

## **Depletion Has Changed The PR Script.**

### **For Washington**

It's time for the Federal Government to change its energy message. Future PR copy must emphasize the inevitability of the far-reaching transformation that confronts us. We do not need self-serving political posturing or a contemptuous ignorance of legislative responsibility. We do need you to provide us with a candid and honest assessment of America's energy challenges.

Many consumers chose to ignore the reality of depletion. We want our prosperity to go on forever. We like our energy intensive lifestyle. If the price or availability of fuel threatens to disrupt the fabric of our existence, we will look for someone to blame. And that will lead to confusion. Apprehension. Suspicion. Hostility.

But there are no easy answers. No instant satisfaction. Moving our economy to a new energy paradigm will take more time than we have available. Even if we are able to find a new way to produce an abundance of cheap energy, the process of implementing a new system of energy delivery will force significant cultural change.

But Washington prefers to vacillate.

Two studies plus multiple presentations from the floor of Congress have already underscored the obvious. Report after report confirms the pending energy crisis. Change is coming. Our culture and our economy are at risk. Yet neither Congress nor the Administration show any signs of leadership. Both are deliberately ignoring publicly available evidence. Instead, the GAO has launched its own study of oil and natural gas depletion, production, and consumption issues, and the Administration has requested the National Petroleum Council to do a report based on industry data.

OK. These studies are a good idea. Assuming the data content is not filtered by the greed of established economic privilege, and assuming the conclusions are not merely an expression of political deception, and assuming these reports are not edited by hacks seeking to deceive us by putting a frothy spin on reality, ..... (sigh) .... they could make a positive contribution to establishing a sound energy strategy.

But why do you insist on ignoring the obvious? Did you learn nothing from this last hurricane season? Do the political events in Russia, Venezuela, Iraq, Iran, Saudi Arabia and elsewhere have no meaning? Are lethargic production statistics useless?

Yes. I know. It's not politically expedient to tell the truth. And you people in Washington are really, really busy with your incessant quest for political power. But don't forget. Vacillation begets demise. You politicians are going to catch hell when the tofu hits the fan.

We Americans need to understand the energy challenges that face us. Straight up.

### **For the Oil and Natural Gas Industry**

It's time for the oil and natural gas industry to change its PR message. Future scripts must emphasize public education. Hiding behind your parochial PR fortress or engaging in banal self-serving misconception would be a tragic mistake. We need you to provide us with a candid and honest assessment of where we humans stand with respect to oil and natural gas production.

Long term.

And this is no time to be caught with your hand in the tax dollar cookie jar. The oil and natural gas industry faces an era of deep and growing public hostility, fueled by misunderstanding and confusion. The industry will be demonized for its apparent profitability during periods of shortage and its destructive environmental impact during periods of surplus. Although demonization is nothing new, human suffering during shortages will be magnified by the media looking for a cheap way to fabricate a story, and by pandering charlatans seeking political power. Shortages, rising prices, and misconceptions will acerbate the acrimony against industry participants.

The oil and natural gas industries must launch a credible response. We are facing an impending crisis of incredible dimensions. The public needs to know the truth. Consumers need to be prepared for a new energy age.

It's your responsibility. We have a right to know.

## **Conclusion**

I appreciate the fact that an "Energy Caucus" is coming together in Congress, and several members have begun a campaign to educate their colleagues about the energy challenges that lie ahead. The oil and natural gas industry is responding with better PR.. Chevron has started an energy forum. ExxonMobil has developed a very good energy presentation. BP is making a serious effort to accurately tabulate worldwide production and consumption data. If you want to do your own homework, additional insight into our energy challenges can be found by picking up a copy of the annual 10K documents of the larger exploration, service, and production companies.

All of this is good stuff. But it falls short of what it will take to educate the general public.

Oil and natural gas issues must be addressed with candor. The challenges of alternative fuels must be examined. A comprehensive program of public education must include a positive endorsement of prudent energy resource management, energy efficiency and conservation, ecologically responsible energy production and consumption, and the development of alternative energy resources. Oil and natural gas depletion will inevitably force extensive cultural change. Of particular interest is the development of a constructive response within our local government infrastructure, the implementation of a pragmatic national agenda, and the formation of productive partnerships between private and public organizations. Since it's obvious that no country will be able to resolve its energy challenges without due consideration for the energy needs of other nations, we must encourage international cooperation in the development, production and consumption of our planet's energy resources.

Who will deliver the message?

The Cultural Economist  
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