

## Energy Policy

- In my view, we do not have a comprehensive energy policy, but rather an incomplete list of initiatives driven by special interest legislation rather than by a systematic analysis based on our long term energy needs, the inescapable knowledge that the cheap oil era is coming to an end, and the imperatives dictated by the certainty of global climate change.
- To reduce our dependence on foreign oil, we must:
  1. Enact a national program that is serious about conservation. Our experience this summer shows how effective just a 4% reduction in miles traveled can be in stabilizing or lowering the price of gasoline.
  2. Promote renewable, sustainable energy sources, at the least by renewing the PTC (production tax credits) for wind energy that will expire in a few months. Make these permanent so that investors can rely on them. Better yet, expand their use to solar and other renewable forms of energy that generate no carbon footprint.
  3. Support the League of Women Voters 10-year moratorium on new coal-fired power plants. Restricting greenhouse gas emissions from coal-fired power plants is one of the most important steps we can take to counter global climate change since the burning of coal is the single largest source of global warming pollution in the U.S. No new coal-fired plants should be built until their carbon emissions can be prevented from entering the atmosphere.
  4. Put real dollars into energy technology research and development. Research should be a national priority. Research into Carbon Capture is particularly important since that would allow the clean burning of coal. Research into nuclear fusion (not fission) should be significantly stepped up since fusion has the potential to provide clean energy, not only without a carbon footprint, but without the production of dangerous nuclear waste.
  5. Pursue the most efficient biofuels available, moving from corn based to cellulosic ethanol and butanol. These biofuels will be derived from new crops such as switchgrass, and agricultural waste such as corn stalks. Congress must encourage rapid advances in the research and development of these new products, bringing them to commercial production within the decade. Ethanol sources such as switchgrass have a very bright energy future. From the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (5 Jan 08), the first large scale study showed a Net Energy Yield of 540% compared to a Net Energy Yield of just 15 - 36% for corn based ethanol. So, ethanol from switchgrass, unlike corn based ethanol is highly efficient, and doesn't take away from food production. Incentives should not marry us to old technologies but push us forward to adopt the newest and most efficient biofuel sources available.
- Continuing the use of petroleum does nothing to reduce our carbon footprint or mitigate global warming, ultimately a far more serious problem. I recommend the following actions at a minimum to address global warming, which would also be a de facto national energy policy:
  - Aggressively promote renewable, sustainable energy sources (wind, solar, small-scale hydroelectric, geothermal, etc.) with incentives such as Production Tax

Credits for wind energy to encourage development, and to expand them to other similar sources.

1. Promote conservation to move the economy away from carbon based fuel sources.
2. Support the League of Women Voters 10-year moratorium on new coal-fired power plants.
3. Adopt legislation to cap and mandate reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. Per the Sierra Club, an average reduction of 2% each year would achieve the goal of an 80% total