

Center for American Progress



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Natural Gas: The Bridge Fuel to the 21st Century

John Podesta and Senator Tim Wirth release a memo on the benefits of natural gas as well as a report detailing the jobs created by retrofitting homes and commercial buildings in the United States.

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Download a [map](#) of shale natural gas plays in the lower 48 states. (pdf)

LAS VEGAS, NV - Newly available supplies of American unconventional shale gas can reduce foreign oil use and global warming pollution according to a policy agenda released today by the Center for American Progress and the Energy Future Coalition. Technological advancements make it possible to produce trillions of cubic feet of natural gas trapped in shale. CAP and EFC propose a policy agenda to increase gas use to produce cleaner electricity, augment intermittent renewable electricity, and power motor vehicles. The proposal includes safeguards to protect air, water, and climate from gas production.

CAP and EFC today also released "Rebuilding America." The report determined that retrofitting 40% of our homes and commercial buildings would save consumers up to \$1200 per month on energy bills. This program would create 625,000 new jobs in construction, manufacturing and other fields. Improved financing options and more efficient building codes would drive \$500 million in public and private investments in retrofitting.

"Natural gas can be a global warming game changer," said John Podesta, President and CEO of the Center for American Progress. "This home grown American fuel can replace millions of barrels of oil we would import from other nations, and instead keep these dollars here while enhancing our national security."

"The evidence of global warming grows every day," said Timothy E. Wirth, President of the U.N. Foundation. "We must take action now to break down barriers to investment in energy efficiency, to accelerate our deployment of renewable energy, and to make greater use of newly abundant domestic natural gas – the cleanest fossil fuel."

"Energy efficiency should be the first source we turn toward to meet energy demand and reduce consumers' bills" said Senator Harry Reid. "It creates more jobs than nearly every other energy investment and the cheapest, cleanest, safest energy is the energy we never have to use."

The recent, dramatic increases in unconventional gas production and the enormous expansion of the producible resource base could fundamentally alter the U.S. energy mix. This gas could play a larger role in helping to more rapidly and cost-effectively speed the transition to a low-carbon economy and reduce global warming pollution.

The Energy Information Administration estimates that the United States has [approximately 1,770 trillion cubic feet](#) (tcf) of technically recoverable gas, including [238 tcf of proven reserves](#). At the current production rates, there is enough natural gas to supply the U.S. for the next 90 years. These newly characterized gas resources are in Arkansas, Louisiana, Michigan, New York, North Dakota, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas, and elsewhere.

The CAP and EFC agenda include the following recommendations to produce cleaner transportation and electricity, and produce natural gas without harming the environment.

- Expand the market for natural gas as a heavy-duty transportation fuel by increasing incentives for gas-powered buses and heavy trucks.
- Create incentives for communities to develop bus rapid transit systems that employ buses fueled by natural gas.
- Establish incentives to retire aging, inefficient, dirty coal-fired power plants, and replace them with renewable and low-carbon electricity.
- Establish a dedicated incentive for development and deployment of "dispatchable" renewable energy to build markets for electricity storage technology.
- Conduct a comprehensive analysis of the impact of natural gas production on air, water, land, and global warming. Include a compilation of best practices and recommendations for new state safeguards.
- Support public disclosure requirements on the release of toxic chemicals used during the production of natural gas.

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The [Center for American Progress](#) is a nonpartisan research and educational institute dedicated to promoting a strong, just and free America that ensures opportunity for all. We believe that Americans are bound together by a common commitment to these values and we aspire to ensure that our national policies reflect these values. We work to find progressive and pragmatic solutions to significant domestic and international

problems and develop policy proposals that foster a government that is "of the people, by the people, and for the people."

The [Energy Future Coalition](#) is a nonpartisan public policy initiative that seeks to speed the transition to a new energy economy. Combining expertise and advocacy, the Coalition brings together business, labor, and environmental groups to identify new directions in energy policy with broad political support.

The Energy Future Coalition works closely with the United Nations Foundation on energy and climate policy, especially energy efficiency and bioenergy issues. The UN Foundation provides financial and in-kind support to the Coalition.