Fossil Fuels And The Future of Alternative Energy

Throughout history there has always been a need for coal, gasoline and oil. Without these energy sources, we could not have running cars, trucks, and planes. Without them we could not have heat or light. According to Robert Lyman Principal at ENTRANS Policy Research Group, Inc., “Oil provides 95% of the fuel demands of the transportation sector... Every transport mode – cars, trucks, trains, buses, marine vessels, and aircraft – relies almost entirely on petroleum fuels. Only natural gas liquids and, in recent years as the result of regulated fuel mandates, ethanol - have made small inroads in the dominant share held by oil.” (qtd. in Can Alternative) This shows that the need for fossil fuels is only going up, and to be a continuos and successful society, that we need to keep fossil fuels around and not lean towards renewable energy.

In addition, without the use of fossil fuels there would be an electricity shortage. According to Gary Wolfram, PhD, William E. Simon Professor of Economics and Public Policy at Hillsdale College, “Today in the U.S. 33 percent of electricity generation is from coal, 33 percent from natural gas and 20 percent nuclear. While rising steadily, only 13 percent is from renewable energy.” (qtd. In Can Alternative) This implies that without the use of fossil fuels not only energy alone would be effected, but anything and everything that needs energy to work and live.

It is Widely believed that fossil fuels are necessary for continual sustainment in the US, however, According to Stephen Cohen, Professor in the Practice of Public Affairs at Columbia University’s School of International and Public Affairs 7 out of 10 people prefer alternative energy over fossil fuels. Although some believe fossil fuels are a major source of electricity generation and fuel demands, in the near future, renewable and alternative energy will replace fossil fuels due to: limited supplies of of fossil fuels, Lower Prices, and self replenishment.

But First, what is renewable energy and what are the benefits? Renewable energy is energy or power collected from natural resources. Some examples are hydropower from damming a river, putting up solar panels and collecting energy from the sun, or putting up windmills, and harnessing the wind.

Fossil Fuels are energy sources including, but not limited to oil, coal, and natural gas. They are one-time use supplies that are formed when plants and animals in the Jurassic time period or the time of the dinosaurs died and were slowly buried beneath layers of rock. In the article “When will fossil fuels run out?” the graph about half way through the article shows that in the next 150 years the amount of fossil fuels will be close to 0 (The End of). This portrays that since the global amount of fossil fuels is decreasing quickly, that over the next 150 years the US needs to change from fossil fuels to renewable and alternative energy to keep up with the need of energy and electricity in the US and throughout much of the World.

Although, some people say that renewable energy can be very costly and a waste of money, it really is not expensive, it is considerably cost effective. According to Richard Schiffman, an environmental journalist:

However difficult and expensive it may be at the outset to green the U.S. power system, it won't take long before our initial investment begins to pay off in lower electric bills — which are no

longer a hostage to global oil prices — and a cleaner environment...It does cost more to build wind farms and install solar arrays. But once these plants are set up and running, they have lower operation and maintenance costs than conventional power on a yearly basis. No more regular fuel bills and only minimal expenses for upkeep of solar, for example, which has no movable parts that wear out and need to be replaced. The price argument is also fallacious because we have never paid the real price for the power we use, which includes the cost to the environment and human health of the carbon pollution that fossil-fuel mining and burning generates... We should be supporting technologies that help us to put the brake on destructive climate change, rather than feeding the unsustainable fossil-fuel habit that is driving it. (qtd. in Can Alternative)

This shows that the switch from fossil fuels to alternative and renewable energy may be a large hit to a countries national debt, however in the long run it will save people and nations an immense amount of money. Using sources of solar and wind power would put a couple of dollars back in the wallet because they are self replenishing.

Consequently, a reason to change from fossil fuels to renewable energy is that there is a limited supply of fossil fuels, and they provide a one time use, while the alternative, renewable energy is self replenishing and sustainable. In the Article, When Will Fossil Fuels Run out, it States, “Unlike fossil fuels, green energy made from wind and solar power is sustainable, because its generated by resources that won’t run out. Plus, it provides a way to fight climate change by reducing and even offsetting carbon emissions.” (The End of) This shows that because fossil fuels are unsustainable, and to decrease the effect on climate change, it is necessary to find an alternative source of energy.

In synopsis, to keep up with demand of electricity in the US and the World, Fossil fuels need to be done away with. Although, fossil fuels may be the dominate source of electricity on the market and may look like the cheapest option, the way to satisfy electricity needs is to switch to renewable energy. Renewable energy needs to be utilized to the max, because: it is self replenishing, it costs less money, and never runs out.