

WATER CONSTRAINTS ON ENERGY PRODUCTION: ALTERING OUR CURRENT COLLISION COURSE

CIVIL SOCIETY INSTITUTE WEBINAR PRESENTATION

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WELCOMING COMMENTS

Thank you for joining us for the second Webcast by Civil Society Institute featuring a report prepared by Synapse Energy Economics.

I am Grant Smith, Senior Energy Policy Analyst with the Civil Society Institute.

CSI is a nonprofit and nonpartisan think tank based in Newton, Massachusetts and, since 2003, has conducted more than 28 major national and state-level surveys and reports on energy policy and the economic, social and environmental impacts, including vehicle fuel-efficiency standards, global warming and regional renewable energy strategies.

CONTEXT FOR NEW REPORT

“Water Constraints on Energy Production” is the 6th in a series of reports conducted by Synapse Energy Economics for the Civil Society Institute.

Our new report points to the many unanswered questions and the urgency of a thorough understanding about water consumption and use of the electric sector and the challenges to it in a water constrained world.

They key findings will be outlined in a few minutes by Synapse Energy Economics.

WHERE IS AMERICA'S WATER ROADMAP?

In 2005, the U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources mandated the Department of Energy to produce an Energy/Water Roadmap of the energy sector's water needs and the impacts on the environment, agriculture and other residential and commercial uses.

After years of bureaucratic infighting and an apparent desire by DOE government employees to avoid controversy for the Federal government, a diluted report was sent to the White House and the Office of Management and Budget. That report, as watered down as the final draft was, has yet to be released to the Congress and the public eight years after the Senate mandate.

“DRIVING BLIND” WITHOUT WATER ROADMAP (1)

In recent years, there has been an explosion of water-intensive energy development by the oil and gas industry. We have had severe regional droughts. Intensive heat waves have warmed the waters necessary for cooling existing power plants.

Diminishing fresh water aquifers, drought and competing agricultural demands present an urgent need for the Federal government to take the lead in identifying what water resources we have and how best to use and protect those resources. Vital water data has yet to be gathered by agencies of the government. United States Geological Survey (USGS) has not been funded adequately to gather this information.

“DRIVING BLIND” WITHOUT WATER ROADMAP (2)

We do not have a thorough understanding of groundwater resources and the interconnection of aquifers and yet we continue to drill shale gas wells and frack them without this essential information.

The U.S. is spending a water budget without understanding how much water is available or what the use of water in energy production will mean for local communities, agriculture or other commercial uses.

MOVING TO LESS “THIRSTY” POWER (1)

There are energy sources available to us that are not water intensive. Wind and solar have the added benefits of preserving water and protecting drinking water from harmful chemicals and producing energy from sources that cannot be exhausted over time.

A safe, renewable energy future has been deferred by politics -- not by technological innovation, though many innovations are around the corner. The enormous economic and political influence of the electric utility companies, and the oil, gas, coal and nuclear industries present one of the major challenges of moving toward a new energy path.

CONCLUSION

It is time for America to be decisive, to choose an energy path that is sustainable and that protects public health. A hard-headed analysis of our water resources and how to manage them in the context of energy choices should be our roadmap.

THANK YOU!

We appreciate your taking the time to participate in this Webcast today.

Please remain with us during the next presentation of the report findings by Synapse Energy Economics.

I hope that you will pose questions during the upcoming Q&A portion of today's program.

To read more, please go to www.civilsocietyinstitute.org/synapsereport