

## IN ALL FAIRNESS

# National Security and Energy

While most of us suffer from the escalating cost of filling our gas tanks, some "public interest" activists likely don't share our concern. After all, increasing the price of natural resources, mostly by curtailing domestic energy production, has been a longstanding goal of environmental elitists. They think this is the best way to reduce supposedly rampant automobile pollution and force development of "alternative" fuels. Less reliance on oil should be a laudable goal, but professional environmentalists' misguided approach carries with it serious consequences for the public — more economic and national insecurity.

These activists should call themselves "Environmentalists for Foreign Energy Dependence" — as we have them to thank for the decades of regulations and lawsuits that make it nearly impossible to discover and refine oil here. And then, when we must rely on oil from unstable regions of the world, like the Middle East, these very same activists hypocritically scream "no blood for oil." Such dependence empowers erratic foreign regimes and power-hungry terrorists to hold our economy and national security hostage. American energy consumers shouldn't be funding Saddam Hussein wannabes who would turn the Middle East into one huge arsenal of terror.



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Nor do we have to. America has abundant, untapped energy resources. But a maze of regulations makes exploring for energy on public lands prohibitively expensive, and extracting gas or oil essentially impossible. Significant improvements in technology have made resource extraction more environmentally friendly

***Paying at the pump for activism***

than ever. Yet, activists and politicians continue to stall offshore exploration and drilling in a barren patch of Alaskan wasteland. And on the rare occasion that approval to explore public lands is granted, extremists and their lawyers bombard energy companies with lawsuits. All this adds up to flat domestic energy production and higher prices.

Once oil is drilled, even more government mandates make it costly to turn crude into gasoline. Demand for gas in the U.S. is simply outstripping the capacity of domestic refineries, adding to what we pay at the pump and furthering our reliance on overseas production. Thanks to activist-driven federal rules, a new refinery hasn't been built here for almost thirty years, while other regulations make it almost prohibitively expensive even to upgrade existing plants. Also, federal regulations require that refiners create over twenty different kinds of fuel that can only be sold in specified regions of America.

Protecting the environment and pursuing new domestic energy development aren't conflicting goals. Responsible, authentic environmentalism, in fact, contemplates the balanced use *and* enjoyment of our resources. But today's no-growth activists must sell gloom and doom to stay in business, so it is fair to wonder whose interest they have in mind when they oppose practical solutions to our foreign energy dependence.



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