

Our sources of fuels and electricity have been getting less and less secure, a trend that has been going on for some years. California's current electricity dilemma foreshadows things yet to come, and suggests we review the past decade.

In 1992, a massive 1350-page Energy Policy Act was put together by the Energy and Natural Resources Committee of the U.S. Senate, chaired by Bennett Johnston (D) LA. The Act contained a host of provisions supposedly to give us a secure energy future.

Today, nine years later, our energy future is not secure. We have no energy policy. Our natural gas supply is shaky, its price has doubled and may go higher.

Our oil consumption has risen from 17 million barrels per day (MBD) in 1992 to 19 MBD today. Back in 1992, we imported about 50% of our oil use. Now we import about 57% of it.

Actually, we Americans have no inherent right to buy and consume other nations' oil, yet with only 4% of the world's population, we consume over 26% of the world's oil production!

Worse, for much of this oil we depend on the Mid-East, an area peppered with unrest and showing considerable animosity toward the U.S. Ten years ago, we went to war there with half a million troops to protect our oil sources. This is far from secure energy.

The Act of 1992 "deregulated" the superb electric power system we had then. This was a profound change! We are an electric society. Electricity is the backbone of our way of life, and after nine years, we still do not

know where the 1992 Act's provisions ultimately will lead us. California's plight shows that politicians and greens are not electricity providers.

Despite diminishing supplies of electricity from fossil fuels and imports, strong forces have been opposed to additional nuclear power, which supplies 22% of our electricity. Regulations hamper the nuclear industry, and the federal facility for nuclear waste disposal has been delayed years past its completion deadline.

Like it or not, there is nothing on the horizon to replace our nuclear power. We hear calls to use "alternate" energy technologies. California built hundreds of wind machines to generate electricity. Why don't they build more if they are so good?

Think back to former President Carter's comprehensive energy R&D program. This intense multi-billion dollar study found that "alternate" energy sources, including the so-called "renewables" were impractical for large-scale use in our energy systems.

Either the "alternate" energy systems don't perform large scale, or they need huge government subsidies. If they had been found practical, we would be using them today.

Regulations abound. President Clinton's first year in office produced 69,684 pages of new regulations-- 33 pages of new regulations every working hour! This was the highest in any president's first year. Many of these unnecessarily detailed regulations have adversely affected the supply and cost of energy.

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