



ADVERTISEMENT

FREE NEWT!



[Home](#) [Blog Row](#) [NRO Radio](#) [NRO TV](#) [Subscribe](#) [Search](#) [Shop!](#) [Donate](#) [Media Kit](#) [Appearances](#) [Contact](#)
[Bench Memos](#) [Campaign Spot](#) [The Corner](#) [Frum](#) [Kudlow](#) [NR / Digital Liberal Fascism](#) [Media Blog](#) [Phi Beta Cons](#) [Planet Gore](#) [Pryce-Jones](#) [Tank](#)

NRO BLOG ROW | PLANET GORE | ARCHIVES | SEARCH | E-MAIL | RSS

planet gore

THE HOT BLOG

Thursday, June 12, 2008

A Growing Chorus [Drew Thornley]

I would ask if it is possible for federal energy policy to become any more backward and senseless than it now is, but I fear as soon as I do, Washington will outdo itself and make matters worse.

The U.S. has tens of billions of barrels of proven oil reserves — and potentially many times more in recoverable reserves — underneath federal lands, but off-limits to domestic drilling. The same is true for oil in the Outer Continental Shelf, where trillions of cubic feet of natural gas are also off-limits. The federal response? Continue to block domestic drilling; go hat-in-hand to the Saudis for more of their oil.

Congress forbids us from accessing our own resources, even as prices soar — inflicting enormous pain at the pump and making us more dependant on foreign (and dangerous) powers. Would exploiting those resources solve all our energy problems? No. Would it be a enormous step in the right direction? Yes.

Likewise, Congress has opposed an expanded role for nuclear power — we've had no new facilities for decades.

However, I am encouraged by the growing chorus calling for domestic oil drilling. Take heed, Congress. Excerpts from some voices of sanity:

George Will: The U.S. Minerals Management Service says that restricted area contains perhaps 86 billion barrels of oil and 420 trillion cubic feet of natural gas — 10 times as much oil and 20 times as much natural gas as Americans use in a year. Drilling is underway 60 miles off Florida. The drilling is being done by China, in cooperation with Cuba, which is drilling closer to South Florida than U.S. companies are. ANWR is larger than the combined areas of five states (Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New Jersey, Delaware), and drilling along its coastal plain would be confined to a space one-sixth the size of Washington's Dulles airport. Offshore? Hurricanes Katrina and Rita destroyed or damaged hundreds of drilling rigs without causing a large spill. There has not been a significant spill from an offshore U.S. well since 1969. Of the more than 7 billion barrels of oil pumped offshore in the past 25 years, 0.001 percent — that is one-thousandth of 1 percent — has been spilled. Louisiana has more than 3,200 rigs offshore — and a thriving commercial fishing industry.

ADVERTISEMENT



Victor Davis Hanson: Another paradox: American laws and technology ensure a rig off Florida or in Alaska has far less chance of springing a leak than one in the Persian Gulf or the Russian tundra. If there really is a shared Planet Earth, then aren't we all its collective stewards? By locking out energy exploration in the United States, we are encouraging it almost everywhere else. . . . We should stop talking about suing the OPEC cartel, jawboning the House of Saud to lower prices, blaming the oil companies, or adding yet another massive tax on sky-high gas prices. What we don't need right now are more pie-in-the-sky sermons about wind and solar saving us all or about millions of new jobs in green technology that can be almost instantly created. That all may be possible in a generation. But in the here and now, we still need to tap the abundant conventional energy we already have in the United States. And in large part that means building, mining, and drilling.

Daniel Henninger: At this point in time, is there another country on the face of the earth that would possess the oil and gas reserves held by the United States and refuse to exploit them? Only technical incompetence, as in Mexico, would hold anyone back. But not us. We won't drill. California won't drill for the estimated 1.3 billion barrels of recoverable oil off its coast because of bad memories of the Santa Barbara oil spill — in 1969. We won't drill for the estimated 5.6 billion to 16 billion barrels of oil in the moonscape known as the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) because of — the caribou. . . . Our waters may hold 60 trillion untapped cubic feet of natural gas.

Roy Innis: The shortages and soaring prices have been created and imposed on us by government policies and edicts. They are artificial. They are due to unnecessary restrictions on developing the energy resources that we still have in abundance, right here in these United States. . . . These intolerable policies have been imposed in the name of protecting the environment. But this is a false dichotomy — this notion that we cannot develop our critically needed energy resources without sacrificing environmental values. The platforms that produce oil and natural gas off our shores do not pollute our coastal waters. In fact, they create magnificent, towering artificial reefs that actually increase marine life. And by reducing the need to import oil from overseas, they decrease the likelihood of tanker accidents that do result in significant damage to coastal shorelines, habitats and wildlife. . . . No other nation on Earth is so self-centered that it locks up its own energy — and then uses other countries' resources . . . and demands that *they* produce more to meet *our* needs, which will continue to grow as our population and energy use increase. It is high time that we stopped acting that way.

WSJ: Amid \$135 oil, it ought to be an easy, bipartisan victory to lift the political restrictions on energy exploration and production. Record-high fuel costs are hitting consumers and business like a huge tax increase. Yet the U.S. remains one of the only countries in the world that chooses *as a matter of policy* to lock up its natural resources. . . . Engineers recently perfected refining solid shale rock into diesel or gas, which may amount to the largest oil supply in the world — perhaps as much as 1.8 trillion barrels in the American West. That's enough to meet current U.S. oil demand for more than two centuries. Yet as late as 2007, Democrats attached a rider to the energy bill that prohibits leasing the federal interior lands that contain at least 80% of America's oil shale. . . . Democrats are going to have to grow up. The oil-rich areas they want to leave untouched are accessible with minimal environmental disturbance, thanks to modern technology. Hurricanes Katrina and Rita flattened terminals across the Gulf of Mexico but didn't cause a single oil spill. . . . In a May Gallup poll, 57% favored "allowing drilling in U.S. coastal and wilderness areas now off limits."

Kathleen Hartnett White: U.S. oil production has steadily declined since the 1970s. Over these 35 years, oil exploration, pumping, pipeline infrastructure, and refining have been consistently opposed by the powerful environmentalist establishment . . . and with great success. It is time to reconsider these

advertisement

Eight Costly Investment Mistakes (and How to Avoid Them)

Making money isn't just about picking stocks. It's also about avoiding mistakes that can harm your portfolio. A brand new report by *Forbes* columnist and money manager Ken Fisher is called "**The Eight Biggest Mistakes Investors Make and How to Avoid Them.**" Read it now before problems start. You've got nothing to lose but your profits.

[Click Here to Download Your Report!](#)

FISHER INVESTMENTS™
www.fi.com
Ads by Google



constraints on domestic production. . . . At today's consumption rates, proven reserves would last 50 years. Yet the amount of proven reserves might jump to more than 50 billion barrels if the government "consented" to development of areas now off-limits. And "recoverable reserves" — known oil resources capable of recovery, but with more cost and technical difficulty than proven reserves — hold several thousand times more. These resources include: light oil in place (293 bbo); heavy oil (81 bbo); oil sands (80 bbo); and the mother lode, oil shale (2,118 bbo). Add the 21.8 bbo proven reserves and 30 bbo off-limits, and the total 2.6 trillion barrel endowment of American oil resources would support U.S. demand for thousands of years.

This chorus will grow for a number of reasons, but mostly because its message is the most sensible and the alternatives are too damning. The current path leads to energy poverty and failure. Americans are exasperated with the effects of Congress' energy-policy incompetence. Petroleum prices are climbing, rogue states aren't becoming any less troublesome, and this country and her energy needs are only growing.

With any luck, Congress will break from the chains of the environmental lobby and start making common-sense decisions that will, for starters, lower energy and electricity prices (and, for that matter, food prices) and lessen our alliances with rogue oil-exporting nations. We have abundant domestic energy resources. The consequences of not tapping them are numerous and far-reaching. A majority of the American people want us to use them. That's all Congress should need to reverse decades of energy-policy nonsense and open up our domestic resources for the health of the country.

06/12 04:00 PM

© National Review Online 2008. All Rights Reserved.

[Home](#) | [Search](#) | [NR / Digital](#) | [Donate](#) | [Media Kit](#) | [Contact Us](#)

This page loaded in 0.007817 seconds.