
Why we Hate the Oil Companies: Straight Talk from an Energy Insider

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ABSTRACT

National public policy efforts to support or expand the nation's energy system, including supplies, efficiency, infrastructure, and environmental protections, and to deliver "energy independence" have failed over the past four decades, from the Nixon to the Obama administration. More recently, despite the high oil price "wake up" call delivered to the U.S. during the period 2005-2008, policymakers have been unable or unwilling to address the nation's energy security, economic competitiveness that comes from affordable energy, and the potential jobs creation initiatives that a sound energy policy would and should deliver. Given the current trajectory of an aging infrastructure, decades of restrictions on drilling, failure to tackle the obstacles that prevent both more nuclear plant and clean coal plant projects, frittering at the edges of renewable energy, and avoidance of other energy "hard choices," within the decade the nation faces an unprecedented energy abyss. By 2020 there will be inadequate supplies of liquid fuels and electricity taking the nation toward inevitable gas lines, brown-out's, black-out's, and extraordinary high prices. The energy abyss will stick around for up to a full decade with all of the national insecurity, economic decline, joblessness, and social malaise that accompanies energy shortages in third world countries. The nation has to come to grips with its energy future sooner, not later. The essence of this talk will focus on the three important steps that every person will be invited to take to make the difference the nation and the world needs to ensure energy affordability and availability forever. The world and this country have more energy than we will ever need. The energy industry has the people, the technology, and the capacity to produce it. We can do better than allow or tolerate its rationing and excessive pricing for the narrow political interests of those who govern us. We need a periodic reminder of who works for whom in a democracy.