

# **ENERGY SECURITY: If Not Now, When?**

**A CALL TO ACTION**



**Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life**  
*Protecting Creation, for Generation to Generation*

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## CONTENTS

<b>Energy Security: If Not Now, When?</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The Problem: Oil Dependence</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>What Are The Solutions?</b>	<b>7</b>
Are Regulations Necessary?	
“CAFE” Standards: A Proven Policy	
Energy Conservation and the Economy	
<b>Public Policy Recommendations</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Other Benefits of Reducing Reliance on Oil</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Drilling in Alaska’s Arctic Refuge: A Dangerous Distraction</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Energy Conservation: An Opportunity for Every Citizen to Help</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Energy Issues and Jewish Values</b>	<b>17</b>
‘Let There Be Light’:	
Energy Conservation and God’s Creation	
<b>Energy and National Security</b>	<b>20</b>



## **ENERGY SECURITY: IF NOT NOW, WHEN?**

Oil dependence has long been recognized as a major security concern. In the early 1970s, Arab oil embargoes led to fuel economy standards and other measures which reduced U.S. oil imports 51% from 1979 to 1985.

The trend was reversed when oil prices fell in 1986. The U.S. now imports 56% of its oil, and the government projects that will rise to 65% by 2020. The main culprits: falling average fuel economy of American vehicles, and increased driving.

With only 3% of proven world oil reserves, the only way for the U.S. to reduce reliance on imported oil is to reduce reliance on all oil.

Since September 11, 2001, President Bush and others have underscored the need to reduce oil imports from the very nations which spawn terrorism and threaten the U.S. **Yet no action has been taken by the Administration or Congress to significantly reduce U.S. reliance on oil in more than 20 years.**

The Administration has failed to provide leadership, opposing actions which would be effective in the near term, and promoting approaches whose minimal effects won't be felt for at least a decade.

Scared by an aggressive advertising campaign by automobile manufacturers, Congress failed in 2002 to pass an increase in fuel economy standards. In fact, Congress failed to produce an energy bill at all, though the House passed a bill full of subsidies for the oil and coal industries.

**If not now -- in the wake of a devastating attack by Saudi terrorists and on the brink of war in the Middle East -- when?**

## THE PROBLEM: OIL DEPENDENCE

*"The wealth produced by oil underlies the power of the three totalitarian movements in the Middle East that have chosen to make war on us: the ruling Iraqi Baathists and Iranian mullahs, and al Qaeda, which was spawned by Saudi money... We are at war. We should start by asking what we can do, as soon as possible, to undercut our enemies' power. Other considerations should now follow, not lead... For all of them, their power derives from their oil. It is time to break their sword."*

**R. James Woolsey, CIA Director, 1993-95**  
*Wall Street Journal, September 18, 2002*

Recognizing potential danger to Israel as a result of U.S. reliance on oil from the Middle East, the Jewish community has been advocating decreased American dependence on oil for over 25 years. The danger of this dependence has become even more clear in the wake of September 11<sup>th</sup> and as the nation grapples with the situation in Iraq. The oil that now fuels our vehicles and drives our economy is inextricably tied to conflicts in the Middle East and Central Asia.

Today, the U.S. imports more than half of its oil, and almost half of the imports come from OPEC member nations. This dependence upon oil has significantly affected American policy toward the Middle East.

The other major consideration of American policy in the region is our alliance with, and support of, the State of Israel, the only democracy in the region. Israel and the world Jewish community have a strong interest in ensuring that the values and alliances of the United States will not be compromised by its need for oil. The only way to ensure complete U.S. freedom of action in the Middle East and effective support of Israel is to reduce U.S. reliance on oil.

## THE FACTS

America spends over \$100 billion per year on imported oil.

22% of the world's oil is in the hands of states that are sponsors of terrorism and are under U.S./UN sanctions.

Only 9% of the world's oil is in the hands of countries ranked free by Freedom House. 3% of that is in the United States.

Projecting 2001 production levels, Middle Eastern regimes will control 83% of global oil reserves by 2002.

Fuel economy is at its lowest level since 1980.

*Source: Institute for the Analysis of Global Security*

There are two primary methods for reducing our reliance on imported oil – increasing domestic supply and reducing demand for oil. Because the U.S. has only 3% of the world's proven oil reserves, it is impossible for the U.S. to significantly reduce our dependence on foreign oil through increasing domestic supply. Our priority should be to focus efforts on reducing our demand for oil.

The Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life (COEJL) and others in the Jewish community have focused attention on the need to develop a comprehensive national energy policy that would protect the environment and public health and lead to greater energy independence. Both of these goals can be accomplished through energy conservation and the development of non-fossil fuel based energy sources and technologies – many of which are already at hand.

Over the next several decades, we are likely to see a major transition in the energy system of the United States. Many anticipate the emergence of a clean hydrogen-based system that relies on fuel cells. Though such technologies are very promising and merit significant investment (as the Administration has requested), prudence demands that we quickly adopt the solutions already at hand.

For decades, powerful corporate interests have opposed such common-sense approaches as requiring an increase in average fuel economy standards. The common good demands otherwise.

**The time for action is now.** The Administration and Congress must develop and adopt a comprehensive and environmentally responsible approach to increasing American energy security by reducing our reliance on oil. In addition, each of us must take responsibility for doing what we can to reduce our consumption of oil.

#### **In the President's Words**

“It's important for Americans to remember that America imports more than 50 percent of its oil -- more than 10 million barrels a day. And the figure is rising. This is dependence on foreign oil. And this dependence is a challenge to our economic security, because dependence can lead to price shocks and fuel shortages. And this dependence on foreign oil is a matter of national security. To put it bluntly, sometimes we rely upon energy sources from countries that don't particularly like us... **Through technology we can increase our national security and economic security by reducing demand for petrochemicals and, at the same time, we can clean up the air in our country.**” [emphasis added]

*President George W. Bush, February 25, 2002*

## WHAT ARE THE SOLUTIONS?

As 68% of the oil used in the U.S. is for transportation, the single most important solution to oil dependence is to dramatically increase our vehicles' fuel economy – which is entirely possible given current technologies. In fact, our fuel economy is now at its lowest level since 1980.

HYBRID-ELECTRIC cars are already on the road. They perform like conventional cars yet get more than 50 miles per gallon (mpg). Hybrid-electric cars have a small gasoline engine and an electric motor and battery. They never need to be plugged in or charged – the gasoline engine charges the battery. The Toyota Prius and Honda Civic are already available in the U.S. Since 1998, Toyota has been selling in Japan a mini-van that gets 40 mpg. American automotive companies are expected to start marketing hybrid-electrics in late 2003.

Many other OFF-THE-SHELF TECHNOLOGIES could significantly improve fuel economy if they were adopted. These include more aerodynamic auto body design, the use of lighter but stronger materials, increased fuel injection efficiency, and improved systems for transferring power from the engine to the wheels.

In the future, **FUEL CELLS** may enable vehicles which don't use any gasoline or oil and emit only water vapor. It is a very exciting and promising technology. There are however, two major barriers: one is the application of the technology to vehicles at a reasonable cost. The second is the creation of a system to produce and distribute the hydrogen fuel required by fuel cells.

Developing fuel cell vehicles will require intensive research, development and investment. This will require at minimum a decade, and perhaps two or three times that long. There are also very important practical and public policy choices along the

way, such as the source for hydrogen, which can be derived from conventional sources like petroleum (which would leave us close to where we started) and coal or could be produced through clean and secure renewable electricity generation (wind, solar, geothermal, etc.).

## **ARE REGULATIONS NECESSARY?**

All historical evidence points to the necessity of a government mandate in order to raise the average fuel economy of American vehicles. The automotive industry has a long track-record of opposing changes that are in the public's interest, from seat belts and air bags to tailpipe emissions and fuel economy. They have made wildly exaggerated claims that adopting such changes would put them out of business, hurting workers and investors. And they have claimed that such changes would harm consumers. Each and every time they have been proven wrong.

American auto manufacturers all recognize that the future will belong to fuel cells, and they are making large investments. That is very positive. But they have actively sought to defeat all efforts to require increases in fuel economy.

In the winter of 2002, all of the major automobile companies, except Honda, mounted an intensive campaign claiming that raising fuel economy standards would deprive suburban mothers of the vehicles they need for carpooling and farmers of their pickup trucks. These claims are false. But they were effective in defeating an effort in the Senate to increase fuel economy standards which have not been raised in over 20 years.

## **“CAFE” STANDARDS: A PROVEN POLICY**

Since the 1970's, the central strategy in the effort to reduce American reliance on Middle Eastern oil has been vehicle fuel economy standards (known as CAFE – Corporate Average Fuel Economy standards). It is a strategy that works.

However, when oil prices fell dramatically in 1986, Congress abandoned efforts to further reduce fuel economy standards.

The result: today, the fleet of vehicles in the U.S. has the lowest average fuel economy since 1980. And we are importing more oil than ever from the Persian Gulf.<sup>1</sup>

In 1975, Congress mandated that cars and light trucks increase their fuel economy to 18 miles per gallon (mpg) for automobile model year 1978. By model year 1985, Congress had increased the standards to 27.5 mpg.<sup>2</sup> Since 1975, domestic new car fuel economy has roughly doubled.<sup>3</sup> Between 1976 and 1989, roughly 70% of the improvement in fuel economy was the result of technical innovation such as weight reduction, improvements in transmissions and aerodynamics, wider use of front-wheel drive, and use of fuel-injection.<sup>4</sup> Between 1979 and 1985, total oil imports fell by 51 percent and imports from the Persian Gulf fell by 88 percent.<sup>5</sup> The tens of billions of dollars saved on fuel as a result of CAFE standards are spread throughout the economy.

The trend of increasing fuel economy reversed in the 1990s. This was the result not only of lower oil prices. It is also a result of the marketing strategies of American automakers. In the 1990s, American automobile companies began to exploit a provision in the CAFE law which allows light trucks a significantly lower standard than cars (20.7 instead of 27.5). Commonly referred to as the “SUV loophole,” this provision allows companies to mass-market SUVs in the place of cars. SUVs now account for 50% of all new vehicles sold.

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<sup>1</sup> Energy Information Administration, *Annual Energy Review 2000*.

<sup>2</sup> National Academy of Sciences, “Effectiveness and Impact of Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) Standards,” January 2001.

<sup>3</sup> Congressional Research Service, “Automobile and Light Truck Fuel Economy: Is CAFE Up to Standards?”

<sup>4</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> Energy Information Administration, *Annual Energy Review 2000*.

Significantly increasing the CAFE standards and closing the SUV loophole is long overdue. In November 2002, the Bush administration proposed increasing fuel economy standards for SUVs and light trucks by 1.5 mpg between 2005 and 2007. Such an increase is a small percentage of the kind of increase that is possible in that timeframe.

## **ENERGY CONSERVATION AND THE ECONOMY**

Greater fuel and energy efficiency would bring much benefit to businesses and the economy in general. Conserving energy makes good economic sense – and there's no shortage of opportunities. With less than 5% of the world's population, we in the U.S. use almost 25% of the world's energy resources. Though some of our disproportionate use is a consequence of our high economic output, the amount of energy we use to generate a dollar in our economy is substantially more than that used by our closest competitors: 34% more energy than Great Britain, 42% more than France and Germany, and 48% more than Japan.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, focusing America's engineering and manufacturing prowess on raising fuel economy through new technologies will provide jobs and strengthen the economy.

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<sup>6</sup> Energy Information Administration  
<http://www.eia.doe.gov/pub/international/iealf/tablee1g.xls>.

## **PUBLIC POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS**

COEJL calls on the Congress and Administration to expeditiously develop and adopt an environmentally sustainable comprehensive energy security plan to move the U.S. toward minimum reliance on oil. The federal government should utilize a broad range of policy approaches to accomplish this goal, including standards, incentives for voluntary action, harnessing market forces, and research and development. A U.S. energy security plan should include:

- a significant increase in vehicle fuel economy standards for all vehicles over the shortest realistic time, followed by steady continued increases in such standards
- tax incentives for consumers to purchase hybrid and alternative fuel vehicles
- increasing funding for inter-city rail and metropolitan mass transit
- requirements for fuel efficient replacement tires for all vehicles
- increased incentives for states to enforce speed limits
- promotion and support of local “smart-growth” initiatives to curb urban sprawl
- aggressive support for the development and production of alternative fuel vehicles, including hybrid-electric and fuel cell vehicles
- a driver education campaign to promote energy conservation measures, such as keeping tires fully inflated, driving the speed limit, carpooling, and turning off engines when idling
- an expansion of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve to two billion barrels
- aggressive support for the development and incentives for the use of non-nuclear, clean, and decentralized sources of electricity, including wind, solar, fuel cells, bio-fuels, and geothermal

- steadily increasing efficiency standards for all appliances, including air conditioners

A national energy security plan should not include opening up the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge or other environmentally sensitive areas to oil or gas exploration or drilling. Drilling in the Refuge will not provide oil for at least seven years, and even then would provide a tiny fraction of the oil that could be saved through conservation.

COEJL calls on the automobile industry to bring super-efficient and alternative fuel vehicles to market as quickly as possible, and actively promote such vehicles for purchase by the American public. Given our national security needs, the automobile and petroleum industries should work with Congress to develop policies that will lead to a rapid and successful transition to fuel efficient vehicles.

COEJL also urges the Administration to take an active and collaborative approach to reducing the dependence of Europe, Japan, and eventually all developed economies on oil. In our globalized economy, the dependence of any large economy on foreign oil sources is an economic vulnerability for the U.S. Such an effort would also complement the commitment and interest of these countries in a global solution to global warming by leading to a substantial reduction in the greenhouse gas emissions of the U.S. and our allies.

## OTHER BENEFITS OF REDUCING RELIANCE ON OIL

There are many benefits to reducing our use of oil in addition to increased security:

- ***Reduce air pollution and save lives:*** Emissions from vehicles are a major source of air pollution. Smog, soot, and toxic chemicals from burning oil cause and exacerbate respiratory illnesses that harm and kill tens of thousands of Americans each year.
- ***Address global climate change:*** Burning oil is a leading source of U.S. greenhouse gas emissions that are causing global climate change – which has already begun to affect ecosystems around the world and which threatens to cause great harm to people, particularly poor people, if left unchecked.
- ***Save consumers money:*** More fuel efficient vehicles save consumers money. Though some efficiency technologies, such as hybrid-electric motors, may increase the price of a vehicle, fuel savings will more than offset the increased costs over the life of the vehicle, sometimes by substantial margins, even while saving energy.
- ***Protect fragile habitats and unique ecosystems:*** Dependence on oil increases pressure to drill in environmentally sensitive areas that serve as critical habitat to endangered species and are unique ecological areas – such as the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, roadless areas in National Forests, and shorelines.

# DRILLING IN ALASKA'S ARCTIC REFUGE: A DANGEROUS DISTRACTION

Drilling for oil and/or natural gas in environmentally sensitive lands, such as the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR), only delays the day when we must make a transition away from oil. We cannot bring oil from the Arctic Refuge to market quickly enough to address current circumstances. Additionally, the oil it would eventually produce is a small fraction of the amount of oil that can be saved by increasing fuel economy standards or even requiring replacement tires to be as fuel efficient as original equipment. Raising fuel economy standards 45 percent by 2013 would save about 55 billion barrels of oil by 2030<sup>7</sup> – or more than 5 times the highest estimate of total economically recoverable oil in the Arctic Refuge<sup>8</sup>. Drilling in ANWR would destroy a unique and fragile ecosystem, and would endanger the culture of the Gwich'in people, who depend upon caribou – whose calving grounds are in the Arctic Refuge – for their cultural life.

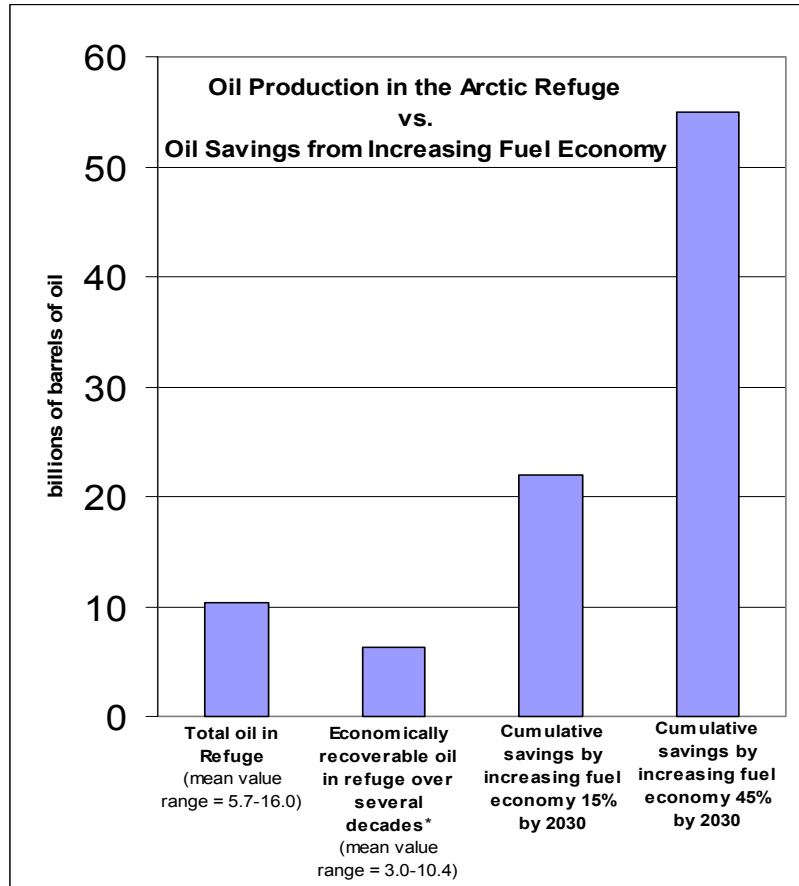
The legislative battle over drilling in the Arctic Refuge has become a huge distraction to the Congress. Continuing to focus the debate on drilling prevents making the progress needed, to take the urgent steps that actually could improve our energy security quickly, cheaply, and cleanly.

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<sup>7</sup> National Academy of Sciences, "Effectiveness and Impact of Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) Standards," January 2001.

<sup>8</sup> At \$30 a barrel, between 3.0 and 10.4 billion barrels of oil are estimated to be economically recoverable from the Arctic Refuge. The estimate of the total volume there is 5.7 to 16.0 billion barrels. U.S. Geological Survey, "Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, 1002 Area, Petroleum Assessment, 1998, Including Economic Analysis."

*The Arctic Refuge could produce only a small fraction of the oil that could be saved by increasing fuel efficiency.*



\* A generous estimate, based on \$30/barrel market price. On November 19, 2001, the market price was \$15.35/barrel, at which price a far lesser amount of oil would be economically recoverable.

**Sources:** National Academy of Sciences, "Effectiveness and Impact of Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) Standards," January 2001; U.S. Geological Survey, "Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, 1002 Area, Petroleum Assessment, 1998, Including Economic Analysis."

## **ENERGY CONSERVATION: An Opportunity for Every Citizen to Help**

Every person and institution can take actions that will help reduce our dependence on oil, including:

- buying the most fuel efficient vehicles that meet their needs
- taking and promoting mass transit and carpooling
- keeping the tires of all vehicles fully inflated
- driving the speed limit
- using vegetable oil-based rather than petroleum-based products, such as liquid detergents

In addition, individuals, homes, and businesses can conserve electricity and natural gas. We burn far more coal and natural gas than we need to – leading to air pollution, respiratory illness, and global climate change. The following are a few simple and effective actions that both save energy and save money (though an initial investment might be required):

- replace conventional light bulbs with compact fluorescent bulbs
- use EnergyStar certified appliances which meet strict EPA criteria for energy efficiency
- adjust the thermostat to make it a few degrees warmer in the summer and few degrees cooler in the winter. You won't notice much of a difference, but you will be saving a lot of energy.
- fully insulate homes and buildings – including insulation for hot water heaters
- and of course, turn out the lights when you leave a room

## ENERGY ISSUES AND JEWISH VALUES

The Jewish vision of peace among nations and harmony in creation is a unitary vision. Both are essential to *shalom*, to peace and wholeness for humankind and all creation. Reliance on oil has brought war, and it threatens to bring ecological desolation caused by global climate change – which itself will likely bring more instability and war.

It is our duty, as a nation, as a Jewish community, and as individuals, to take the actions we can to reduce our dependence on oil now – and to set our sights on creating a society and an economy run by clean, secure, and renewable sources of energy powering the highly efficient vehicles and appliances we know are within our capacity to develop. Not to do so would be an unforgivable abdication of our individual and collective responsibility to seek peace, pursue justice, provide for future generations, and tend the Earth of which we are a part.

In addition to the obvious value of helping to prevent future war and terrorism, there are a number of core Jewish values that should lead us to adopt an ethic of conservation – in this case energy conservation. These values were articulated in an *Open Letter to the President, Congress, and American People on Energy Conservation and God's Creation* signed by the heads of the Conservative, Orthodox, Reconstructionist, Reform, and Renewal congregational bodies, rabbinical associations, and seminaries – along with over 600 rabbis across the United States. Organized as an interfaith letter, it was also signed by heads of 27 Orthodox, Protestant, and historic Black Christian denominations.

## **“LET THERE BE LIGHT”: ENERGY CONSERVATION AND GOD’S CREATION**

*An Open Letter to the President, Congress, and American  
People – May, 2001 [excerpted]*

### **Conservation and Stewardship of God's Creation**

"The Earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof" (Ps 24:1). In light and wind, in land and water, energy resources are abundant gifts for human well-being from our creator God. Because we are called to "till and to tend the garden" (Gen. 2:15), we have a moral obligation to choose the safest, cleanest and most sustainable sources of energy to protect and preserve God's creation. Energy conservation is faithful stewardship.

### **Conservation and Responsibility to Future Generations**

The gifts of God's creation are to be conserved over time for God's children...Humankind has a fundamental choice of priorities for its future. By depleting energy sources, causing global warming, fouling the air with pollution, and poisoning the land with radioactive waste, a policy of increased reliance on fossil fuels and nuclear power jeopardizes health and well-being for life on Earth. On the other hand, by investing in clean technology, renewable energy, greater vehicle fuel efficiency and safer power plants we help assure sustainability for God's creation and God's justice. Energy conservation is intergenerational responsibility.

***Conservation is a personal and a public virtue –  
a comprehensive moral value.***

### **Conservation and Justice**

The prophet Micah says "What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and walk humbly with your God" (Micah 6:8). The gifts of God's creation must be shared fairly among God's children. Energy policy must be an instrument of social and economic justice here and abroad...Energy conservation is justice for all peoples and nations.



### **Conservation, Prudence, and Precaution**

...We do not have to sacrifice economic security to assure environmental health. Prudence — the application of moral principle in service to the common good — should guide us to meet immediate needs in such a way as to enhance, not diminish future sustainability. And where there are genuine risks to health and well-being, the principle of precaution should guide our actions. More investment in renewable energy and fuel efficiency is now a moral imperative especially because these are technologically feasible and economically viable. Energy conservation is prudent human action.

### **Conservation in the Age of Global Warming**

These concerns have entirely unprecedented moral urgency in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In its reliance on fossil fuels, American energy policy is a cause of global climate change. With less than 5% of the world's population, our nation is generating more than 22% of greenhouse gas emissions...We must join in binding international agreements...which set energy conservation targets and timetables. Preventing climate change is a preeminent expression of faithfulness to our Creator God. Energy conservation is global leadership and solidarity.

**We call on all Americans, and particularly our own leaders and congregants,** to consider carefully these values, which should guide our individual energy choices and by which we should judge energy policy options. In securing human well-being by preserving creation and promoting justice, conservation is a personal and a public virtue – a comprehensive moral value – a standard for everything we do to assure energy for a wholesome way of life. We pray that the wisdom, faith, and solidarity of the American people will bring us together – at this critical juncture – to redirect our national energy policy toward conservation, efficiency, justice, and maximum use of the perennial abundance of clean and renewable energy that our Creator brought into being by proclaiming, “**Let there be light**” (Gen. 1:3).

# ENERGY POLICY AND NATIONAL SECURITY

*Statement of the COEJL Board of Trustees  
November 5, 2001*

Eliminating American dependence upon Middle Eastern oil is a necessary and urgent strategy in the War on Terrorism. Furthermore, energy conservation is vital to the fulfillment of our moral obligations to protect the environment and public health and to provide for future generations.

There are two ways to reduce oil dependence: increase domestic supply, and decrease demand. Because of very limited domestic reserves – the U.S. has only 3% of proven world oil reserves – our only effective option is to reduce demand and therefore dependence on oil from all sources.

Therefore, energy conservation and the development of new fuels and technologies must now rise to the highest level of priority for the U.S. Congress and Administration and the American people. Both the government and every citizen can and should take action to help conserve energy and reduce our reliance on oil.

Energy policy has far-reaching impacts. Therefore, it must be developed through a deliberative process and not as a rushed reaction to the events of September 11. We call on Congress to adopt an energy security plan with the following core elements:

- a significant increase in vehicle fuel economy standards for all vehicles
- an expansion of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve to two billion barrels
- increasing funding for inter-city rail and metropolitan mass transit

- aggressive support for the development and production of alternative fuel vehicles, including hybrid-electric and fuel cell vehicles
- aggressive support for the development and incentives for the use of non-nuclear, clean, and decentralized sources of electricity

A plan should not include opening up the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge or other environmentally sensitive areas to oil or gas exploration or drilling. Such drilling will not provide oil for at least seven years, and even then would provide a tiny fraction of the oil that could be saved through conservation.

Industry has a vital role to play as well. We call on the automobile industry to work to bring super-efficient and alternative fuel vehicles to market as quickly as possible, and actively promote such vehicles for purchase by the American public. Given our national security needs, the automobile and petroleum industries should work with Congress to develop policies that will lead to a rapid and successful transition to more fuel efficient vehicles.

Finally, we call on each and every person and institution to help by:

- taking and promoting mass transit and carpooling
- keeping the tires of all vehicles fully inflated
- driving the speed limit
- buying the most fuel efficient vehicles that meet their needs
- conserving electricity

Together, we the American people can wean ourselves of dependence on Middle Eastern oil – and dramatically reduce our use of oil in general – through practical actions by industry, individuals, and institutions. We call on the leadership of our nation to move thoughtfully and swiftly to develop and implement an effective and environmentally sustainable energy security policy.



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*Energy Security: If Not Now, When?*