

The Crisis in Energy:

Can the United States Live with an Insatiable Thirst for More Fossil Fuels?

Pam McComas, Topeka High School
Cindy Burgett, Washburn Rural High School

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An Introduction to the Topic Area

President Bush surprised many people when, in his 2006 State of the Union address, he declared that the US is "addicted" to foreign oil. His remarks highlight that energy use and the cheap and ready availability of energy in the United States is a topic of increasing importance for Americans. Though India and China are quickly catching up, the United States is still the biggest user and importer of oil in the world. (Cooley 9). And oil is, after all, a finite resource.. The US is the largest consumer of oil, but as India and China expand their economies, world-wide consumption has skyrocketed. Some scientists assert that world oil resources are at a peak and may soon decline, although optimistically, oil reserves may currently be 42 times annual production levels (Cooley 9). If we found no new oil and world wide consumption remained the same, that estimation gives us just four decades to find alternatives to oil. While the United States may be "addicted," very little serious work is being done by either Bush or the US Congress to address that addiction with the sort of urgency that is needed. Without attention, our addiction to fossil fuels creates serious long term problems for America from both a geopolitical and an environmental view.

Depending on foreign sources for energy has its drawbacks. Because of its support of Israel, in 1973, America saw the impact of an embargo on oil from the Middle East. Long lines of cars waited for gasoline, and energy prices soared. While the Middle East is unlikely to impose another such embargo -- and indeed, Arabian Peninsula nations have regularly boosted their sales to the US and long ago stopped threatening to disrupt supplies -- events like Hurricane Katrina and turmoil in the Middle East have driven the prices of crude oil up dramatically. And even if Middle Eastern suppliers are not an imminent threat, embargoes or other supply disruptions might eventually be found in the neighborhood of Hugo Chavez, the President of Venezuela, who is bent on nationalizing his country's oil industry. Other South American leaders

are watching with great interest, perhaps planning on doing the same. Western Europe now gets about half of its gas from Russia, the current leader of oil exportation in the world, and whether or not this is troublesome for Western block nations remains to be seen. And then there are those who argue that the war in Iraq is in part (or whole) about the oil resources available in that country and the West's attempts to control those resources. The extent to which our dependence on foreign oil shapes our foreign policy is probably not quantifiable, but it is undoubtedly an influence.

Environmentally speaking, fossil fuels have been less than healthy. Global carbon dioxide output in 2006 was nearly 32 billion tons, with about 25% of that coming from the United States. Our 250-year industrial bacchanal has left us with a planet hotter than ever. Of the twelve warmest years on record, 11 occurred between 1995 and 2006 (Hertsgaard 52). Carbon dioxide levels are higher now than they have been in the last 650,000 years of Earth's history. Global warming has caused climate changes that may be devastating: droughts, wildfires, floods, crop failures, drowning polar bears, shrinking polar ice caps, hurricanes that destroy cities -- all of these give us reason to worry. "Many experts view climate change as a 'threat multiplier' that intensifies instability around the world by worsening water shortages, food insecurity, disease, and flooding that lead to forced migration" ("Could Warming Cause War?" 2). And no matter how one evaluates the use of fossil fuels -- either geopolitically or environmentally -- there's a real cost in dollars that is paid because we are so in love with our fossil fuels.

What is the government doing?

Despite James Inhofe's (R, OK) claims that global warming is "the greatest hoax ever perpetrated on the American people," and the optimistic view that we will always have plenty of fossil fuels, Bush's admittance that we are "addicted" to foreign oil was a step -- albeit a small

one -- toward change. The government has begun to come to the realization that something must be done to curb or change our energy consumption habits, and in that vein, some legislation has been proposed. The Energy Policy Act of 2005 (EPAct) was the first omnibus energy legislation passed by Congress in over a decade (Snyder). The EPAct of 2005 focused on promoting oil and gas, nuclear power, clean coal and other forms of traditional energy production, but it also included provisions on renewables, efficiency incentives and other environmental issues tied to energy. It “requires renewable fuel use to grow from four billion gallons in 2006 to 7.5 billion gallons in 2012,” provides tax credits for wind farms, gives federal tax credits to consumers who install solar energy panels and to those who purchase hybrid vehicles and energy efficient appliances (Clarke).

While it affects nearly every sector of the energy industry in one way or another, it does not address greenhouse gas controls, nuclear waste disposal, and US dependence on foreign oil (Clarke). Many critics point out that this bill mostly supports traditional (fossil fuel) energy production and that it has largely created incentives and subsidies for status quo energy industries, which have, incidentally, seen their largest profits in history since the passage of this legislation. One source comments that “it’s not a new energy direction, but more of the same” (Clarke). Additionally, the proposed funding in the Department of Energy’s 2007 budget doesn’t fund key parts of the 2005 act (Johnson).

Currently a new energy efficiency bill is being considered in Congress. The EXTEND the Energy Efficiency Incentives Act of 2007 “enhances and extends the energy efficiency and solar energy tax incentives enacted in the Energy Policy Act of 2005” (“New Energy Efficiency Bill Draws Broad Support from Business, Conservation Groups”). The Energy Policy Reform and Revitalization Act of 2007 is another piece of legislation that has been proposed that repeals some of the EPAct of 2005, specifically items that have to do with citing electric transmission

lines and items that subsidize oil, gas and coal industry (Snyder). It is, consequently, opposed by the powerful lobbies representing those industries.

President Bush has said that he has a “goal of reducing US gasoline usage by 20 percent in the next ten years” (Mufson, “On Energy Policy, Critics Don’t See Much That’s New), but the math behind that reduction shows a fairly underwhelming overall decrease in gasoline usage. Bush also has proposals for raising fuel-economy standards, which, if supported by automakers, could have some positive impact.

Other more limited and specific legislation for energy projects has been proposed, including the Marine and Hydrokinetic Renewable Energy Promotion Act of 2007, which would provide funding for research and development in harnessing ocean currents. There are a number of similar types of bills proposed that have not yet come to the floor of Congress.

The Supreme Court has made a ruling or two that are also encouraging on the environmental front. In the case *The Commonwealth of Massachusetts v. the US Environmental Protection Agency*, the court ruled that the EPA has an obligation to regulate greenhouse gasses emitted from cars and has little discretion in choosing whether or not to regulate them, thus requiring the EPA to enforce the Clean Air Act where greenhouse gasses are concerned. (“Regulating Emissions).

How Can the Problem Be Solved?

Despite what appears to be a fairly grim outlook where energy availability, sustainability, and security (as well as environmental issues connected to energy) are concerned, there are a number of ideas that have been proposed to move the United States away from its addiction to fossil fuels. These fall generally into two broad categories: increasing the use of renewable and alternative energy sources, and conservation measures.

There are a vast number of renewable and alternative energy sources that are or may be more environmentally friendly and more sustainable, and there is a great deal of research that has already been done on the viability of these proposals. Biofuels – specifically the use of ethanol from corn and other crops – are currently generating a great deal of interest, especially in states that have large agricultural interests. While these sources are sustainable and (usually) cleaner than fossil fuels, there is some debate about whether or not these sources actually take more energy to produce than they themselves provide in the end. Increasing the use of ethanol would boost the economies of agricultural states, but it could ultimately create food shortages for livestock and humans as well.

Solar energy has been a popular idea for nearly four decades. The technology needed to use solar panels on homes and other buildings to generate electricity and heat has improved greatly, although the costs to build such systems are still high. Solar energy is quite reliable in some geographical regions, and less so in others. One of the drawbacks of solar energy plans is that the technology is not yet available to produce vehicles that run on solar energy, thus failing to decrease the need for crude oil and other petroleum products for the transportation sector.

Wind, water, and geothermal energy systems have improved over the years and there are a number of possible affirmatives that might adopt these systems. There is excellent evidence on both the affirmative and negative for any of these options, including both positive and negative environmental impacts generated by their use.

Clean coal technologies are of interest in the status quo and while these are not “renewable” sources of energy, coal is readily available and plentiful in the United States. The coal industry is pursuing new methods of burning coal that do not pollute the environment.

Nuclear energy is an option that has been largely undeveloped in the United States in the last two decades. While it is “clean” in many ways, it does produce radioactive waste, the

disposal of which the US has yet to fully address. As with solar energy and coal plans, nuclear energy fails to address the transportation sector needs for gasoline, leaving a somewhat crucial area of energy use unaddressed.

With these (and other possible) renewable and alternative technologies, part of a debate will have to center on time frames. How soon will these technologies be perfected, affordable, and widely available? While there are plan mechanisms to address time frame issues (including subsidies, funding for research and development, and floors on the price of crude oil), the time frame is an important negative argument to alternatives that may seem, on the surface, quite rosy.

The other category of affirmative cases that would fulfill some of the proposed resolutions center around a variety of conservation measures. The President has already indicated that he supports raising fuel-economy standards for most passenger vehicles, but there are those that believe the measures he has proposed have too many loopholes. Energy efficiency is, according to Jim Presswood, an energy advocate, “the quickest, cheapest and cleanest way to bring down gas prices while curbing global warming pollution” (“New Energy Efficiency Bill Draws Broad Support From Business, Conservation Groups”). Increasing the efficiency of vehicles is a worthy affirmative case, but creating energy efficient building products and designs can also have an important impact. Affirmatives could also increase efficiency by lowering speed limits, doing more to encourage car pooling or use of public transportation, and perhaps through other ways as well.

Negative Ground

There is much to offer in negative ground on this topic, and while it does offer critical options, this topic readily lends itself to a pure policy debate. Besides a number of case specific arguments – especially in the arena of possible solvency turns – there are topic specific disadvantages and counterplans that would create solid debates.

Disadvantages include a variety of options. While the cost/spending/tradeoff disadvantage is an obvious possibility, the debate over cost-benefit analysis is a bit more concrete for this topic than for others that have been debated in the recent past. More interesting to advanced debaters would be foreign policy/isolationism disadvantages, economic/global markets disadvantages, specific China/India growth disadvantages, and disadvantages that relate to specific case areas (such as a nuclear disposal disadvantage).

Counterplan ground is equally interesting. There is good evidence to show that states (especially states like California, Washington, and Oregon) are leading the way in creating state-wide programs that are progressive, innovative and that work in the status quo. Today, programs in California have shown great success. California uses less energy per capita than any other state in the country, and while energy use per person for the US overall has jumped 50 percent since 1974, California's consumption has remained constant (Mufson, "California's Thrifty Example" 20). Private industries have also been keen to solve energy consumption and pollution issues on their own. Duke Energy and General Motors, among many companies, have voluntarily begun programs to "green" their companies, and they both favor a serious cap-and-trade program for carbon emissions. Many American states, cities, companies and individuals are curbing their energy use and carbon outputs on their own, preferring solutions tailored to their own local conditions ("Global Warming's Keystone Kops 8). The evidence exists to negate the need for a federal program.

Just as important, international and UN counterplans are fertile ground, although the evidence is probably more scarce. Action by the United States alone does not address the problems created by the burgeoning energy usage of China and India, and global warming is just that: global. A negative team might easily argue that any solution must be world-wide.

Additionally, specific counterplans such as ban nuclear energy (in response to an affirmative that would increase its use) or ban the use of coal provide for excellent clash in varsity rounds (especially) and for interesting debates for debaters, judges and other spectators.

Critical ground is certainly available for debaters who prefer that approach on this topic, but it is perhaps less vital as a strategy on this topic than it has been in the recent past, since other negative ground is extremely fertile. Kritiks of capitalism seem most obvious, but there are clearly many links to other critical arguments that debaters might explore.

Is Energy a Good Topic Choice?

An energy topic is a good choice for many reasons. First, it is gaining importance in our national dialogue, and its timeliness is unquestionable. “Energy independence” is a term that is more and more common in the political arena, and many political analysts believe that the Presidential candidates for the 2008 election ought to be able to answer some tough questions about what s/he would do in shaping our national energy policy. This topic also allows for a good variety of affirmatives and gives our students an opportunity to discuss scientific and environmental issues in an appropriate depth. In the past, energy topics have proven to be interesting for our least and most experienced students, and while it is true that we have debated energy before, its last incarnation was the 1996-97 school year. It is not a less important topic today than it was then; indeed, it may be even more important considering world events. The topic is interesting for students because it complements much of what they are learning in social science and science classes, but it is also interesting for our judging community. Those who are lay judges and are paying exorbitant bills at the gas pump and for electricity will find it interesting, and those who are seasoned policy debate judges will see rounds on a balanced topic with a variety of argument choices for both teams. As for material availability, there is an abundance of current information easily and readily available in both print and electronic

sources, and students who continually read throughout their competitive seasons will find plentiful updates and may find themselves more successful than those who believe the work is done after their time at summer institutes.

Definitions Important to the Energy Topic Area

Black's Law Dictionary, 8th Ed. 2004, pg. 575

Environmental Protection Agency--An independent federal agency in the executive branch responsible for setting pollution-control standards in the areas of air, water, solid waste, pesticides, radiation, and toxic materials, enforcing laws enacted to protect the environment; and coordinating the antipollution efforts of state and local governments.

Black's Law Dictionary, 8th Ed. 2004, pg. 575

Environmental law--The field of law dealing with the maintenance and protection of the environment, including preventive measures such as the requirements of environmental-impact statements, as well as measures to assign liability and provide cleanup for incidents that harm the environment.

"Alternate fuel"; "alternative fuel"; "alternative energy resources"; "conventional energy source" 44,100: Google hits; 125 Lexis-Nexis Academic hits

American Jurisprudence, 2nd Ed. A Modern Comprehensive Text Statement of American Law, Vol. 27A, Energy and Power Sources to Escheat. 1996, pg. 22-23.

The term "**alternate fuel**" has several statutory meanings. Most generally it means electricity or any fuel other than natural gas or petroleum, and includes petroleum coke, shale oil, uranium, biomass and municipal, industrial, or agricultural wastes, wood and renewable and geothermal energy sources, liquid, solid, or gaseous waste by-products of refinery or industrial operations which are commercially unable to be marketed, and waste gases from industrial operations. In terms of energy development policy, the term "alternative fuel" means methanol, denatured ethanol, and other alcohols; mixtures containing 85 percent or more (or such other percentage, but not less than 70 percent, as determined by the Secretary of Energy, by rule, to provide for requirements relating to cold start, safety, or vehicle functions) by volume of methanol, denatured ethanol, and other alcohols with gasoline or other fuels such as natural gas, liquefied petroleum gas, hydrogen, coal-derived liquid fuels, fuels (other than alcohol) derived from biological materials, electricity (including electricity from solar energy), and any other fuel that the Secretary determines, security benefits as well as substantial environmental benefits. The term "conventional energy source" means energy produced from oil, gas, coal, and nuclear fuels.

"Alternative Energy"

< <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/alternative+energy> >

1. Noun "alternative energy" - energy derived from sources that do not use up natural resources or harm the environment

[energy](#) - (physics) the capacity of a physical system to do work; the units of energy are joules or ergs; "energy can take a wide variety of forms"

[solar energy](#), [solar power](#) - energy from the sun that is converted into thermal or electrical energy; "the amount of energy falling on the earth is given by the solar constant, but very little use has been made of solar energy"

[wind generation](#), [wind power](#) - power derived from the wind (as by windmills)

Alternative Energy includes three main groups:

Renewable Energy (Solar, Wind, Hydro, Geothermal, Biomass)

Fuel Cells & Hydrogen

Energy Conservation and Enabling Technologies

Alternative energy saves natural resources is environmentally superior to conventional coal and oil.

< http://www.newalternativesfund.com/invest/invest_alternative.html>

Wind, flowing water, energy conservation and geothermal heating are ancient but now employ new advanced technology. Technologies such as solar cells, hydrogen and fuel cells and ocean energy are relatively new. All of the technologies operate. The present cost effectiveness of some of the newest technologies varies.

<http://www.angelouconomics.com/alternative_energy.html>

INDUSTRY DEFINITION

Alternative energy, in the tradition of electronics, biotechnology, and other technology waves, has become the newest industry to attract the attention of investors and economic developers worldwide. The alternative energy industry is broadly defined by technologies that reduce or eliminate the environmental impact of primary energy production, energy consumption and electricity generation. Production of alternative energy equipment, their operation and use in creating electricity or clean fuels, and research and development leading to breakthroughs in alternative energy comprise the bulk of the industry. Solar power, geothermal, wind, clean coal, biomass, and fuel cells are the primary technologies comprising the clean energy industry. The industry is also driven by advances in green building and energy and water conservation, ocean and wave power, superconducting electrical transmission lines, battery and energy storage, and a wide variety of electronic, mechanical, and industrial processes and services.

"Biomass energy" and related terms; alcohol fuels

American Jurisprudence, 2nd Ed. A Modern Comprehensive Text Statement of American Law, Vol. 27A, Energy and Power Sources to Escheat. 1996, pg. 23.

The term "biomass" means any organic matter which is available on a renewable basis, including agricultural crops and agricultural wastes and residues, wood and wood wastes and residues, animal wastes, municipal wastes, and aquatic plants.

The term "biomass fuel" means any gaseous, liquid, or solid fuel produced by conversion of biomass.

The term "biomass energy" means biomass fuel or energy or steam derived from direct combustion of biomass for the generation of electricity, mechanical power, or industrial process heat.

The term "biomass energy project" means any facility (or portion of a facility) located in the United States which exists primarily for the production of biomass fuel (and by-products) or

the combustion of biomass for the purpose of generating industrial process heat, mechanical power, or electricity (including cogeneration).

Ocean thermal energy and related terms

American Jurisprudence, 2nd Ed. A Modern Comprehensive Text Statement of American Law, Vol. 27A, Energy and Power Sources to Escheat. 1996, pg. 26.

"Thermal plume" means the area of the ocean in which a significant difference in temperature, as defined in Department of Energy regulations, occurs as a result of the operation of an ocean thermal energy conversion facility or plantship.

"Ocean thermal energy conversion facility" means any facility which is standing, fixed, or moored in whole or in part seaward of the high-water mark and which is designed to use temperature differences in ocean water to produce electricity or another form of energy capable of being used directly to perform work; the term includes any equipment installed on such facility to use such electricity or other form of energy to produce, process, refine, or manufacture a product, and any cable or pipeline used to deliver such electricity, fresh water, or product to shore, and all other associated equipment and appurtenances of such facility to the extent they are located seaward of the high-water mark.

"Fossil Fuels" 1,720,000: Google hits; 125: Lexis-Nexis Academic hits

Definitions of **Fossil Fuels** on the Web:

< www.atniedc.com/programs/Energy/glossary.htm>

Fuels formed in the ground from the remains of dead plants and animals. It takes millions of years to form fossil fuels. Oil, natural gas, and coal are fossil fuels.

<www.ergon.com.au/energyed/glossary.asp>

Coal, oil or natural gas that result from the fossilisation of ancient plants or animals. These fuels have taken millions of years form.

< www.climatechangecentral.com/default.asp>

Coal, petroleum, and natural gas are called fossil fuels because they are made of fossilized, carbon-rich plant and animal remains. These remains are buried in sediments and compressed over geologic time, slowly being converted to fuel. Fossil fuels can be extracted from the sediment millions of years after its deposition. Its stored energy can be used as fuel when it is burned.

< www.climatechangenorth.ca/H1_Glossary.html>

Fossil fuels are fuels containing carbon – coal, oil and gas – that were formed over millions of years through the decay, burial and compaction of rotting vegetation on land, and of marine organisms on the sea floor. Burning fossil fuels is the major way in which humans add to the greenhouse gases in the atmosphere.

< www.pce.govt.nz/reports/pce_reports_glossary.shtml>

Carbon-based fuels including coal, natural gas and fuels derived from crude oil (eg petrol and diesel); called fossil fuels because they have been formed over long periods of time from ancient organic matter. Fossil fuels are not a renewable resource, meaning that once consumed, they are gone forever.

<www.jea.com/community/education/teacher/glossary.asp>

Fuels derived from the fossil remains of plants and animals that lived in ages past; includes petroleum, natural gas, coal, oil shale and tar sands.

< www.nrc.govt.nz/reports.and.news/annual.environmental.monitoring/2003-2004/glossary.shtml>

Fossil fuels refer to carbon-based materials (primarily coal and oil) that can be combusted (burnt) to produce energy. The “fossil” in fossil fuels refers to the fact that all these carbon-based fuels were once living things, trapped and buried by sediment, and converted into the fuels as part of a geological cycle. Very broadly speaking, coal is the remnants of buried forests while oil is the accumulation and conversion of oceanic plant-life.

<www.ecifm.reading.ac.uk/glossary.htm>

Biological materials which have been subjected to long term geological effects. ie coal, oil natural gas and peat .

<<http://www.energy.gov/energysources/fossilfuels.htm>>

Fossil fuels – coal, oil and natural gas -- currently provide more than 85% of all the energy consumed in the United States, nearly two-thirds of our electricity, and virtually all of our transportation fuels. Moreover, it is likely that the nation’s reliance on fossil fuels to power an expanding economy will actually increase over at least the next two decades even with aggressive development and deployment of new renewable and nuclear technologies.

"Energy Security" "Energy Independence" 162,000: Google hits; 125: Lexis-Nexis Academic

Richard Haass, President of the Council on Foreign Relations, "Geopolitical Implications of Rising Oil Dependence and Global Warming," Prepared Statement before the Select Committee on Energy Independence and Global Warming U.S. House of Representatives, April 18, 2007. Online Google. <<http://www.cfr.org/publication/13128/>>

Energy security is not easy to define. It is a relative concept, in the sense that it is impossible to achieve total energy security – just as it is impossible to achieve full security (or complete invulnerability) in any realm. A traditional definition of energy security would be one that emphasized minimizing U.S. vulnerability to supply interruptions and price increases. This “reliability and affordability” approach to energy security is inadequate, as it does not capture the additional rationales for reducing consumption of oil (imported or otherwise) in order to curtail the flow of resources to unfriendly governments and to reduce the adverse impact on the world’s climate. As a result, we need to adopt a broader definition of the concept. Energy security is directly related to the ability to manage the form and amount of energy produced, consumed, and imported so that the United States reduces its vulnerability to supply and price fluctuations, the flows of resources to unfriendly producer countries, and the adverse impact on the global climate.

A range of prescriptions, some familiar, some not, flows from this broader approach to energy security. One is the desirability of diversifying sources of oil and other energy supplies. Such diversification reduces the impact of losing for whatever reason access to the output of any single producer. The United States has done this in the oil realm, as only Canada provides the United States in the range of 20% of its total oil imports. 90% of U.S. crude oil imports are distributed to more than ten countries.

The United States can also help reduce its vulnerability to supply interruptions through contingency planning, including the maintenance of the strategic petroleum reserve (SPR) and various stand-by international sharing arrangements. Congress would be well-advised to assess both the adequacy and guidelines for use of the SPR. Also in need of overhaul is the International Energy Agency, which needs to be amended (or complemented by the International Energy Forum) so that major countries such as India and China are fully included in global planning.

David L. Greene and Paul N. Leiby, Oak Ridge National Laboratory, "Oil Independence: Realistic Goal or Empty Slogan?," **Lugar Energy Initiative**, online Google, <http://lugar.senate.gov/energy/links/commentary/08_greene_full.html>

What do we mean by oil independence? The common meaning of the words suffices. Merriam-Webster defines independence as, “not subject to control by others”, and to control is to “exercise restraining or directing influence over.” To achieve oil independence as a nation we must reach a state in which our nation’s decisions are not subject to the restraining or directing influence of oil producers. We therefore propose the following as an apt and meaningful (but not yet measurable) definition of oil independence.

“For all conceivable future world oil market conditions, the potential costs of oil dependence to the U.S. economy will be so small that they will have no effect on our economic, military or

foreign policies.”

This definition captures the essential idea but it is not measurable. A measurable definition needs to reflect our uncertainty about future oil market conditions and include a quantitative statement of how much the potential costs of oil dependence must be reduced. This requires not only rigorous analysis, but judgment. The following is put forward as a reasonable starting point for discussion and analysis and possibly an adequate, measurable definition.

“The annual economic costs of oil dependence will be less than 1% of U.S. GDP, with 95% probability, by 2030.”

Rep. Nydia Velazquez, R-NY, "HOUSE LEADERSHIP ANNOUNCES '**ENERGY INDEPENDENCE DAY**' PACKAGE," **2007 States News Service**, June 29, 2007, online Lexis-Nexis Academic.

A critical piece of the "**Energy Independence Day**" Package is H.R. 2389, The Small **Energy** Efficient Business Act (SEEBA), introduced by Subcommittee Chairman, Congressman Heath Shuler, and approved by the Full House Small Business Committee in May. The bill will provide loans, education and investment to small firms to help them become more **energy** independent, helping them take advantage of their role as leaders in the search for **energy** solutions. The bill promotes good **energy** practices by modifying existing Small Business Administration (SBA) programs to provide more flexible loan terms to small firms that are developing or utilizing **energy** efficient technologies. It stimulates investment in the production of alternative sources of **energy** and the development of **energy** efficient technologies by expanding the Small Business Investment Corporation (SBIC). The SBA will be required to develop a strategy to educate small firms about **energy** efficiency, and establishes an **energy** efficiency program for the Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs). Additionally, the Renewable Fuel Capital Investment (RFCI) program will be created, which will help small firms develop renewable **energy** sources and new technologies. These measures will play a vital role in the reaching the goals of the "**Energy Independence Day**" Package.

Sen. Benjamin Cardin, D-Md, "SEN. CARDIN INTRODUCES BILL TO ACHIEVE ENERGY INDEPENDENCE," **US Fed News**, May 24, 2007, online Lexis-Nexis Academic.

The office of Sen. Benjamin Cardin, D-Md., has issued the following news release:

Sen. Benjamin L. Cardin, D-MD, today introduced legislation that would create a framework for the United States to become **energy** independent in a decade, and put us on the path to become fossil fuel independent.

The **Energy Independence** Act would create a bipartisan Blue Ribbon Commission to study and review policy changes that are needed for the United States to achieve **energy independence**. Starting in 2009, the Commission would meet every two years and report to Congress on how to adjust our policies to achieve **energy independence** by 2017. **Energy independence** is defined as getting 90% of our **energy** needs from domestic sources.

"For too long America has been held hostage by its reliance on foreign **energy**," said Senator Cardin. "**Energy independence** is critical for our national security and for our environment, and this bill provides a much-needed framework for developing a comprehensive **energy** policy for our nation."

"**energy independence* 162,000: Google hits; 125: Lexis-Nexis Academic hits**

<<http://www.intelligence.gov/0-glossary.shtml#2>>

energy intelligence-Intelligence relating to the technical, economic, and political capabilities and programs of foreign countries to engage in development, utilization, and commerce of basic and advanced energy technologies. This includes the location and extent of foreign energy resources and their allocation; foreign government energy policies, plans, and programs; new and improved foreign energy supply, demand, production, distribution, and utilization.

Carol Kessler, director of the Pacific Northwest Center for Global Security, part of Pacific Northwest National Laboratory, "Energy insecurity -- a weapon of mass disruption?," **Public Release Eureka Alert** 17-Feb-2007. Online Google.

< http://www.eurekaalert.org/pub_releases/2007-02/dnnl-ei021407.php>

"Energy security is fast becoming a key to national security in many parts of the world, said Carol Kessler, director of the Pacific Northwest Center for Global Security, part of Pacific Northwest National Laboratory. "If a country does not have access to sufficient energy resources to meet its energy requirements, its economic security can be impacted and eventually, its national security and possibly the United States' national security will be too."

Many experts say that energy insecurity concerns are driving the United States to develop more domestic supply resources, such as in the Arctic National Refuge, so America is not forced to import more foreign energy resources, such as oil.

According to the International Energy Agency, the U.S. produced 307 metric tons of crude oil in 2005 and one year earlier imported 577 metric tons – more than any other country in the world. For natural gas, the U.S. was the second largest producer in 2005, but was also the largest importer in the same year.

NewPoint Energy Solutions. 2007. Online Google.

<http://www.newpointenergy.com/renewable_energy_security.htm>

Reduced Dependence on Foreign Energy Sources (Oil), and Investments in Domestic Economy In addition to generation and transmission infrastructure challenges, fossil fuel resources are limited, and the United States relies heavily on imports from foreign countries to keep up with rising demand. Recent years have highlighted the security, political, and economic implications of our national dependence on foreign energy resources (such as oil). Shifting our

reliance to freely available, renewable resources reduces our dependence on other countries to provide our sources for power. It protects us from the unpredictable and rapidly fluctuating costs of importing fuels from other countries.

"carbon emissions" 811,000: Google hits; 125: Lexis-Nexis Academic

Definitions of **Carbon Emissions** on the Web:

< energytrends.pnl.gov/glosa_d.htm>

Releases of carbon to the atmosphere as part of compounds that arise from man-made processes such as energy use or agriculture

< www.corusconstruction.com/page_9041.htm>

Emissions to the atmosphere principally from the burning of fossil fuels and deforestation. Increased atmospheric concentrations of CO₂ and other greenhouse gases trap more of the earth's heat leading to the phenomenon known as global warming

< www.cpc-inc.org/resources/glossary.php>

Carbon that enters the atmosphere as a result of burning carbon-based fuels, chiefly coal, oil and natural gas. For a given unit of energy, coal combustion emits roughly twice as much carbon dioxide as natural gas, and oil falls in between. About a third of human-caused carbon dioxide emissions in the US comes from electric power plants, another third from cars and trucks, and the remaining third from other commercial enterprises and households.

< www.edcnews.se/Research/EcoEconomy-All.html>

As the atmospheric concentration of carbon dioxide changes, so does the earth's temperature. Thus carbon emissions tell us a lot about ourselves and our current habits and provide clues about the kind of world we will be leaving for future generations. Will we be leaving them a stable climate, or will it be a world of searing heat waves, more destructive storms, melting glaciers, and rising sea level - a world besieged by millions of rising-sea refugees? (Full text at EPI, or on this site).

"Importation" 17,200,000: Google hits; 125: Lexis-Nexis Academic

Definitions of **importation** on the Web:

< wordnet.princeton.edu/perl/webwn>

importing: the commercial activity of buying and bringing in goods from a foreign country

medicines.mhra.gov.uk/ourwork/licensingmeds/types/thmpd/glossary.htm

import: commodities (goods or services) bought from a foreign country. The buying or bringing in of goods from another country

aquat1.ifas.ufl.edu/mcdef.html

The act of bringing an organism from a foreign place or country into another country.

encarta.msn.com/dictionary_/import.html

Importation--the bringing in of something from abroad or an outside source. Most governments forbid the import of such goods.

The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition. Houghton Mifflin Company, 2000. Updated in 2003.

im·por·ta·tion (mpôr-tshn, -pr-)

n. **1a.** The act or business of importing. **b.** The condition or process of being imported. **2.** Something imported; an import.

Resolution Possibilities:

1. The United States federal government should substantially increase the energy independence of the United States.

The director of the CIA, James Woolsey, has said that dependence on foreign oil is a major national security concern. This resolution creates a debate that addresses that vulnerability and allows students to discuss the benefits and pitfalls of global interdependence, with energy as the focal point. While we are not in the throes of the embargo of 1973, rising energy prices and the war in Iraq are both timely concerns of nearly every American citizen, and are key elements that pertain to this topic.

2. The United States federal government should significantly increase the use of alternative energy resources in the United States.

The United States is currently tied to oil and coal as its major energy sources. Both contribute to global warming and a host of other problem areas. The use of alternatives -- solar, wind, hydropower, biofuels, organic fuels, nuclear energy, clean technology and perhaps others -- would create a discussion for students concerning the efficacy of those methods as well as debate over global warming, energy markets, the economy, and the advantages and disadvantages of changing from fossil fuels to other sources.

3. The United States federal government should substantially decrease the use of fossil fuels in the United States.

This resolution is, in some ways, a combination of the first two resolutions. While decreasing the use of fossil fuels would, in all likelihood, make the country less dependent on foreign oil, it would also require the use of alternative sources as replacements. Debate could center around the need to replace fossil fuels, the efficacy of possible replacement technologies, and the impacts to the environment and the economy from these changes. This resolution also adds plans that increase fuel efficiency to the possible affirmative solutions. The Christian Science Monitor notes that "not burning gasoline is as effective at improving energy security as making tens of billions of gallons of biofuels annually" (CSM, 10 May 2007, p 2).

4. The United States federal government should significantly decrease its importation of foreign energy resources.

This is an alternative wording to the first resolution. Rather than discuss "energy independence," this resolution is more strictly about trade. While the core areas of discussion are probably very similar, this resolution is a bit more focused on the geopolitical and economic aspects of an energy policy, rather than including environmental impacts. Affirmatives might choose to have an overall decrease in importation, or might exclude imports from particular regions (the Middle East, Venezuela, etc.).

5. The United States federal government should significantly increase the use of clean technology for energy in the United States.

The Clean Tech Revolution, co-authored by Ron Pernick, claims that a revolution in clean energy technologies is coming and that venture capitalists ought to hop on that wagon. Clean technologies emphasize using natural resources more efficiently or not at all. Transforming solar, fuel-cell and biofuel projects as well as building eco-/energy friendly buildings would be viable affirmative ground.

6. The United States federal government should significantly decrease carbon emissions in the United States.

The idea of global warming is accepted by nearly every scientist of any repute (even if it is not acknowledged by the President), and carbon emissions as the primary source is fairly well understood. This resolution creates a debate that is more focused on the environment/global warming and on what the United States could do in that arena. Affirmative cases could decrease the use of fossil fuels or improve emission controls.

Bibliography for Energy Topic Paper

Note: The resources available for an energy topic are extensive. The ability to find news articles on reputable internet resources and readily available print resources would yield many new sources on a daily basis for students researching. While this bibliography is not comprehensive, it does highlight easy-to-find book and periodical sources as well as broader articles on the current issues confronting American energy policy. It only scratches the surface on smaller areas within the topic (ie oil sands, nuclear energy, etc.).

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Energy

Summary Report
The Crisis in Energy:
Can the United States Live with an Insatiable Thirst for More Fossil Fuels?

Resolutions:

1. The United States federal government should substantially increase the energy independence of the United States.
2. The United States federal government should significantly increase the use of alternative energy resources in the United States.
3. The United States federal government should substantially decrease the use of fossil fuels in the United States.
4. The United States federal government should significantly decrease its importation of foreign energy resources.
5. The United States federal government should significantly increase the use of clean technology for energy in the United States.
6. The United States federal government should significantly decrease carbon emissions in the United States.

Ground for debate

The affirmative possibilities for these topic areas fall in two main categories: the use of alternative – especially renewable – energy sources, and increasing conservation of energy. Alternative sources could include the use of many types of solar energy, wind energy, geothermal technology, hydroelectric power, nuclear power, biofuels and hydrogen fuels, and clean coal technologies. Conservation cases might use mechanisms like tax incentives, might legislate fuel efficiency for new vehicles that are manufactured and are on American roads, might decrease the national speed limits, might create new “green” building codes, or might subsidize industries that retrofit their facilities to make them greener. This list is not exhaustive but does mention the major affirmative case areas. Advantages could include a decrease in carbon emissions, a decrease in global warming, other environmental advantages, increased national security and many different economic advantages as well as national security advantages.

Negative approaches to these topics would include a number of case specific solvency debates and many different disadvantage scenarios, such as foreign policy/isolationism, trade-off/spending, economic and global energy market disadvantages, collapse of economies such as those of the Middle East and Russia, and relations disadvantages, especially concerning oil supplying countries, India and China. There would be a good number of disadvantages specific to particular affirmative cases as well. The counterplan ground is fertile with states/private industries counterplans and international counterplans as options that have ample evidence. A number of critical arguments are also viable, including those on capitalism, the environment, and ecological use of the Earth.

An energy topic is a good choice for many reasons. It is gaining importance in our national dialogue, and its timeliness is unquestionable. Al Gore has brought climate issues

caused by fossil fuel usage to the forefront for public discourse. “Energy independence” is a term of art that is more and more common in the political arena. Energy as a core item in the debate about national security make topic timely and debatable. As for material availability, there is an abundance of current information easily and readily available in both print and electronic sources, and students who continually read throughout their competitive seasons will find plentiful updates and may find themselves more successful than those who believe the work is done after their time at summer institutes. One would not need to have access to expensive databases to be able to gather excellent information on these topics. The balance on these topics allows for a good variety of affirmatives and gives our students an opportunity to discuss scientific and environmental issues in an appropriate depth without their having to be scientific experts. In the past, energy topics have proven to be interesting for our least and most experienced students, and while it is true that we have debated energy before, its last incarnation was the 1996-97 school year. It is not a less important topic today than it was then; indeed, it may be even more important considering the status of the United States as a world leader who has become increasingly dependent on unstable sources of energy. The topic is interesting for students because it complements much of what they are learning in social science and science classes, but it is also interesting for our judging community. Those who are lay judges and are paying exorbitant bills at the gas pump and for electricity will find it interesting, and those who are seasoned policy debate judges will see rounds on a balanced topic with a variety of argument choices for both teams. We are particularly interested in this topic because its focus is explicitly on policy advocacy.

Synopsis

The demand for energy worldwide is expected to grow by over 50 percent by 2030 and most economies are fundamentally fossil-fuel based. These fossil fuels are often located in places that are geographically hard to reach and geopolitically challenging. The United States needs to articulate a sound and sustainable energy policy that promotes livable communities and a livable world for all life forms. Energy has become a household concern and decision-makers are struggling with policy choices. The public discourse is obsessed with energy. Future generations will pay a high price for our lack of foresight and action on the issue of energy and ultimately, the survival of our civilization will depend on the way we view and use energy. Affirmative plans might explore using alternative and renewable sources, conservation of energy or a mixture of the two, and would claim advantages related to foreign relations, national security and the environment. Negative teams would have ample ground for specific solvency arguments, and a variety of disadvantages concerning domestic and international economies, foreign relations, and the politics of energy policy reform. Evidence is readily available supporting all sides of the energy debate and comes from a variety of easily accessible sources.