
Read the "Should The U.S. Be Energy Independent?" passage set.

Should The U.S. Be Energy Independent?

Source 1: The Quest for Energy Independent

- 1 "In the year 1980, the United States will not be dependent on any other country for the energy we need to provide our jobs, to heat our homes, and to keep our transportation moving."
- 2 President Richard Nixon spoke those words in 1974, articulating a goal that did not become a reality in his lifetime. Nixon was not alone in his futile quest for American energy independence. In the years since, nearly every US President aspired to reduce the country's dependence on other countries for energy resources. Each said that reducing oil dependence would make the country safer and more prosperous. The path to energy independence has proven a more difficult challenge than many imagined. However, in recent years the United States has inched closer to making that dream a reality.
- 3 Government has used a range of strategies to reduce energy consumption and boost fuel production. During the 1970's energy crisis, when oil-producing nations suddenly stopped exporting oil to the United States, the government rationed gasoline, but coal production increased rapidly. Between 1973 and 1976, coal production increased by 14.4 percent. And coal production continued to rise, nearly doubling between 1973 and 2003.
- 4 Despite these efforts, the percentage of foreign oil used in the US also doubled between 1974 and 2005. In 2005, the country imported a record 60 percent of its oil. However, in the years that followed that number began to decline. A number of factors contributed to this shift.
- 5 First, domestic oil production increased dramatically. In 2013, the United States was the third-largest producer of crude oil in the world, behind Russia and Saudi Arabia. According to the International Energy Agency, the US was projected to be the world's biggest producer by 2020. The agency also estimated that the US would export more oil than it imported by the middle of the 2020s.

- 6 The main source of this increased production came from a newfound ability to extract oil and gas from deep underground. These deposits come from shale, a common type of rock that contains organic matter rich in oil and natural gas. States with large amounts of shale include Montana, Wyoming, North Dakota, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Texas. The fuels can be extracted from the rock in a variety of ways. One method, called hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, uses high-pressure liquids to extract the fuel. The process is controversial for its potential to have a negative effect on the environment and on the people living in close proximity. At the same time, it is effective in providing much-needed fuel.
- 7 Other factors reducing American dependence on foreign oil include renewable sources and greater energy efficiency. Technologies to convert renewable sources such as wind and sunlight into energy have become more affordable. The introduction of electrically-powered vehicles also promises to reduce the need for gasoline. Finally, the simplest way to reduce the need for foreign energy sources is to use less energy. To make that possible, recent US policy encourages both businesses and individuals to improve energy efficiency. The push for greater efficiency includes everything from improved gas mileage standards in vehicles to more energy-efficient buildings.
- 8 Nixon's statement was the first sign of the country's focus on energy independence, but it hasn't been the last. Nearly every president since has sought to increase the supply of American-made energy while reducing our energy needs. After decades of seeking energy independence with little success, the goal seems more achievable than ever.

Source 2: Excerpt from Address on Energy Policy

- 9 The United States experienced an energy crisis in the early 1970s. The nation depended heavily on petroleum, or crude oil refined into gasoline, coming from other countries. With disruption of the oil supply, a result of tense international relations, the U.S. economy suffered, causing hardships for workers. Throughout the rest of the decade, energy policy became a major focus for the nation. On May 27, 1975, President Gerald Ford gave an address on energy policy, explaining his plans for preventing future energy disasters.

- 10 We are now paying out \$25 billion a year for foreign oil. Five years ago we paid out only \$3 billion annually. Five years from now, if we do nothing, who knows how many more billions will be flowing out of the United States. These are not just American dollars, these are American jobs.
- 11 Four months ago, I sent the Congress this 167-page draft of detailed legislation, plus some additional tax proposals. My program was designed to conserve the energy we now have, while at the same time speeding up the development and production of new domestic energy. Although this would increase the cost of energy until new supplies were fully tapped, those dollars would remain in this country and would be returned to our own economy through tax cuts and rebates.
- 12 I asked the Congress in January to enact this urgent 10-year program for energy independence within 90 days—that is, by mid-April.
- 13 In the meantime, to get things going, I said I would use the standby Presidential authority granted by the Congress to reduce our use of foreign petroleum by raising import fees on each barrel of crude oil by \$1 on February 1, another dollar on March 1, and a third on April 1.
- 14 As soon as Congress acted on my comprehensive energy program, I promised to take off these import fees. I imposed the first dollar on oil imports February 1, making appropriate exemptions for hardship situations. Now, what did the Congress do in February about energy? Congress did nothing—nothing, that is, except rush through legislation suspending for 90 days my authority to impose any import fees on foreign oil. Congress needed time, they said.
- 15 At the end of February, the Democratic leaders of the House and Senate and other Members concerned with energy came to the White House. They gave me this pamphlet outlining energy goals similar to mine and promised to come up with a Congressional energy program better than mine by the end of April. I remember one of them saying he didn't see how they could ask the President to do more than postpone the second dollar for 60 days. If the Congress couldn't come up with an energy program by then, he said, go ahead and put it on.

- 16 Their request stretched my original deadline by a couple of weeks. But I wanted to be reasonable; I wanted to be cooperative. So, in vetoing their bill to restrict the President's authority, I agreed to their request for a 60-day delay before taking the next step under my energy plan.
- 17 What did the Congress do in March? What did the Congress do in April about energy? Congress did nothing ...
- 18 The Congress has concentrated its attention on conservation measures such as a higher gasoline tax. The Congress has done little or nothing to stimulate production of new energy sources here at home. At Elk Hills Naval Petroleum Reserve in California, I saw oil wells waiting to produce 300,000 barrels a day if the Congress would change the law to permit it.
- 19 There are untold millions of barrels more in our Alaskan petroleum reserves and under the Continental Shelf. We could save 300,000 barrels a day if only the Congress would allow more electric powerplants to substitute American coal for foreign oil. Peaceful atomic power, which we pioneered, is advancing faster abroad than at home.
- 20 Still the Congress does nothing about energy. We are today worse off than we were in January. Domestic oil production is going down, down, down. Natural gas production is starting to dwindle. And many areas face severe shortages next winter. Coal production is still at the levels of the 1940s. Foreign oil suppliers are considering another price increase. I could go on and on, but you know the facts. This country needs to regain its independence from foreign sources of energy, and the sooner the better.
- 21 There is no visible energy shortage now, but we could have one overnight. We do not have an energy crisis, but we may have one next winter. We do have an energy problem, a very grave problem, but one we can still manage and solve if we are successful internationally and can act decisively domestically.
- 22 Four months are already lost. The Congress has acted only negatively. I must now do what I can do as President.

- 23 First, I will impose an additional \$1 import fee on foreign crude oil and 60 cents on refined products, effective June 1. I gave the Congress its 60 days plus an extra 30 days to do something—but nothing has been done since January. Higher fees will further discourage the consumption of imported fuel and may generate some constructive action when the Congress comes back. Second, as I directed on April 30, the Federal Energy Administration has completed public hearings on decontrol of old domestic oil. I will submit a decontrol plan to Congress shortly after it [meets again]. Along with it, I will urge the Congress to pass a windfall profits tax with a plowback provision.
- 24 These two measures would prevent unfair gains by oil companies from decontrol prices, [create] a substantial incentive to increase domestic energy production, and encourage conservation.
- 25 When I talk about energy, I am talking about jobs. Our American economy runs on energy—no energy, no jobs. In the long run, it is just that simple.
- 26 The sudden fourfold increase in foreign oil prices and the 1973 embargo helped to throw us into this recession. We are on our way out of this recession. Another oil embargo could throw us back. We cannot continue to depend on the price and supply whims of others. The Congress cannot drift, dawdle, and debate forever with America's future.
- 27 I need your help to energize this Congress into comprehensive action. I will continue to press for my January program, which is still the only total energy program there is.
- 28 I cannot sit here idly while nothing is done. We must get on with the job right now.
- 29 Thank you and good night.

Writing Prompt

Write an informational essay about why it was important for the United States to achieve energy independence. Your essay must be based on the ideas, concepts, and information found in the “Should The U.S. Be Energy Independent?” passage set.

Manage your time carefully so that you can

- read the passages;
- plan your response;
- write your response; and
- revise and edit your response.

Be sure to

- use evidence from multiple sources; and
- avoid overly relying on one source.

Your response should be in the form of a multi-paragraph essay. Type your response in the space provided.

You have **90 minutes** to read, plan, write, revise, and edit your response.