

Renewable Energy

Do or Die?

Do you ever consider how you're affecting your grandchildren? Would they be proud of how you treat the Earth? All of the bombs and wars that are spent are over liquid gold. Then, smog that rolls over cities are because people are focused on having the flashiest car rather than demanding fuel efficiency. All the news is about celebrities or debates over gay rights, but a select few see the next global extinction in the near future. What is more important? Having a filter over your conscience so you can live comfortably? Or working hard and accepting less luxuries to rejuvenate the Earth? Most people refuse to see a difference in the two options.

There is a clear solution to all this bloodshed and overzealous debt. The power touches our skin every day, and we devour it to survive. People fall short of seeing that renewable energy could be the key to our continuation as a species. Now, you may ask, "What exactly is renewable energy?" It is energy that is harvested from sources that are non depletable. This includes, but is not limited to, sources such as solar, wind, and tidal power. The current resources the globe depends on right now, such as petroleum and natural gas, are finite. Eventually, those reservoirs will dry up. If we convert to using renewable energy for our power, the world could end wars, save depletable resources as an insurance policy rather than nursing on it now, and ultimately we could save the Earth. Renewable energy should be the main focus of development for our current generation.

One immediate benefit of converting to renewable energy is that it would change the United States conflict with countries in the Middle East. The Global Policy Forum wrote a detailed report on the different conflicts that have risen over resource reclamation. They revealed,

“The Bush administration and US oil experts base their energy strategy on one simple mantra: Saudi Arabia's oil fields can satisfy rising demand.” (GPF p.1). In other words, the United States is basing their energy dependency on a different country's ability to harvest oil.

Wars have been going on for decades in that region. It has been over a variety of issues. Most people would claim it was because of religious disagreements. The reality is that global governments struggle for control over that region simply because of their oil rich land. It may seem as if the U.S. and Saudi Arabia are allies, but consider the history the world has with those countries. More blood has been spilt than there is oil to draw from those reservoirs. For a country as large as the United States to be fighting over one resource is a disheartening concept to digest. It is boggling that, after the decades of war, the world governments have not turned over their energy dependencies onto reliable sources. Think of a country that could run simply off of solar energy, or even dedicating whole regions strictly to renewable energy. The power would be infinite with endless backup plans, yet scientists spend their time constructing new ways to pulverize cities simply with the flip of a switch. Their main goal? What's buried under all the destruction. Now, that is not the only evidence to revealing how serious our dependency is on the East's reservoirs. A journalist for TomDispatch.com broke down the science behind the global conflicts that have arisen over oil and gas. He stated, “Neither side seemed prepared to back down on key demands, especially on Iran's nuclear program, and any talk of a compromise solution was deemed unrealistic.” (Klare p.1). To explain, countries like Iran refuse to change their destructive energy programs. The U.S. has tried to make policies with them to potentially save Iran from abusing their nuclear energy. Both countries demand the other changes. This creates extreme stress between both governments. The reason there is a struggle over the power

is because each country secretly wanted to harness that finite energy source. It was never about the moral choice of using a clean energy source. It was about the money. They are only looking out for their present energy crisis. This causes the stubborn U.S. powers to continue to crave what the Middle East is withholding, but the East is not going to give it up without a hefty trade. Since the United States is not known for being generous, the power struggle remains. Until each side realizes they are plaguing the Earth with war over a source that will only last into the next generation, all future generations will have to struggle to clean up their ancestors mess.

Another reason our generation should focus on changing to renewable energy is because we could save our own resources. A German journalist wrote about how his country has revolutionized their carbon emissions. "Since 1990, Germany has reduced its emissions by 27%, according to the government. It is the world's fourth-biggest economy but the sixth-biggest greenhouse gas emitter, thanks in part to a shift to wind, solar and other renewable energy sources that now provide a third of its electricity." (Kirschbaum p.1). Clearly, the Germans are paving the way for energy efficient movie production. If countries would take a look at how impactful and positive German's conversion to renewable energy has shaped their economy maybe more countries would consider their own wastefulness. Since the world wars left Germany stranded, Germany was able to relieve itself of power struggles with other countries by taking it upon themselves to provide their own electricity. By using those power sources, countries do not have to rely heavily on resources that will eventually run out. People could save whole ecosystems and reduce carbon emissions ten fold. Future generations would not have to worry about repairing the Earth and scrounging for power. The current generation has enough intelligence to realize how they are draining the Earth. At this rate, if humans convert now, they

could save the remaining nonrenewable energy sources as a backup, not as a priority. Not only has Germany lead by example to prove that the transition is possible, but the World Resources Institute has drawn the conclusion that largest advantage would be to the global economy if the world changes its strategy on energy. One of their articles detailed that, “Studies by the New York Independent System Operator (NY ISO), Synapse Energy Economics, and the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) suggest that increased renewable energy generation has the potential to save American ratepayers tens of billions of dollars a year over the current mix of electric power options” (Ryor p.1). Obviously, the United States, and potentially the world, would save enormous amounts of money by transitioning to being dependent on renewable energy. The only problem with the transition is that because of the current taxes regulations on all of the energy sources, people who decided to take the leap would see large chunks of their money coming out of pocket. It takes a year or two to see the money be paid back fully, but think of all the years after that. People would never have to pay another electric bill. If someone becomes skilled enough with using the renewable energy that could even cut back water and gas bills. Essentially, entire cities could save millions of dollars that they could spend elsewhere in the economy rather than being a slave to their utility bills. It could rise the United States out of their debt. All it would have to take is people taking one afternoon to install their energy provider.

The most obvious reason our generation should focus on changing our energy dependencies is so we can heal the Earth. A Union of concerned scientist wrote an article about the benefits of transitioning to renewable sources. They reported, “In an 80 percent renewables

future, carbon emissions from the power sector would be reduced by 80 percent, and water use would be reduced by 50 percent” (Union p.1). To clarify, these scientists predicted that if the world changes to even a fraction of renewable energy they could find significant positive impacts. People do not realize how much energy they waste on a daily basis. All of the sources they draw from tax the Earth exponentially. Think of all the gas someone burns when they drive their car, or how much gas it takes to heat up water for a shower. All of that energy has to come from somewhere. There is such a thing as natural gas deposits, but most of the gas companies have to refine their product before being able to use it. These elaborate processes require many hours of burning chemicals to get their desired output. Where do all of the chemicals go? As told by the University of Atmospheric Research, “Chlorofluorocarbons drift slowly upward to the stratosphere, where they are broken up by ultraviolet radiation, releasing the chlorine that catalytically destroys ozone” (UCAR p.1). The only way to reduce the harmful chemicals created by these companies is to transition to more renewable energy such as biofuels or hydroelectricity to provide for everyday needs. Not only were union scientists concerned with how necessary this conversion would be, but so did one particular news service that wrote an article titled “Major Milestones Reached in the New World”. They discovered, “Were it not for renewables excluding large hydro, annual global CO₂ emissions would have been an estimated 1.5 gigatonnes higher in 2015” (SIRS p.1). In other words, renewable energy saved the world from creating excessive amounts of carbon dioxide emissions. That large of an output of emissions would have been felt immediately. CO₂ is well-known for its effect on the ozone. The carbon eats away at the protective layer that shields humans from the sun’s harmful ultraviolet rays. In turn, this warms the Earth and causes massive climate change. In the next fifty years, domino effect of climate

change caused by carbon emissions will have wiped out the coral reefs, raised oceans, and intensified global storms. As long as people convert to cleaner energy now, humans could stop the Earth from becoming a toxic wasteland. Every step toward renewable energy means one step closer to a healthier future.

Many citizens are blind to the idea of butterfly effects. The idea that one small event could collapse or improve whole societies. In this case, if every citizen took small steps toward cleaner and renewable energy they could potentially be saving the Earth. When people have access to clean energy it can be of enormous value to societies. This is especially true to regions where the reliable energy could cause profound improvements in qualities of life to evaporate war, create economic development, and provide environmental sustainability. As long as people continue to invest themselves in renewables, it will not only benefit the people, but it will be a key element into the survive of our planet. Every action we do now as a society affects how our children's children will see us. If they do not have a healthy world to live in, they will be denied a prosperous future. Think of that next time you take a thirty minute shower.

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