

CHAPTER
8



**ENERGY
AND
ENVIRONMENTAL
SECURITY**

IDEA 15

An all-of-the-above energy strategy is the best way to lower prices for American families.

Most Americans want clean air and water, are concerned about climate change, and support the idea of Washington making significant investments to spur the adoption of cleaner energy sources.

But what concerns them most today about energy is how much it costs them to fuel their cars and heat and cool their homes.

In 2022, the average US household spent well over \$4,000 on gasoline, up from \$2,800 the year prior. Electricity prices in the US are at an all-time high, and as a result, 20 million families—one of every six—were behind on their utility bills at the end of 2022.

This is why most Americans do not support government restricting access to fossil fuel energy at a moment when we don't yet have enough affordable and reliable renewable energy to replace it. They believe that fossil fuel energy is absolutely essential to our economy now and for the foreseeable future, and they are right.

Even though renewable energy deployment has grown rapidly around the world, so has the demand for energy, which is why fossil fuels still account for about 80 percent of all the world's energy use—essentially the same proportion they accounted for 30 years ago.

When Washington tries to prohibit exploration of America's fossil fuel resources or discourage investment in the sector, all it does is weaken our country and strengthen other oil- and gas-producing countries like Russia that will gladly meet the world's growing demand for energy.

Meanwhile, neither Democrats nor Republicans in Washington have done enough to champion the expansion of carbon-free nuclear power, which is more reliable than wind and solar and cleaner than oil and gas. Despite the fact that US nuclear facilities are among the safest industrial facilities in the world—and newer reactor designs could make them even safer—the number of nuclear reactors in the US hasn't increased in three decades.

Most Americans want an all-of-the-above approach to our energy challenges, and that's exactly what the next president should deliver.

IDEA 16

To have cleaner energy, America needs to be able to build clean energy technologies.

As America accelerates our shift to cleaner energy sources, we should not trade what was once an overreliance on Middle Eastern oil for an overreliance on the foreign countries that control the metals, minerals, and refineries needed for the energy technologies of tomorrow.

But that is where we are headed.

According to the US Department of Energy, China controls the production and refining of 80 percent of the rare earth metals that are key to direct drives in wind turbines, 60 percent of the lithium refining capacity needed for electric vehicles and battery storage, and 100 percent of graphite processing needed for battery anodes. Then there's the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which produces 70 percent of the world's cobalt, about half of which is actually controlled by Chinese companies.

What's more, almost half of America's uranium (the fuel for nuclear power) comes from Russia and Kazakhstan.

Washington has lately made some welcome steps toward strengthening US clean energy supply chains, and the Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2023—which averted the debt ceiling crisis—has some small measures to make it easier to build energy infrastructure in the US.

But on balance, federal, state, and local governments still make it much too hard to do the mining in America that would provide the essential minerals and metals we need to build clean energy technologies and to build the transmission lines, distribution systems, and other infrastructure we need to deliver energy to homes and businesses.

That's why improving the regulatory and permitting process for how we build things in America needs to be at the top of the next president's agenda.

