

Introduction

The United States is too dependent on oil and the potential negative consequences could spell disaster for the US. Thus, I stand resolved, that the United States Federal Government should adopt a policy to significantly increase the production of energy from renewable sources. To begin, let us cover the barrier to implementing a Renewable Portfolio Standard (or RPS) in the US. An RPS is a policy that mandates a certain percentage of power produced by power companies in the US come from renewable energy. So, for example, Southern California Edison, the major southern California power company, would have to sell at least 20% of its energy from renewable sources rather than solely from oil. Now, to

Observation One: Inherency

A. State Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) solutions need Federal Action to expand

Rabe, B.G., June, 2006 [University of Michigan], “Race to the Top: The Expanding Role of U.S. State Renewable Portfolio Standards”, Pew Center on Global Climate Change,

<http://www.pewclimate.org/docUploads/RPSReportFinal%2Epdf>

This report illustrates a classic case of federalism in energy and environmental policy. States adopting RPSs are providing actual data and real-world models, and the early successes of these states are changing the debate about what states can individually accomplish with their energy systems, how states can cooperate regionally, and whether a federal RPS may be feasible. These states are also, however, pushing up against the limits of what states can do without federal support and coordination. Engagement between state and federal policy makers on this issue has been surprisingly limited, and is overdue. These policy experiments may prove a deciding factor in the energy path that the United States chooses to take, demonstrating that renewables can be a viable part of our energy future.

A national plan for energy generation has not been created by the federal government despite a desperate need for one. Without a comprehensive federal policy to divert US energy production to renewable sources, several harms will jeopardize the United States and its people. These will be explained in

Observation Two: Harms

A. 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 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.

B. Oil Dependence funds terrorism and oppression in oil regimes

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

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

With the threat of terrorism at hand, foreign oil dependence is creating a greater risk for the United States, thus we offer the following plan...

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 by 2020.

Now let's take a look at how implementing an RPS will solve the harms outlined above

Observation Three: Solvency

A. RPS could successfully help 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 worked successfully in the past

Union of Concerned Scientists, Feb 3, 2006,
Renewable Energy--Mitigating Global Warming
http://www.ucsusa.org/clean_energy/clean_energy_policies/RES-climate-strategy.html

Practical solutions do exist. For example, 40 percent of U.S. states have adopted a renewable electricity standard—a policy that requires electricity suppliers to gradually increase their use of renewable energy such as wind, solar, geothermal, and biomass. These states are demonstrating that renewable standards are an affordable solution to reduce CO2 and other unhealthy air emissions, while alleviating the harmful impact that fossil fuel extraction, transport, and use have on land and water resources.

C. RPS Standards also solve fuel diversity, energy security and economic goals

Union of Concerned Scientists, Feb 3, 2006,
Renewable Energy--Mitigating Global Warming
http://www.ucsusa.org/clean_energy/clean_energy_policies/RES-climate-strategy.html

In addition to realizing significant reduction of harmful emissions, the states have also found that renewable standards are an effective means to help meet critical fuel diversity, energy security, and economic goals. In fact, this approach has been so successful that several states—including Minnesota, Nevada, New Mexico, Pennsylvania, Texas and, most recently, New Jersey—have revisited and significantly increased or accelerated their standards.