

Re: A world without oil

Source: <http://sci.tech-archive.net/Archive/sci.energy/2007-06/msg00113.html>

- *From:* Sevenhundred Elves <sevenhundred@xxxxxxxxxxxxxx>
 - *Date:* Sat, 16 Jun 2007 08:54:40 GMT
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Dan Bloomquist wrote:

Sevenhundred Elves wrote:

What is methane hydride?

Don't let him fool you. There is no practical way to exploit the stuff.

Google: methane hydrates

And if they do try to get at the stuff, let's hope there is never a catastrophic release....

Thanks. Reading this NG only sporadically, I simply didn't realize that the poster was speaking of methane clathrates, aka methane hydrates. Knowing that methane can't be further hydrogenated, I figured it had to be either a mistake, a hoax, or the trivial name of some new compound.

I took your advice and googled it, nonetheless, and it seems you are right: As yet the technology for extracting methane from oceanic clathrates in greater amounts is non-existent.

It was interesting to learn that those clathrates are now hypothesized to have played a role in the Permian-Triassic extinction event, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clathrate_Gun_Hypothesis but I don't believe that human methane extraction all by itself could trigger another such event. Global warming, on the other hand, might.

The root of the current energy and raw materials problems is that there are too many humans around, consuming natural resources faster than they are renewed. A population of something between half a billion to one billion would probably be able to survive safely for a long time without ruining its own environment. Six billions is just too much.

S.

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