

Politicians and energy policy

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I heard a bit of a politician on the radio today. He was governor of one of the western states. He said some things that I didn't hear any supporting evidence for. I wonder if there are facts to support these ideas.

He seemed to think that driving hybrids is the answer to the oil problem. He describes this scenario. Everyone drives a hybrid which can be plugged into the power grid and charged at night when the power grid is way below peak usage. Then they can be driven up to 40 miles the next day without using any fuel.

He would also set the power rates at lower amounts at off peak times and higher during the daily peaks. You would be able to sell power to the grid at the same price that it would cost you to buy it. So if you weren't driving that day, you could sell power back from your hybrid to the power company and make a profit!

He claimed that this would eliminate our need for foreign oil.

I don't get it. Sure hybrids can save fuel. If you otherwise drive a vehicle that gets 20 MPG and you switch to a hybrid that gets 40 MPG, you save half the fuel you otherwise would use. But a 50% savings on auto use of petroleum is not a 50% savings in imported oil. There are many, many other uses of oil. The fuel saved by plugging into the power grid may not be a savings at all. Where does this power come from? A lot of power plants burn petroleum. Otherwise they burn coal which is very dirty or use nuclear energy which is a whole 'nother can of worms.

I don't remember his name. Anyone here know who this is? Do his numbers add up? Has he given any real numbers to support his claim or is this one of those half baked ideas that sounds good in a sound bite, like having a gas tax "holiday"?

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