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## Talk of Energy Summit Spurs Hope

### But what kind of impact would such a meeting have?

By KTRH's Bill O'Neal

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They're certainly two very big words to use as the country continues to wrestle with a tight energy market-but would an energy summit really make much of a difference? While North Dakota Senator Kent Conrad makes his push, some experts will tell you we've simply backed ourselves in to a corner-and it will be difficult to get out of it.

"This should have been done back after the first embargo in '73, and especially after the second embargo in '79. We didn't learn our lessons then," said Texas Alliance of Energy Producers President Alex Mills, who also said we had plenty of opportunities along the way to make our lives a little easier.

"If President Clinton had not vetoed the ANWAR Bill that would have allowed drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge-that was ten years ago, we would have that production online right now," Mills said. Others see the same situation, and know it will take time for real change to take effect.

"You can't flip a switch to a non-carbon alternative. It's a long-term project if that's what the country needs to do," said Kathleen White with the Texas Public Policy Foundation. She often wonders why we didn't see the rapid development coming in other parts of the world-which is putting so much pressure on our energy supply today.

"At a speed, and with a consumption of these commodities-oil, food-that has really startled a lot of planners and policy makers," White said. Going forward, she said we need to be smart.

"It takes three gallons of Ethanol-85-a larger blend-to drive as far as two gallons of gasoline," White said, noting that you aren't helping yourself if both products cost about the same.

Mills also said a lot of planning needs to go in to fixing things.

"Not just wind, solar, and ethanol. We also need to include coal, nuclear, crude oil, natural gas", Mills said.

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