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Potential Contribution of Rocky Mountain Natural Gas to U.S. Energy Supply—Resource, Demand and Price Considerations

Projections by United States government and gas industry research organizations indicate that U.S. gas consumption could increase by up to 50% from the current 22 trillion cubic feet by the year 2015. The Rocky Mountain region contains the largest remaining potential gas resource, outside of the U. S. Gulf Coast.

An analysis is made of the gas resource assessments of the Potential Gas Committee for the Rocky Mountain region for the time period 1992 – 2002. The analysis is for 16 geologic provinces in the region. Additionally, Rocky Mountain gas resource estimates from the 1995 U.S. Geological Survey National Assessment (updated through 2002), the 1999 National Petroleum Council study, and the 2000 Gas Technology Institute Baseline Projection establish a range of assessed resource values for the region. Lastly, the total United States – Canadian gas resource base is discussed in relation to the Rocky Mountain region.

Gas price projections by the Gas Technology Institute and U.S. Department of Energy are examined in light of 1) gas price differentials with other Lower 48 producing regions and Canada, 2) the effects of pipeline capacity constraints to other market regions, 3) competition between natural gas and coal in the electrical power generation sector, and 4) discoveries and reserve additions attributable to the year 2000 gas price spike.