

# Access to Energy

A Pro-Science, Pro-Technology, Pro-Free Enterprise Monthly Newsletter  
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Dr. Arthur B. Robinson, President and Research Professor, Oregon Institute of Science and Medicine

## Energy and Freedom

Petr Beckman founded *Access to Energy* 34 years ago for the purpose of communicating the truth about nuclear-electric power to the American people. He foresaw the devastating effects that failure to develop nuclear energy would have on the United States, and he feared that enviro, political, and media propagandists who were lying about nuclear power in an effort to stop its development.

The propagandists won. The United States government stopped the building of nuclear power plants, with President Jimmy Carter driving the final nails into the nuclear energy coffin. During the past 30 years, similar liars and government actions have managed to prevent a resumption of nuclear power development.

Nuclear engineers have maintained and improved most of the approximately 100 nuclear power plants that America had at the time, but no new plants have been built. These old plants still generate about 20% of America's electricity.

At about the same time, the United States government undertook an extensive series of steps that crippled the hydrocarbon energy industry. Further development of resources was inhibited, taxes were imposed, regulations proliferated and the development of American domestic hydrocarbon energy was thereby made so expensive that it was priced out of the world market.

Here also the propagandists won. America ceased to have a self-sufficient supply of hydrocarbon energy. Americans were falsely told that America is running out of hydrocarbon resources. Now, the "human-caused global warming" lie has been added.

Since nuclear energy and hydrocarbon energy were and still are the only practical methods of energy generation on a large scale, the American people lost their energy independence and became dependent upon foreign supplies.

It is important to know certain facts.

First, there is no significant danger from nuclear power plants. In fact, nuclear-electric energy is by far – nothing else is even close – the safest, most economical, and most environmentally sound way to produce electricity. This has been true for more than 40 years.

Second, hydrocarbon energy - which is still superior to nuclear energy for most uses, except the generation of electricity - is not resource restricted. The United States has such vast coal, oil, and natural gas resources that it could easily be entirely independent for many future centuries. Moreover, coal, oil, and natural gas can be easily converted into one another. The relative use of nuclear, coal, oil, and gas fuels is simply an engineering and economic choice.

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These are not opinions - they are facts. The propaganda to the contrary that has been used to cripple our country's energy industries is simply lies – lies specifically invented for the purpose of diminishing our technology and our freedom.

These lies have, so far, been very successful. At the present time our wealth is being rapidly dissipated by the cost of buying foreign energy; our industries are being lost to foreign competition because inexpensive energy was necessary to maintain our competitive technological advantages; and our military resources and our personal freedoms are being diminished by wars for the misguided purpose of protecting our access to foreign energy.

For the past six years, America has had a President who understands energy. Unfortunately, almost every effort he has made to expand domestic energy production has been thwarted by corrupt Republican and Democrat politicians in the U.S. Congress. Now, as he passes from the scene, it appears likely that our government will once again be fully in the hands of the reprehensible forces that have successfully crippled our energy industries over the past 30 years.

The American nation bequeathed to us by previous generations was like an enormous flywheel. It has taken a long time to slow that flywheel down. Now, however, there is little time left. Taxation, regulation, litigation, and propaganda have had devastating effects - with none more disastrous than those on our domestic energy industries, upon which all of our technology depends.

And - there is one more fact. The very existence of the United States - a great experiment in the freedom and dignity of individual human beings - is crucial to the future of all humanity. As those currently in charge of that experiment, our generations are morally required to keep this experiment alive. It is morally wrong for us to allow our own selfishness and ignorance, or the selfishness and ignorance of those around us to destroy the American experiment. We are not required to force our ways on others nor to punish those who go a different way, but we are required by Providence to keep the example of the United States vibrant and alive in the world.

The needed actions are self-evident. *Every* tax, regulation, law, or other impediment that currently inhibits any energy-producing industry should immediately be abolished - and no new such tax, law, or regulation should be created until the flow of useful energy across the borders of the United States is strongly outward, with net exports comprising a large percentage of total production - perhaps as much as 50%. Simultaneously, and for the same period of time, all local, state, and federal taxes should be waived for all persons employed in the energy industries, and these industries should operate with no government oversight whatever. The cost of these measures - if any, since they would likely increase our wealth - can be paid by ending all political, economic, and military adventures used to secure foreign supplies of energy.

We are in very serious trouble. Some propose an energy Manhattan project where a huge government program is created to solve our energy problem. This will not work because the government *is* our energy problem - it is certainly not the solution to it.

If, however, we lift the entire burden of government off the back of free enterprise, free men will solve our energy problem in record time. Moreover, not only will this save our nation, it will demonstrate to nations everywhere the accomplishments that truly free men can achieve, even when they begin as underdogs as a result of their own mistakes.