

Energy

The trend of reduced U.S oil production and increasing imports is moving the United States back to the oil import dependence of the 1970s. The Energy Policy Act of 1992 will slow but will not reverse the trend toward increasing import dependence.

Oil prices are low compared to the 1980s, but growth in consumption worldwide will tighten world oil supplies and may result in substantial oil price increases over the next 20 years.

Declining U.S. oil production will further reduce the ability of the U.S. economy to cope with supplies and rising oil prices.

The United States should not wait for a crisis to plan for a secure energy future for the nation.

We therefore recommend the following energy measures:

Conservation

1. Develop and require energy efficiency standards for all new buildings and homes and the retrofitting of existing buildings. New home buyers should be given a rating of the home's expected energy use.
2. Improve mandatory energy efficiency standards for appliances.
3. Expand government support of energy efficient transit such as mass transit systems and intercity rail.
4. Raise the mandatory fuel economy requirement for automobiles and light trucks subject to the following conditions:
 - a. Require a percentage increase in the mileage standards for each manufacturer if it can be shown to be technologically feasible and not cause an adverse impact on employment in the automobile industry.
 - b. Apply the increase to domestic and foreign fleets as under current law.
 - c. Retain administrative discretion to relax or strengthen standards as is now in the law.
 - d. Adopt an incentive in the mileage requirement for domestic fuel efficient car production to bring small car production back to underutilized U.S. factories.
5. Expand the government's research program for Intelligent Vehicle-Highway Systems (IVHS) to improve traffic control systems which will make more efficient use of highways and improve energy efficiency of vehicles.
6. The government should monitor and distribute information comparing U.S. process technologies with the best available examples of energy efficiency and productivity elsewhere in the world. Goals should be set for improved energy efficiency of energy-intensive industries.
7. Expand the weatherization program for low-income households.

New Supplies

1. Revitalize programs for development of new energy sources that are alternatives to oil. These include solar, wind, gasohol, tidal and geothermal, waste matter, oil shale, tar sands, and synthetic fuels from coal, and other materials.
2. Speed action on the siting of a nuclear waste disposal site.
3. Take action to build a pipeline to transport natural gas from the Alaskan North Slope parallel to the existing oil pipeline. Begin construction of tankers and port facilities to transport the gas to the lower 48 states.
4. Expand further the requirements for alternative fuel vehicles and make alternative fuels more available to motorists.
5. Accelerate the development of “clean coal technologies” that will permit increased use of U.S. coal in an environmentally acceptable manner.

Other Measures

1. Enact a permanent ban on the export of Alaskan oil and natural gas.
2. Increase the low-income energy assistance program to assure the poor are protected from the hardship of energy price increases.
3. Create an oil import authority to purchase oil from foreign sources. The government should determine the amount of oil imported, negotiate its price and provide for its allocation.
4. Raise the emergency petroleum stockpile to 1.5 billion barrels.
5. Enact a standby windfall profits tax on oil company profits to capture the windfall from price increases during an oil import shortfall.
6. Explore the Alaskan National Wildlife Refuge for oil with safeguards to protect the environment.
7. Restore price regulation to the wholesale electric power industry.