

Renewable Portfolio Standards AFF [5 pages]

Observation One: Inherency

A. Proposed federal Renewable Portfolio Standards are always strongly opposed

Broehl 2005 [Jesse Broehl, Editor, RenewableEnergyAccess.com June 17, 2005
<http://www.renewableenergyaccess.com/rea/news/story?id=33451>]

Washington, D.C. [RenewableEnergyAccess.com] Renewable Energy advocates won a major but tentative victory this week as the U.S. Senate voted 52 to 48 to enact a national renewable portfolio standard, a requirement mandating that utilities throughout the U.S. source at least 10 percent of their electricity production from sources like solar, wind, geothermal, and bioenergy by the year 2020. The amendment to the broader Senate energy bill, offered by Senators Bingaman (D-NM) and Coleman (R-MN), represents the third time such a law was approved by a Senate majority. And as in congressional sessions past, it has been roundly opposed by the fossil fuel lobby, electric utilities, and the Bush Administration which believes such a measure is best left to the states.

B. The magnitude of US oil dependence is putting the nation at risk

Smith and Kelley in 2006. [Frederick and P.X. Chairman of FedEx and ex-Marine General. "Is the United States ready for the next oil shock?" The Cleveland Plain Dealer, August 13th, 2006. 1/n]

The global oil trends now at work - rising consumption, reduced spare production capacity and high levels of instability in key oil-producing countries - all increase the likelihood of a supply shock. But, unfortunately, energy debates in this country often suggest a profound misunderstanding of these international economic dynamics. Calls for "energy independence" notwithstanding, oil is a fungible global commodity, which means that events affecting supply or demand anywhere will affect oil consumers everywhere. A country's exposure to world price shocks is thus a function of the amount of oil it consumes and is not significantly affected by the ratio of domestic to imported petroleum.

The magnitude of our dependence on oil puts stress on our military, strengthens our strategic adversaries and undermines our efforts to support democratic allies. Each year the United States expends enormous military resources protecting the chronically vulnerable oil production and distribution network while also preparing to guarantee international access to key oil-producing regions. This allocation of forces and dollars diminishes the military's capability for dealing with the war on terrorism and other defense priorities.

Observation Two: Harms

A.

The U.S. needs to decrease oil dependency.

The Baltimore Sun, "Time to kick the oil habit" July 09, 2004

Editorial, p. 11A

Since 1980, U.S. **oil** policy has centered almost entirely on enlarging our supply of **oil** -- either by drilling more **oil** wells at home or by cozying up to foreign producers such as Nigeria or **Saudi** Arabia. But as a means to energy security, this plan is dangerously obsolete. U.S. **oil** fields are nearly tapped out. Most of our **oil** allies are so unstable that supply disruptions -- and price spikes -- will become routine.

More to the point, **oil** is a finite resource. Today's high prices have less to do with turmoil in Iraq than with the fact that **oil** companies can't find new **oil** as fast as the United States, China and other booming economies are using it -- and this trend isn't likely to change. The United States uses about 20 million barrels of **oil** a day; the world, about 80 million barrels.

In short, America can no longer afford the fiction that we still control our **oil** supply. Instead, we must refocus on the one area where we do have control: demand. Specifically, we need to find ways to use dramatically less **oil**, especially in our transportation fleet, where two-thirds of all U.S. **oil** use occurs.

To succeed, we'd need to commit to a long-term, broad-based and expensive research and development effort. But if successful, America could not only lower its reliance on an increasingly unstable **oil** economy, but also help start a global transition away from **oil** that even **oil** companies see as inevitable.

B.

OIL DEPENDENCE FUNDS TERRORISM AND OPPRESSION IN OIL REGIMES.

Wirth, Gray and Podesta in 2003 (Timothy, Boyden, and John, "The Future of Energy Policy," Foreign Affairs July/August, pg. 132)-mikee

Nor are supply disruptions and price shocks the only risks that oil dependence creates for U.S. national security. The flow of funds to certain oil-producing states has financed widespread corruption, perpetuated repressive regimes, funded radical anti-American fundamentalism, and fed hatreds that derive from rigid rule and stark contrasts between rich and poor. Terrorism and aggression are byproducts of these realities. Iraq tried to use its oil wealth to buy the ingredients for weapons of mass destruction. In the future, some oil-producing states may seek to swap assured access to oil for the weapons themselves. It is also increasingly clear that the riches from oil trickle down to those who would do harm to America and its friends. If this situation remains unchanged, the United States will find itself sending soldiers into battle again and again, adding the lives of American men and women in uniform to the already high cost of oil.

C. Terrorism risks extinction

ALEXANDER 2000 [Yonah, (Dir. Inter-University Center for Terrorism) "Terrorism in the 21st Century", Depaul Business Law Journal, p. In //wyo-tjc]

More specifically, present-day terrorists have introduced into contemporary life a new scale of terror violence in terms of both threats and responses that has made clear that we have entered into an Age of Terrorism with all of its serious implications to national, regional, and global security concerns. Perhaps the most significant dangers that evolve from modern day terrorism are those relating to the safety, welfare, and rights of ordinary people; the stability of the state system; the health of economic development; the expansion of democracy; and possibly the survival of civilization itself

D.

Expected Oil spike can create disasters that Kill Thousands. Roberts in 2004 (Paul [has written for the New York Times Magazine and Harper's Magazine.] The end of Oil: on the edge of a perilous new world. Houghton Mifflin Company, pg.)-

At the same time, if the consuming world instead continues in its current mode — known by energy economists and other worriers as “business as usual” — oil demand will be so high by 2015 that a peak (or any big disruption, such as a civil war in Saudi Arabia or a massive climate-related disaster that kills thousands and forces politicians to cut the use of oil and other hydrocarbons in a hurry) could be an unmitigated disaster. Thus, the real question, for anyone truly concerned about our future, is not *whether* change is going to come, but whether the shift will be peaceful and orderly or chaotic and violent because we waited too long to begin planning for it. p. 14

Thus, Plan Text: The USFG will significantly increase the production of energy from renewable sources by requiring that all states implement a Renewable Portfolio Standard that mandates that 20% of energy produced come from renewable sources, excluding hydropower, by 2020.

Observation Three: Solvency

A. RPS could successfully helps sustain renewable energy markets

Petersik 2006 [Thomas Petersik March 21, 2006 Renewable Portfolio Standards Help Wind Industry Grow <http://www.eia.doe.gov/oiaf/analysispaper/rps/pdf/rps.pdf>]

Wind power is the fastest growing form of electricity generated in the U.S. In 2005, more than 2,400 megawatts of wind energy were added to the nation's power grid, and it is expected that the market will continue to grow in 2006. According to accredited standards developer American Wind Energy Association (AWEA), growth in the market is largely due to federal support over the past three years through the renewal of tax credits for wind energy. A renewable portfolio standard (RPS) is a market-driven policy set by federal or state governments that helps sustain renewable energy markets like the wind industry. An RPS requires a percentage of electricity be derived from renewable sources, such as wind, solar, biomass or geothermal energy. By setting the level of the standard and its rate of increase over time, a properly-designed and implemented RPS encourages the growth and competitiveness of renewable energy markets, according to experts. An RPS can enable long-term contracts and financing for the renewable energy industry and fuel lower renewable energy costs. An RPS requires electricity generators or retailers to prove, through ownership of renewable energy credits (RECs), that they have achieved a certain percentage of renewable energy generation. Government involvement is limited to monitoring compliance, certifying credits and imposing any necessary penalties. It is up to investors and generators to decide how to meet the requirement, determining the type of energy and technology they will use, as well as price and terms of the contract.

B. RPS have advantages over traditional power sources including stability

Schoofs 2004 [Sam Schoofs 6 August 2004 A Federal Renewable Portfolio Standard: Policy Analysis and Proposal, Calvin College]

There are a number of strong reasons for support of a federal RPS. First, the bulk (88%) of the electricity generation in the U.S. comes from coal, natural gas, and nuclear power [1]. To meet the electricity needs of the U.S. these sources are definitely needed, but there is currently too much reliance. Much of the new electricity generation has relied on natural gas, a fuel that has seen dramatic increases in price in the past several years [46]. Increased diversification of electricity generation sources, exactly the kind that would come from a federal RPS, will decrease demand on natural gas and avoid the cost fluctuations associated with higher demand [46], [47].

C. Any costs are outweighed by the goal of the program, and implementation brings it into competitive cost range

Schoofs 2004 [Sam Schoofs 6 August 2004 A Federal Renewable Portfolio Standard: Policy Analysis and Proposal, Calvin College]

The main question is whether the price that would be paid to fulfill a federal RPS would be appropriate for the incremental net benefits that would arise from reduced pollution [50]. It could be argued that "electricity from renewable energy usually costs so much more than electricity from fossil fuels that externality considerations do not overcome the difference" [50]. Although this is a hard argument to substantiate economically, there may perhaps be some truth in this fact. It is important that the goals of a program such as a federal RPS be remembered. Not only is the goal to reduce pollution but also to subsidize the renewable energy industry so that large-scale implementation will bring overall costs into a more competitive range.

D. Federal RPS brings large scale development lowering costs and contributes to the economy

Schoofs 2004 [Sam Schoofs 6 August 2004 A Federal Renewable Portfolio Standard: Policy Analysis and Proposal, Calvin College]

First, a federal RPS would bring large-scale development of renewable energy and nationwide standards that would lower costs. This is a "learn by doing" approach that will more than likely decrease installation costs and general product costs due to the benefits of economies of scale. Second, the difference in magnitude between the funding that is typically given for renewable energy and the investment that will be made to fulfill an RPS will be orders of magnitude different. This difference will contribute to the economies of scale mentioned above.