

## [A problem solved](#) [1]

Written by [Dr Madsen Pirie](#) [2] | Friday 10 August 2012

The world's energy problem seems to have been solved, but governments do not seem to have noticed. A relatively clean and abundant source of energy has not been produced by wind, solar or tidal power, nor even by nuclear power. It has certainly not come from bio-fuels that create less energy than they use. It has been solved by human ingenuity and technology.

The world has suddenly uncovered vast reserves of natural gas, largely because advances in horizontal drilling and hydraulic fracturing (fracking) technology have enabled it to be extracted from shale deposits previously thought undrillable. The price of gas in the US has dropped to less than a quarter of its 2008 level (down from \$13 per million BTUs to about \$3).

Gas is still a fossil fuel, but the reserves of it are already estimated to last for 100 years, and possibly 200 years. Ongoing technology will by then almost certainly develop new and low-cost alternatives to replace it. Furthermore, gas is relatively clean, putting out less pollution and carbon emissions than coal or oil. Gas-fired power stations will give us a cheap, relatively clean supply of electricity for many years to come to power our factories, our transport and our homes.

Gas is not renewable, and does not need to be. Renewable energy is only desirable when energy is in short supply, and the gas revolution means that it no longer is. Governments which have succumbed to environmental lobbies to subsidize wind farms and solar power generation will find they have unnecessarily increased energy costs to their citizens and their businesses, as well as disfiguring their countryside.

Gas has the additional advantage that its reserves are not located in politically volatile or hostile parts of the world. It will free the developed countries from dependence on Middle Eastern or Russian energy supplies. The US will soon be self-sufficient in energy and become a net exporter, and even Britain could be.

Environmentalist organizations will lobby hard against it, citing all kinds of reasons for opposing it, but the main reason is the political one that it does not require changes in our behaviour, or the requirement to live more simply. We can instead continue to develop new opportunities, and the lower cost of energy will free resources to make its use cleaner still.

The energy problem has been solved, and someone should at some stage tell this to governments so that their behaviour might change.

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