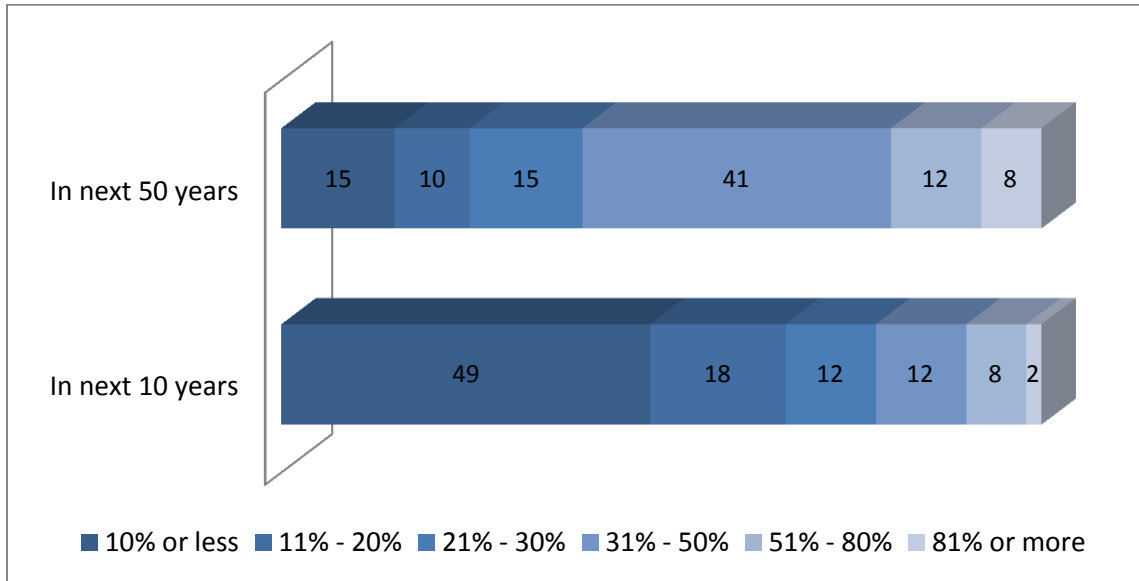


What percentage of Nebraska’s electricity should come from renewable energy sources (e.g., wind, solar) in each of the following time periods?

The average answer given for the next 10 years was 23%. The answers given ranged from 0 to 100. Almost one-half (49%) of the respondents gave responses of 10% or less. Almost two-thirds (67%) gave responses of 20% or less.

When asked the same question for the next 50 years, the average response was 42%. Again, the answers given ranged from 0 to 100. One-quarter of the respondents (25%) gave responses of 20% or less. Eighty percent gave responses of 50% or less.

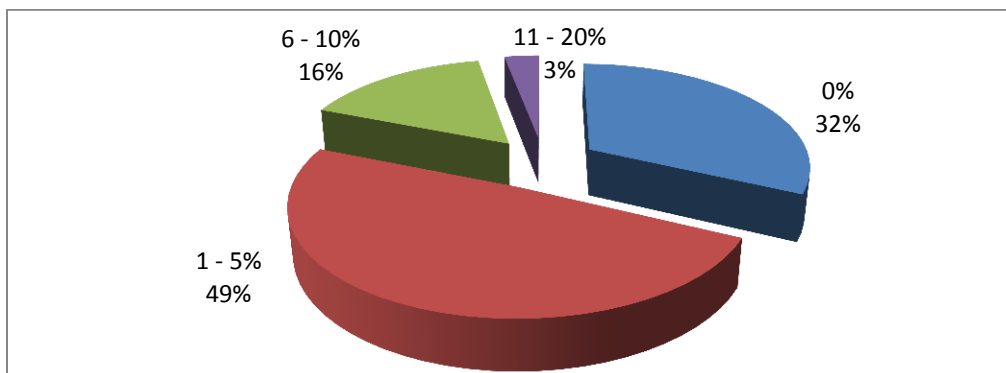
Percentage of Nebraska's Electricity that Should Come from Renewable Energy Sources



How much more would your community be willing to spend for each month to have electricity for your municipal buildings come from renewable sources?

Almost one-third (32%) answered 0% (they are unwilling to spend any more per month to have electricity come from renewable sources). Almost one-half (49%) are willing to spend between 1 and 5% more per month to have electricity for their municipal buildings come from renewable sources.

Amount More per Month Community is Willing to Spend to Have Electricity for Municipal Buildings Come from Renewable Sources



Open-Ended Responses

States will need to develop a plan, either individually or regionally (with other states), that complies with the Clean Power Plan and limits carbon dioxide emissions. If a state fails to submit an approvable plan, the federal government can issue a plan for the state. Which of these options do you think would be most preferable for Nebraska?

Federally template but modified to Nebraska's specific situation

Either State or regionally developed plan.

plans that are specific to the owner

what a joke

Federal recommendations of alternatives, with the state choosing which to use to add up to the necessary limits.

State or Regionally which ever speaks louder to the Feds

If you are willing, please explain the reason(s) for your answer to Q2:

I believe that states should author their own plans since they would be the most familiar with any limitations due to commerce, resources and agriculture.

As with anything else with limits and rules, I feel it is best to coordinate with surrounding states.

A regional plan will better suite our needs rather than a national plan.

Nebraska is not an island, it borders many other states and should work cooperatively to solve the problem.

The pan-handle of Nebraska may share some of the same problems/concerns as Wyoming, Colorado and the Dakotas.

I believe working together will be benefical in cost and ideals.

I don't believe the Federal Government would understand the specific needs of Nebraska

Federal plans seem to usually be one-size-fits-all plans but that size really fits way more densely populated areas. But if the feds have already done a lot of basic research and development, let's not spend a lot of resources reinventing the wheel.

We already have had communications with our DEQ on the State level, they know how to contact us and we know how to contact them.

Need to cooperate with other states for region wide plan

I feel it is best for Nebraska to develop its own plan as we know what is good for Nebraska.

We need to develop a plan that is specifically for the State of Nebraska-- what works for other regional states might not be the best plan for our state. Keep it specific to what we have here.

Nebraska may have different challenges and opportunities to stay in compliance with the plan. The state must do what is best for the citizens of Nebraska which may be different than other states.

can keep it "in state

reduce the reach of the federal government whenever possible

Nebraskans are hands on. We can do the work and develop a plan that works best for Nebraskans and also meets the overall goals. Too many times the federal government comes in with what they view as the "best plan". Their "best plan" may be a good starting point for states - but we all need to take the responsibility to bring it home and develop a plan that will truly work best for each individual state.

Our state needs its own plan to provide for its best interests. What works for another state may not work for ours.

Would prefer state control versus federal control. Also NE can develop a plan that addresses our state's circumstances. We definitely do NOT need further federal "one size fits all" plans.

The states know best how to serve the state. I would prefer the mandate, which as I understand it didn't even go through Congress, be eliminated. The regulation will be far too expensive with very little if any benefit to the environment and to the people of the United States.

The State of Nebraska is not necessarily the same as the Fed or other States, so a State only should be adopted to adhere to our local laws and preferences.

Ability to trade credits within the region.

This is a cross-jurisdictional problem. We will need to partner with our surrounding states to develop solutions.

State regulators probably have a better idea of what will work for the State. If you do a regional plan, you will have many variations that may not work well together. I don't see very good results coming from different regional plans.

It seems the state should know better and to be able to develop a good plan for us. It sometimes is not a good thing to be thrown into a generalized plan.

Better to have a comprehensive state plan involving all utility providers than a patched together mess.

With Nebraska being the only public power state, I think it is very important that the "public" create a plan for our state. This is unlike a state such as Iowa, where power is investor owned (IO). Nebraska needs to develop a plan that sets it apart from IO utility states.

Federal interference is expensive & a waste of time.

The Fed is busy enough mandating items to states

Our ISO is the Southern Power Pool. While the EPA may issue environmental guidance, the FERC is the federal agency chartered with ensuring power quality and transmission through its various ISOs. (too bad the EPA didn't do the research and know that to start with) An ISO-wide approach is the best option.

As the only state in America totally served by a consumer-owned public power system it is important that we develop a plan tailored for public power with a continued focus on the best interests of the entire state by providing low-cost, dependable power.

Because of our relatively low population as a state, and due to our similarity with other Midwestern states. Regional planning makes sense for Nebraska.

Won't have govern other states, easier to regulate

I believe teamwork is always best and what the states next door do has an effect on our state; so to me it makes the most sense.

We need to maintain control of our own resources and not be forced into something that doesn't fit Nebraska's needs.

Have an input on areas of the plan that will assist NE and the Midwest.

Easier in meeting compliance

all plants are different and sizes are different.

Honestly, I'm not familiar with the Clean Power Plan.

Nebraska has always had a reputation for getting things done and I think we can do better ourselves than trying to incorporate other states into a one size fits all.

Believe the cost of this study could be shared also that they could combine all resources in developing the plan

I think Nebraska would save money by having the Federal government do the studies necessary to outline alternatives. It's a federal Plan, let them spend the money devising alternatives for each state's needs.

I don't know much about this plan yet so hesitate to say which I think would be best.

Citizens in there own state know more about what will work for us and what will not. Federal government is not always aware of the rural smaller states.

The Federal Government is forcing alot of rules that do not apply to the rural areas.

Although working with different states may help with economics (\$) however it may not meet the specific needs of Nebraska.

As Nebraska begins to evaluate how to comply with the Clean Power Plan, how much should the following items be considered?

Economic impacts of substituting renewable energy for fossil fuel energy

As a primarily ag state with low emissions our CO2 reductions should focus on economics, not the small gains in health and enviromental issues

I think all of these need to be considered, together.

As shown above, electricity can come from many different sources. Over the next several years, do you think Nebraska should invest less, more or about the same in each of the following sources of electrical energy?

Need to allow solid waste incineration, and encourage biomass to energy projectcs. Incentives for both woudl create jobs and investment, and realize enviornmental benefits.

What is your role/position in the community?

Deputy City Clerk

administrator

Clerk

city manager

City Superintendant

Administrator

Administrator

manager

attorney

Utility Superintendent

Division Head

Economic Development Director

utility superintendent

City Manager

Utilities Director

Utility Manager

Administrator / Utility Supt.

director of public works

Wastewater

Administrator

City Administrator

utility superintendent

Supt.

City Administrator

Clerk/Treasurer

administrator

Utility Superintendent

What is the source for electricity in your community?

electricity supplied by neighboring community owned utility/retail

purchased retail in-state OPPD

supplied by community-owned utility from another city

Community Owned/Leased by NPPD

rural electricity

nppd retail city

public power

Community owned-purchased at wholesale in state

NPPD

oppd

Outside resources provide the electricity & do the billing

MEAN / NMPP

We buy from Cedar Knox who buys from NPPD

OPPD services our community

a Member-owned, not-for-profit cooperative,

franchise agreement with NPPD

NPPD Leased

If you have any additional comments that you would like to make, please feel free to note them below. Thank you!

The city has already spent 600,000 dollars to provide convertors on our plant.

I am strongly opposed to this mandate. Congress should declare it unconstitutional and hold our President in check.

The City of Neligh already purchases roughly 40% of its power from renewable energy sources and has seen an economic impact from the creation of Nebraska's largest windfarm in our county. However, I am concerned with the impact of the CPP on industrial business, especially NUCOR steel in Norfolk. I do feel that, as a state, we knew these regulations were coming and did little to prepare.

Appreciate your efforts. Would like to learn more about the Clean Power Plan. As the Utilities Director for a municipal owned electric utility in Nebraska, I feel it is very important for our public power utilities to be involved and knowledgeable about this program. Thanks.

Wind energy is too expensive to develop at this time. Look at how it cost European countries (such as Spain) and what their cost of electricity is in places like Germany. The only reason there is any wind generation is the Federal subsidies they receive. Wind power can't stand in the free market.

I am not sure I can speak for the entire community, but the Village sets our thermostats down in the winter and up in the summer, etc. to reduce the resources we use. I, personally, would love to see a wind-generated electric source here to serve the entire community and reduce all of our resident's purchased electricity and augment the Village's supply. I'm hoping the storage of electricity can be perfected in the very near future so this becomes more practical.