

Re: Why no (new) drilling in the US?

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Paul Ciszek wrote:

In article <37jk7458kn1cfogagjkif83ie0agg9r4tp@xxxxxxx>, Anthony Ferrante <ferrante276-ngspam@xxxxxxxxxx> wrote:

I have been told by friends that the USA has vast amounts of oil underground but the government keeps blocking all attempts to get at it. Is this true and if so, why the opposition to getting it?

There are two great political pandering operations going on. One is to pander to the corn belt by subsidizing ethanol. The other is to pander to the coastal states by blocking oil exploration on either the Pacific or the Atlantic seaboard. ANWR is a special case, but is banned for similar reasons to the coastal bans.

If you want to be elected in this country, you do what is politically necessary.

You have just heard, with a single exception, the massive political chorus that has just been orchestrated to preserve the status quo: no drilling.

The reality is this: from a U.S. perspective, there is a lot of oil in those two places. ANWR in itself is a certain percentage of U.S. production. California would further increase production. Florida's eastern seaboard would increase production. And so on.

I recently corrected someone's math in another group in which he claimed there were a mere 68 billion barrels in those locations and that was only a few weeks of U.S. consumption. He had confused billions with millions and was off by three orders of magnitude. The 68 billion barrels – his number – would be good for up to 10 years of U.S. consumption.

Now those who consider it criminal to open up coastal exploration are in a panic mode and want to win the argument at all costs. So they divide up the issue into little parcels and argue that each parcel is small.

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But the entirety is significant.

And my calculation, if the 68 billion barrel estimate is correct, is that that is an amount of oil at current prices that is roughly equal to the national debt.

Wouldn't it be something to have the U.S. benefit from that massive cash infusion, with perhaps much of the income from it going into federal and state government, instead of having it flow out to countries who care little for us and to whom we are becoming increasingly beholden?

I will not argue that we will add 10 years to the world's supply. But if we are able to provide our own needs for a few years, that's that much less 'fuel' feeding the speculative frenzy, that much more of a bargaining position when times are tight, and of course money flowing into local economies on a massive scale instead of a hemorrhaging of funds to OPEC and others.

Plenty of new drilling taking place in Colorado.

Sure, there's plenty of drilling in all the places we have looked for it before. We are in declining production in all the known on-shore oil fields, but we'll reopen them and use increasingly expensive methods of retrieval for less and less benefit, eventually shifting to extraction from tar sands and oil shale. But the coastal areas are expected to contain very significant oil resources that can be used at much lower cost. ANWR is separate, but if it is 10–15% of the total, not something to sneeze at either.

So, here's the issue: do you feed the local economy, or do you continue at full speed hemorrhaging cash to the Chavez's, the Ahmadiniazad's, the Bin Laden family, and thousands of others equally as friendly?

And if you think it is a giveaway to oil companies, then let's focus on negotiating what the terms for the leases will be, and accept or reject the deals on the merits instead of mere theories about some vast conspiracy.

By the way, the massive anti-drilling PR campaign always assumes that current consumption levels will continue unabated.

Of course they won't. We all have vehicles, except in a very few isolated pockets such as New York City. We won't just send them to the crusher – that would be pointless, even with prices double what they are now. But we will use vastly less oil. We will skip many of the long trips; commute via bicycles and public transportation; and eventually shift to high mileage vehicles, including electric cars. The high prices, at long last, will do what no amount of lecturing to the population to conserve was able to do – cause us to recognize that we do, in fact, have a scarce resource that is going to do nothing but increase in price, and cause us to act accordingly.

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Enviro's, you have your wish: high prices are driving down consumption. But we can't cut it off instantaneously without committing economic suicide; so let's let the price rise in a bit more moderate fashion by exploiting what we have (yes, I used the _exploit_ word), provide a cash rebate or two – _not_ tied to oil consumption – to those at the bottom of the economic scale and therefore hardest hit by high prices, and move on to the task of eliminating our dependence on oil, not to mention the other fossil fuels.

George Cornelius

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