

Poll: Nearly 50% favor zero nuclear power scenario

The Yomiuri Shimbun

The government's executive committee, which conducted a deliberative opinion poll on mid- and long-term energy policies in April and May, said Wednesday that 46.7 percent of respondents supported a scenario in which nuclear power generation would cease.

In the poll, which asked about the percentage of energy to be generated by nuclear power as of 2030, the largest portion of respondents favored the zero percent scenario among three presented by the government.

The choice was followed by 15.4 percent who favored a 15 percent supply scenario and 13 percent who favored a scenario with a supply percentage between 20 percent and 25 percent.

Those who favored the zero percent scenario were nearly 70 percent of participants in

Support for various nuclear power usage scenarios

	Support after deliberative poll	Support of those who attended public hearings
Supporting 0% scenario	46.7%	67.9%
Supporting 15% scenario	15.4%	10.9%
Supporting 20-25% scenario	13.0%	16.4%
Others	24.9%	4.8%

earlier public hearings and other occasions in which attendees voluntarily gathered.

But the percentage of zero percent scenario supporters did not reach 50 percent in the deliberative poll.

The poll surveyed 285 randomly selected people from among 6,849 who responded to prior telephone surveys.

The participants gathered in Tokyo and participated in the deliberative poll, which comprised group discussions and interpellation with experts.

The government committee analyzed the results of telephone surveys and three questionnaires taken before and after the deliberative poll.

In the telephone surveys, 32.6 percent supported the zero percent scenario. But the percentage increased before and after the deliberative poll.

The percentage of supporters of the 15 percent scenario fell 2.8 percentage points after the deliberative poll. The percentage of supporters of the 20 percent to 25 percent scenario did not markedly change before or after.

Among those who favored the zero percent scenario after the deliberative poll, 96.2 percent cited safety as the reason.

Among supporters of the 15 percent scenario, 88.6 percent cited a stable energy supply as the reason for their choice. Of those who chose the 20 percent to 25 percent scenario, 89.2 percent cited the same reason.

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Questions over legitimacy

By Ryosuke Yamauchi / Yomiuri Shimbun Staff Writer

The result of the deliberative poll, along with results of prior public comments and public hearings, will be considered by the government in setting mid- and long-term energy policies to be compiled by the end of this month.

The deliberative poll aimed to obtain an informed public response the objectivity of the public as the randomly selected people were asked for their opinions after sufficient discussions and explanations.

However, it remains doubtful whether the poll result can be seen as a neutral "public

opinion."

The participants in the deliberative poll are viewed as being highly interested in the nuclear power issue. Some of the participants said after the discussions that the debates were influenced by those who spoke more loudly than others.

The government committee explained that the reason the percentage of zero percent scenario supporters increased was that safety measures and other tasks were made clear.

The government should carefully consider effects on the economy and maintaining technological capabilities. They also must consider business groups that have voiced concerns.

It cannot be wise to decide important policy decisions, which will affect the future of the nation, through popular vote.

(Aug. 23, 2012)

