



# South Carolina Trust & Nuclear Information

September 24, 2026

South Carolina Governor's Nuclear Advisory Council (GNAC)



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GEORGIA TECH.



CRESP

# CRESP: Independent expertise for nuclear decisions

Consortium for Risk Evaluation with Stakeholder Participation ([cresp.org](http://cresp.org))

MISSION

Support safe, effective, publicly credible, risk-informed management of existing and future nuclear waste from government and civilian sources.

Goal: Confidence in environmental management decisions

01

## Independent analysis and research

Evaluate waste, cleanup and safety options through strategic analysis, review and applied research.

02

## Stakeholder participation

Sustain engagement with government, regulators, Tribal nations, advisory boards and the public.

03

## Education and workforce development

Develop curricula, academic partnerships and early-career mentoring across nuclear disciplines.

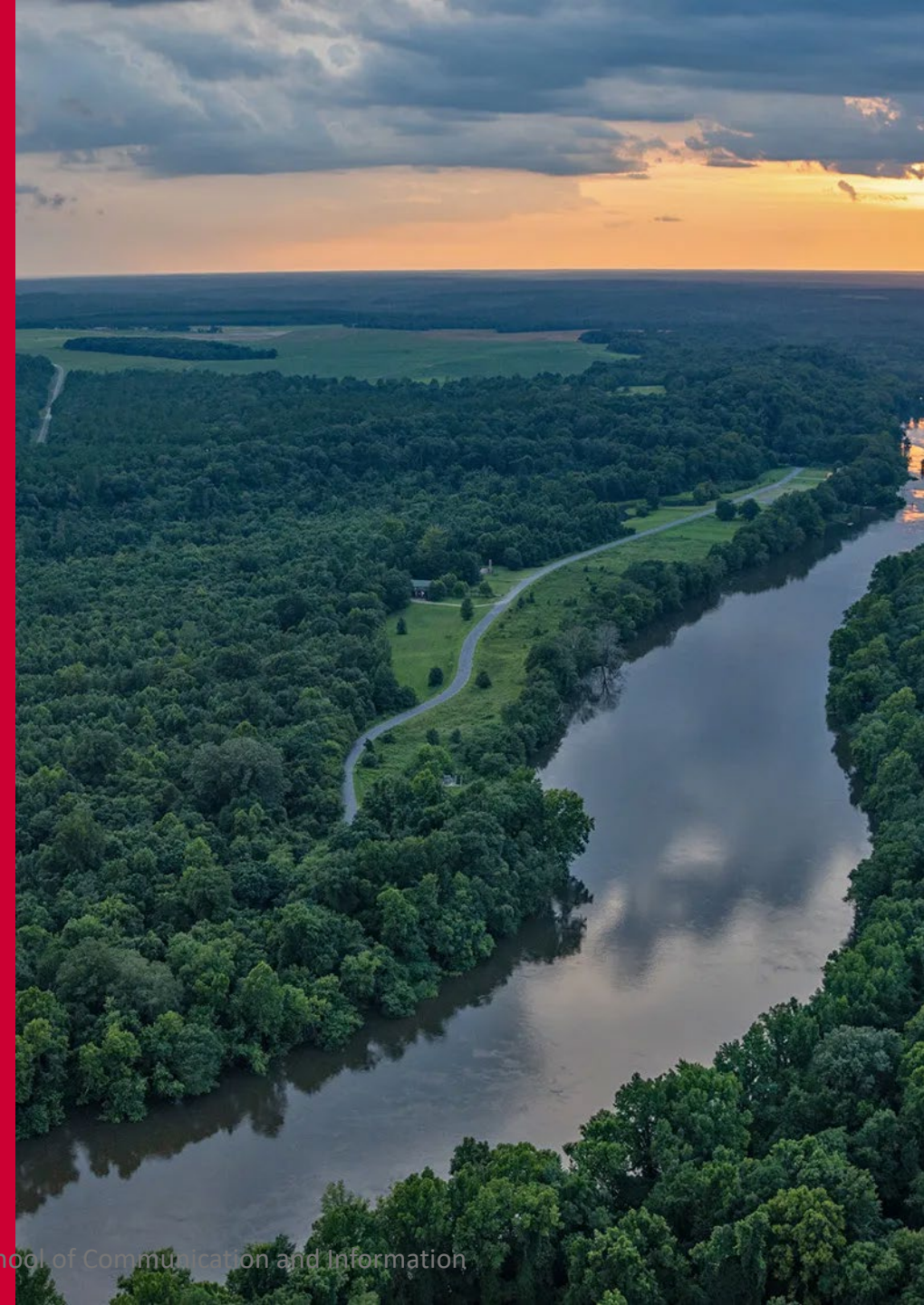
30 Years of collaboration

14 DOE sites served

24 Universities represented since 1995\*

# Survey & Fieldwork Results

Overview and Results



# Survey sample and fieldwork

YouGov survey | December 15, 2025 – January 15, 2026

**2,000**  
total respondents

Georgia  
**500**  
respondents

South Carolina  
**500**  
respondents

North Carolina  
**500**  
respondents

Tennessee  
**500**  
respondents

Paired with 28 interviews to examine underlying motivations and key factors influencing trust in information.

Detailed media analysis also conducted examining relevant news and social media.

# What the survey measures

Self-reported informedness, learning interest, and general information access and use

## Self-reported questionnaire

*“How well do you think you’re informed about...?”*

About nuclear plants operating near your community:

- A** Use and functioning
- B** Plant impacts
- C** Plant maintenance
- D** Management of radioactive waste generated by these plants

Five-point scale: Not very well to Extremely well

## Interest in learning more

*“Would you like to know more about nuclear energy and your community?”*

## Access to general information sources

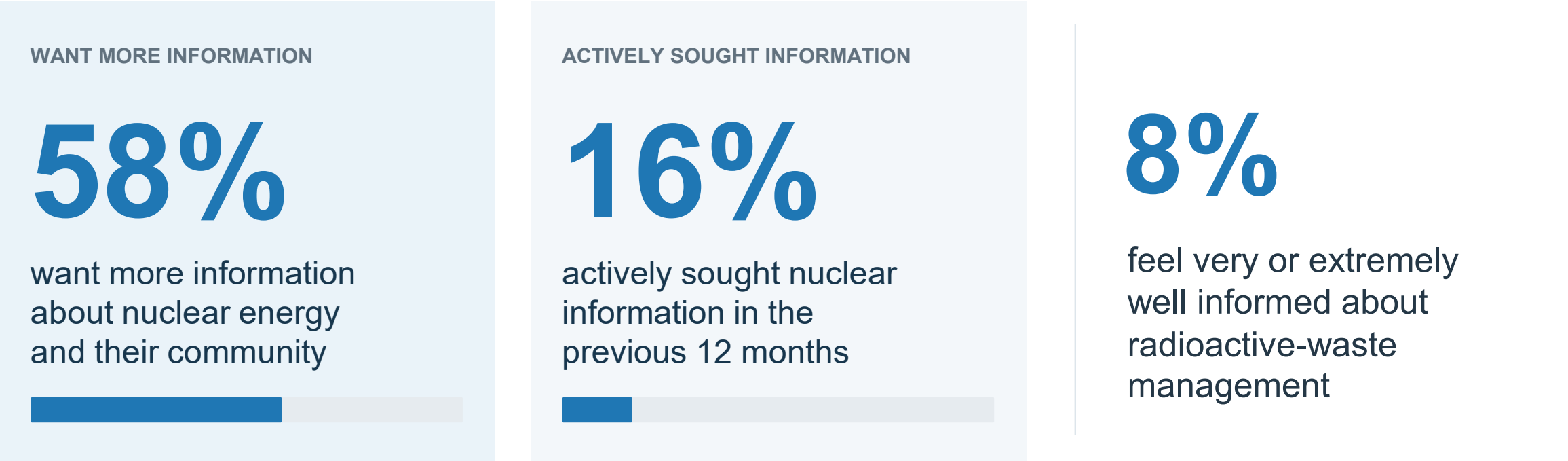
*“Which of the following sources do you have access to for news and information, whether you use them or not?”*

## Use of general information sources

*“Which of the following were sources you have used for news and information in the past week?”*

# Interest in information does not match active searching

South Carolina | Reported interest, behavior and informedness



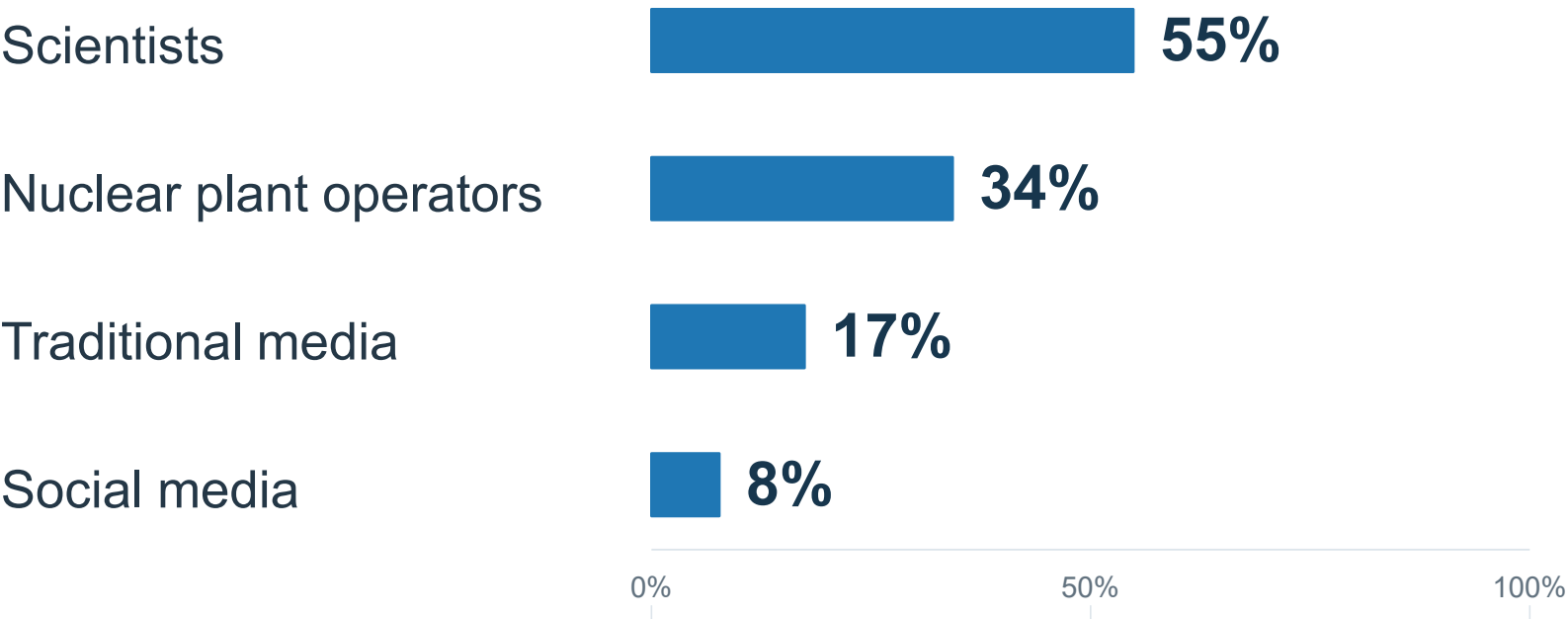
**75% of those wanting more information had not actively searched.**

The 75% figure comes from the same respondents, not from subtracting two percentages.

Rutgers / RUTG0015 | Weighted SC results | n = 500 | Dec 2025–Jan 2026

# Trust varies by source; neutrality is common

South Carolina | Trust or completely trust a source for scientifically accurate nuclear information



PLANT OPERATORS

**44%**

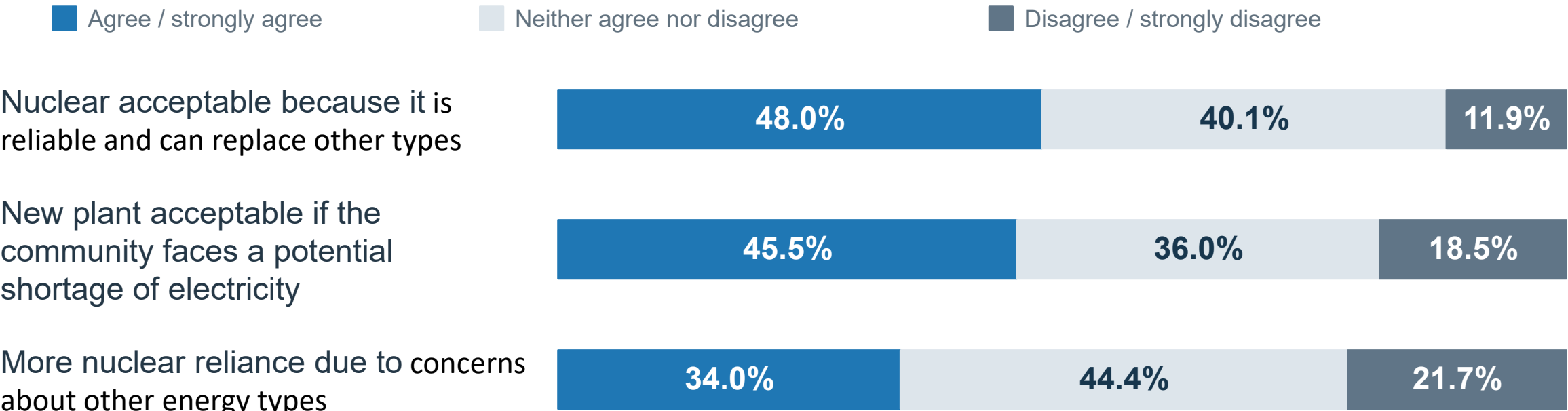
**gave a neutral response**

Neither trust nor distrust

Neutral responses should not be counted as distrust.

# Risk concern can coexist with nuclear acceptance

South Carolina | Agreement with statements about nuclear power under specified conditions



35%

of all SC respondents agree an accident would cause irreparable damage and a new plant could be acceptable during an electricity shortage.

Reported perceptions, not technical risk estimates or approval of a particular project. Totals may vary slightly due to rounding.

Rutgers / RUTG0015 | Weighted SC results | n = 500 | Dec 2025–Jan 2026

# Implications

Translating Research to Practice



# Questions the findings raise for public engagement

Three keys emerged across the research to drive trust in information

- |                                                       |                                                                                                            |
|-------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>01 Access</b><br>Interest without searching        | Local networks of residents connect people to information; local media helps support those networks        |
| <b>02 Evidence</b><br>Trust depends on the source     | Trusted intermediaries are critical resources for guiding residents to information they see as trustworthy |
| <b>03 Dialogue</b><br>Views are mixed and conditional | More pathways are needed for two-way interaction; residents want information without advocacy              |

**Support informed participation without presuming agreement.**

Rutgers / RUTG0015 | Discussion questions based on survey findings; engagement interventions were not tested

# Nuclear is familiar, but information is not equally accessible

How interviewees describe information, trust and the site's place in community life

01

## People help establish credibility

Known contacts help locate and explain information. Participants also check original sources and compare accounts.

02

## Familiarity does not equal understanding

SRS is known through jobs and local history. Understanding of its mission, waste activities and new activity is mixed

03

## Everyday stakes shape information needs

Employment and school benefits sit alongside questions about health, water, safety and long-term waste.

*“I just wish there was an easier way for people to find information”*

Interview participant | De-identified excerpt

**Familiarity with nuclear in the state does not ensure access to reliable information**



Rather than trying to make it understandable, the nuclear industry has always said, 'Well, if we tell them all this smart science stuff, that they'll believe us,' and that's just not the way it works anymore. So, you really have to sometimes find examples that they see every single day in their work.

-Interview Participant



# Engagement is more than making information available

Contrasting accounts highlight uneven reach and the importance of sustained relationships

- 01 Professional access is not universal** Regular briefings and people to call contrast with accounts of limited time, uneven awareness and difficulty finding usable information.
- 02 Local media matters** Cuts in local media have had an impact; others valued familiar reporters. Schools, social platforms and in-person contact provide other routes.
- 03 Presence and follow-through matter** School support and outreach are valued. A community-based account warned about collecting input without returning results or keeping commitments.

**Interview implication: pair clear local explanations with sustained dialogue and visible follow-through.**

Participants' accounts suggest priorities for engagement; they do not establish which interventions work.

Rutgers / SRS-area interviews | 9 supplied transcripts | Qualitative themes, not population estimates

# Build engagement into each stage of new nuclear activity

Start before opinions narrow; continue through review, construction and operations

## 01 Listen before choices narrow

Map affected communities and local concerns. State what can change, who decides, and when public input is needed.

## 02 Reach beyond public hearings

Use local groups, local organizations and local media. Offer small-group, online and phone options; address language, timing and access barriers.

## 03 Make evidence easy to examine

Provide independent expert Q&A on safety, waste, water, costs and jobs. Explain uncertainties, trade-offs and affiliations.

## 04 Show how public input is used

Name a lead; publish questions and responses. Show changes and reasons for decisions; report unresolved issues at each milestone.

**Measure reach, understanding and response quality, not agreement with a project.**

Recommendations are not tested survey effects. Local engagement should complement the applicable formal review process.

Rutgers / RUTG0015 | Proposed practices informed by survey findings and EPA / NRC guidance | Sources in notes



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# Thank You

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