

New Energy for America

The Problem

America's energy policy is running on empty. Families are strapped by rising gas and heating costs. We're shipping billions to oil producers abroad. Our security is weakened by deepening dependence on foreign oil. Catastrophic climate change is a real and present danger. And, thanks to years of Bush administration denials and obstruction, we are running out of time.

Families are now spending an annual average of \$1,702 more for home heating oil and \$2,327 more to fill up their cars than in 2000.

Last year, we spent \$237 billion on foreign oil¹, with the help of borrowed money from the Chinese. Meanwhile, we've lost 3.7 million manufacturing jobs over the course of the Bush administration.

The warning signs of catastrophic climate change are all around us. The Arctic is melting at a record pace. Wildfires are burning hotter and longer. A record number of Category 5 hurricanes have formed in the Atlantic Ocean this decade. Hunting seasons and wildlife habitats are beginning to be adversely impacted.

The genius of America is to turn crisis into opportunity. If we change policy – launch a concerted drive for energy independence, we can put millions of Americans to work generating clean, affordable energy alternatives and maximizing energy efficiency. What's stopping us from creating jobs, saving money and saving the planet?

The Reason

The path to a clean energy economy has been blocked by the Bush administration and its Republican congressional allies who scorn the threat posed by global warming, and discount the growing economic and security costs of reliance on foreign oil. Instead of seeing the transition to renewable energy and conservation as an opportunity, they denounce it as a threat to our economy. And their do-nothing, know-nothing policies are reinforced by entrenched corporate lobbies.

ExxonMobil reported the largest profits of any company in history – over \$40 billion. Yet Republicans in Congress blocked efforts to invest in renewable energy.

We spent \$237 billion on imported oil last year, and we've blown more than \$500 billion on Iraq so far², as our national security has been weakened by relying on – and occupying – volatile regions of the world.

Hunters, fishermen, and farmers all attest to the startling changes wrought by global warming. After years of denial, President Bush has finally admitted that something is happening, yet his administration continues to cook the books, pressuring government scientists to downplay the data and mislead the public.

For too long, conservatives have been subsidizing the disease and starving the cure. We don't have to continue the failed policies that perpetuate the addiction to oil and put our pocketbooks and planet at risk. We have a choice.

The Solution

We need a concerted national initiative – a 10 year plan like John Kennedy's Apollo Initiative that took us to the moon – to move us to a new energy economy, creating jobs, strengthening our security and resolving the climate crisis. We can weatherize homes and office buildings, saving money on reduced energy costs. We can move to renewable energy sources – wind, solar, biofuels – that already exist. We can mobilize science and technology and the imaginations of the young to build the next generation of energy-efficient appliances, batteries, advanced automotive technologies.

If we take the initiative, we can then help lead the world into the imperative cooperative efforts to curb carbon emissions and address global warming. With the revenue we generate by scrapping giveaways to Big Oil and auctioning off carbon allowances, we can create millions of new jobs in renewable and low carbon energy production, green building construction and retrofits, and the manufacture of new energy-efficient products – good-paying jobs that can't be easily outsourced. Rather than shipping billions abroad for oil, we'll profit from taking the lead in the growing markets for green technology. We can develop the clean coal technologies vital to the transition to sustainable energy, explore the benefits and costs of a new generation of nuclear power. We'll provide sustainable and affordable fuel options for consumers and businesses. We'll fortify our economy and our security while creating jobs, saving money and saving the planet. There's no reason to wait, and no time to lose.

Telling the Story

◆ Stories to Look for

- ◆ Individuals forced to choose between heating homes and other basic necessities
- ◆ Ideas that must be acted on but need capital – such as better car batteries, carbon capture and sequestration technology cancelled by Bush administration, and solar panel technology
- ◆ Commuters faced with rising fuel costs and inadequate public transportation
- ◆ Laid-off workers eager to train for “green-collar” jobs, or entrepreneurs getting started
- ◆ Companies or schools that have gone green and reduced heating costs
- ◆ Small business or farm forced to make cuts (in labor, benefits, production, etc.) because of increased cost of energy in production

Spotlight Story #1

SAN JOSE, Calif., May 2 — Strangers are flocking to Eric and Nicole Jorgensen's boxy 50-year-old tract house. With energy on nearly everyone's mind, the Jorgensens' place — with solar panels on the back roof, a sun oven in the backyard and a meter that runs backward — is a full-scale attraction. It draws fifth-grade classes, international news crews and fellow homeowners.

"California has so much sun that it's silly everyone isn't doing this," said Mr. Jorgensen, 34, a physicist at Stanford University. He hitched his house to the sun and wind last October, and it now produces more energy than it uses.³

From the New York Times, May 3, 2001

Spotlight Story #2

SWEETWATER, Tex. — The wind turbines that recently went up on Louis Brooks's ranch are twice as high as the Statue of Liberty, with blades that span as wide as the wingspan of a jumbo jet. "That's just money you're hearing," he said as the turbines hummed in a brisk breeze recently.

Teenagers who used to flee small towns like Sweetwater after high school are sticking around to take technical courses in local junior colleges and then work on wind farms. Marginal ranches and cotton farms are worth more with wind turbines on them.

"Wind has invigorated our business like you wouldn't believe," said Marty Foust, local shopkeeper. "We're now in our own bubble."⁴

From the New York Times, February 23, 2008

Hot Facts

- ◆ **Bush's energy policy has kept us addicted to oil.**
 - ◆ We spent \$237 billion on imported crude oil last year.⁵
 - ◆ Despite enjoying record profits from sky-high gas prices, oil companies get billions in tax breaks and government subsidies.⁶
 - ◆ In 2007, Senate Republicans used a filibuster to block a clean energy bill that would have stripped subsidies from Big Oil and invested in renewable energy.⁷
 - ◆ The new Congress was able to raise fuel-efficiency standards to 35 mph by 2020, but that alone won't cut greenhouse gas emissions and achieve energy independence.

- ◆ **Big Oil reaps windfall profits from our failed energy policy.**
 - ◆ ExxonMobil posted the highest annual profit ever for a U.S. company, \$40.61 billion in 2007.⁸

- ◆ **Working Americans bear the brunt of our failed energy policy.**
 - ◆ The price of both gasoline and home heating oil has more than doubled since January 2001.⁹
 - ◆ Families spend \$1,702 more to heat their homes than in 2000.¹⁰
 - ◆ Families spend \$2,327 more to fuel their cars than in 2000.¹¹

- ◆ **Despite years of denial by Bush and Republicans in Congress, the climate crisis grows worse and the dangers are accelerating.**
 - ◆ Arctic ice caps are melting at a record pace.¹²
 - ◆ Wildfires are burning hotter and longer.¹³
 - ◆ A record number of Category 5 hurricanes have formed in the Atlantic Ocean this decade.¹⁴
 - ◆ Even hunting seasons and wildlife habitats are beginning to be adversely impacted.¹⁵
 - ◆ Lake Mead, which supplies water to Phoenix and Las Vegas, is drying up.¹⁶

- ◆ **Climate change is an urgent economic threat.**
 - ◆ The British government projects a 10-20% decline in global economic activity – comparable to Great Depression.¹⁷
 - ◆ Unstable climate will decrease food production and water supplies.¹⁸

- ◆ **Investment in new energy is good for the economy.**
 - ◆ Most jobs producing renewable energy will be in manufacturing, helping reverse the recent loss of nearly 4 million manufacturing jobs.¹⁹
 - ◆ Addressing climate change will be much cheaper than dealing with the consequences.²⁰

Public Pulse

- ◆ **Americans are tired of rising fuel prices and want a new energy policy.**
 - ◆ 65% say our energy policy is seriously on the wrong track.²¹
(*Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Poll, April 2007*)
 - ◆ 81% of Americans think gas prices are “unreasonable” when “compared to the prices of most other things [they] buy.”²²
(*CNN/Opinion Research Corporation Poll, May 2007*)
 - ◆ 63% of Americans say that recent price increases in gas causes them “financial hardships.”²³
(*CNN/Opinion Research Corporation Poll, November 2007*)
 - ◆ 66% of Americans have had to reduce their driving, turn down the thermostat, or cut back on other expenses. 49% have changed their vacation plans.²⁴
(*AP/IPSOS Public Affairs Poll, May 2006*)

- ◆ **Americans support an energy policy based on public investment in new energy.**
 - ◆ 64% of Americans are “willing to pay higher taxes on gasoline and other fuels if the money was used for research into renewable sources like solar and wind energy.” Only 33% are unwilling.²⁵ (*CBS/New York Times Poll, April 2007*)
 - ◆ 75% of Americans would be willing to pay more for electricity if it were generated by renewable sources like solar or wind energy in order to help reduce global warming.²⁶ (*CBS/New York Times Poll, April 2007*)

- ◆ **Concern about global warming adds urgency for a new energy policy.**
 - ◆ 76% of people believe the effects of global warming are apparent now.²⁷
(*Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Poll, April 2007*)
 - ◆ Seven in ten Americans think that the federal government should do more to address global warming.²⁸ (*ABC News/Washington Post Poll, April 2007*)

- ◆ **Energy transition raises difficult issues.**
 - ◆ Nuclear power: Many conservatives and some experts argue for nuclear power, which many unions and some environmental groups support as a necessary part of dealing with global warming. Others worry about how we safely store waste that remains radioactive for thousands of years.
 - ◆ Coal: We have plentiful reserves of coal, which supplies a large portion of our energy needs. Some environmental activists argue against any further coal – burning plants. Others, and many unions, push hard for clean coal – a process that seeks to gassify the carbon, and store it back in the earth. Coal is a central energy source in China, Eastern Europe and elsewhere, so many scientists think developing clean coal is an imperative.

Message Box

Us on Us	Them on Us
<p>We should launch a concerted drive for new energy – investing in renewable energy, conservation and new green innovation. We can generate millions of jobs, gain energy independence, reduce our trade deficits, address global warming and strengthen our security.</p>	<p>The market not the government should define the right energy mix. They'll just waste your money on subsidies and boondoggles. With the price of oil where it is, private investment is already building alternatives.</p> <p>And their burdensome regulations and limits will tax our companies and damage our economy at the very time it least can afford it.</p>
Us on Them	Them on Them
<p>They're subsidizing the disease and starving the cure. They've done nothing as oil prices have soared and the climate crisis has gotten worse.</p> <p>Republicans in Congress blocked efforts to rollback subsidies to Big Oil and use that money to invest in renewable energy. Yet you pay a lot more at the pump than you ever saw in Bush's tax cuts.</p>	<p>We need a comprehensive energy plan, but one that is based on markets and competition, not on government.</p> <p>Lower taxes, so the market can take the lead in developing technology to cut greenhouse gas emissions.</p> <p>We should open up oil fields here at home, and get rid of the red tape that blocks the development of domestic energy sources, like nuclear power.</p>

Additional Resources

Campaign for America's Future: New Energy
<http://ourfuture.org/energy>

Apollo Alliance
<http://apolloalliance.org/>

Ella Baker Center: Green-Collar Jobs Campaign
<http://ellabakercenter.org/page.php?pageid=5>

Union of Concerned Scientists: Clean Energy
http://www.ucsusa.org/clean_energy/

League of Conservation Voters: 2008 Presidential Primaries Voter Guide
<http://www.lcv.org/voterguide/>

Grist: Energy
<http://grist.org/topic/energy>

Endnotes

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- ¹ "U.S. International Trade in Goods and Services, December 2007," Exhibit 17, Imports of Energy-Related Petroleum Products, Including Crude Oil, U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, U.S. Department of Commerce, 14 February 2008.
<http://bea.gov/newsreleases/international/trade/2008/pdf/trad1207.pdf>
 - ² Amy Belasco, "The Cost of Iraq, Afghanistan, and Other Global War on Terror Operations Since 9.11," CRS Report for Congress, 9 November 2007. <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/RL33110.pdf>
 - ³ Evelyn Nieves, "In California, Solar's Time to Shine," *New York Times* 3 May 2001.
<http://www.nytimes.com/2001/05/03/national/03CONS.html?ex=1203915600&en=c57f35e40321b68b&ei=5070>
 - ⁴ Clifford Krauss, "Move Over, Oil, There's Money in Texas Wind," *New York Times*, 23 February 2008. <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/02/23/business/23wind.html?ei=5087&em=&en=3ede15dc922971a4&ex=1204002000&pagewanted=print>
 - ⁵ "U.S. International Trade in Goods and Services, December 2007," Exhibit 17. See note 1.
 - ⁶ Based on data contained in *Inventory of Major Federal Energy Programs and Status of Policy Recommendations*, The U.S. Government Accountability Office, GAO-05-379, June 2005, www.gao.gov/news.items/d05379.pdf; as quoted in Testimony of Tyson Slocum, Director of Public Citizen's Energy Program, U.S. House Committee on Energy and Commerce, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, "Gasoline Prices, Oil Company Profits, and the American Consumer," 22 May 2007. <http://www.citizen.org/documents/House07.pdf>
 - ⁷ "Senate Passes Energy Bill Without Oil Tax Hikes," *PBS – The Online NewsHour*, 14 December 2007. http://www.pbs.org/newshour/updates/environment/july-dec07/energybill_12-14.html
 - ⁸ David Ellis, "Exxon Shatters Profit Records," *CNNMoney.com*, 1 February 2008.
http://money.cnn.com/2008/02/01/news/companies/exxon_earnings/
 - ⁹ Gas prices from January 2001 and May 2008. Home heating oil prices from January 1, 2001 and March 17, 2008. Adjusted for 2008 dollars. Data compiled by Oil Price Information Service in cooperation with Wright Express, "Daily Fuel Gauge Report," AAA

<http://www.fuelgaugereport.com/sbsavg.asp>; United States Energy Information Administration, "Weekly Heating Oil and Propane Prices." 17 March 2008.

http://tonto.eia.doe.gov/dnav/pet/pet_pri_wfr_a_EPD2F_PRS_cpgal_w.htm

¹⁰ Rise in home heating oil costs derived from average home usage of home heating oil [864 gallons a year according to The Consumer Energy Council of America: See "Save on Home Heating Oil," Smart Money, 2 November 2005.

<http://www.smartmoney.com/dealoftheday/index.cfm?story=20051102>], and average price of home heating oil \$1.88/gallon in January 2001 (adjusted for inflation and \$3.85/gallon March 2008. [See: United States Energy Information Administration, "Weekly Heating Oil and Propane Prices." 17 March 2008. http://tonto.eia.doe.gov/dnav/pet/pet_pri_wfr_a_EPD2F_PRS_cpgal_w.htm]

¹¹ Increase in fuel costs derived from the following: A) Average fuel consumption per passenger cars and other 2-axel four-tire vehicles, data from Federal Highway Administration table Annual Vehicle Distance Traveled in Miles and Related Data, "Highway Statistics 2002" and "Highway Statistics 2006," <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/policy/ohim/hs02/pdf/vm1.pdf> and

<http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/policy/ohim/hs06/pdf/vm1.pdf> . 2006 figure used to estimate 2008 consumption. B) Average number of vehicles in households with vehicles, found in Energy Information Administration table U.S. Per Household Vehicle-Miles Traveled, Vehicle Fuel Consumption and Expenditures, January 2001,

[http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/rtecs/nhts_survey/2001/tablefiles/t0464\(2005\).pdf](http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/rtecs/nhts_survey/2001/tablefiles/t0464(2005).pdf) C) Average price of gas in January 2001 (adjusted for inflation) and May 2008 from data compiled by Oil Price Information Service in cooperation with Wright Express. "Daily Fuel Gauge Report," AAA <http://www.fuelgaugereport.com/sbsavg.asp>

¹² "Scientist: 'Arctic Is Screaming,'" Associated Press, 11 December 2007.

<http://www.cnn.com/2007/TECH/science/12/11/arctic.melt.ap/>

¹³ "According to experts ... warmer spring seasons—due at least partly to climate change—have already resulted in earlier snowmelt, longer summer dry periods, and increased wildland fire activity in western U.S. forest ecosystems, where the experts stated that fires are linked more to climatic conditions than to land management techniques. Both the frequency of large fire ... and the area burned increased significantly in the western United States during the period of 1987 through 2003 ... wildland fire size and severity are likely to further increase with climate change..." "CLIMATE CHANGE Agencies Should Develop Guidance for Addressing the Effects on Federal Land and Water Resources," United States Government Accountability Office, 7 August 2007.

<http://www.gao.gov/docsearch/abstract.php?rptno=GAO-07-863>

¹⁴ "Category 5 Warning," by Chris Mooney, *Los Angeles Times*, 7 September 2007.

<http://www.latimes.com/news/opinion/la-oe-mooney7sep07,0,6220263.story?coll=la-opinion-rightrail>

¹⁵ "The Chesapeake Bay and Global Warming: A Paradise Lost for Hunters, Anglers, and Outdoor Enthusiasts?," National Wildlife Foundation. September 2007.

http://www.nwf.org/sealevelrise/pdfs/chesapeake_bay_final.pdf

¹⁶ "Lake Mead Could Be Within a Few Years of Going Dry, Study Finds," *New York Times*, 13 February 2007. <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/02/13/us/13mead.html>

¹⁷ "Stern Review on the Economics of Climate Change," 30 October 2006, Sir Nicholas Term, HM Treasury. http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/independent_reviews/stern_review_economics_climate_change/sternreview_index.cfm

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- ¹⁸ “Climate Change: Solutions For Sustainable Development,” The Earth Institute at Columbia University <http://www.earthinstitute.columbia.edu/articles/view/1784>
- ¹⁹ “New Energy for America: The Apollo Jobs Report, Executive Summary” January 2004
- ²⁰ “Reducing U.S. Greenhouse Gas Emissions: How Much at What Cost?” McKinsey & Co., November 2007. <http://www.mckinsey.com/client-service/ccsi/greenhousegas.asp>
- ²¹ “Americans Feel New Urgency on Energy Independence and Global Warming,” Greenberg Quinlan Rosner, April 2007
- ²² CNN/Opinion Research Corporation Poll, May 2007. <http://www.pollingreport.com/energy.htm>
- ²³ CNN/Opinion Research Corporation Poll, Nov. 2007. <http://www.pollingreport.com/energy.htm>
- ²⁴ AP/IPSOS Public Affairs, May 2006. <http://www.pollingreport.com/energy.htm>
- ²⁵ CBS/New York Times Poll, April 2007. <http://www.pollingreport.com/energy.htm>
- ²⁶ Ibid.
- ²⁷ “Americans Feel New Urgency on Energy Independence and Global Warming,” Greenberg Quinlan Rosner, April 2007
- ²⁸ ABC News/Washington Post. April 5-10, 2007. N=1002 adults nationwide