



The Bottomless Well: The Twilight of Fuel, the Virtue of Waste, and Why We Will Never Run Out of Energy

By Peter Huber, Mark P. Mills

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The sheer volume of talk about energy, energy prices, and energy policy on both sides of the political aisle suggests that we must know something about these subjects. But according to Peter W. Huber and Mark P. Mills, the things we think we know are mostly myths. A better understanding of energy will radically change our views and policies on a number of very controversial issues. In *The Bottomless Well*, Huber and Mills show why energy is not scarce, why the price of energy doesn't matter very much, and why "waste" of energy is both necessary and desirable. Across the board, energy isn't the problem; energy is the solution.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Contrary to "Lethargist" Chicken Littles who champion gas taxes and mileage standards, this free-market-oriented, techno-optimist manifesto insists that "[h]umanity is destined to find and consume more energy, and still more, forever." Huber, a fellow at the conservative Manhattan Institute (*Hard Green; Galileo's Revenge*; etc.), and venture capitalist and former Reagan administration staffer Mills contend that, in conjunction with our ever-increasing scientific know-how, consuming energy yields good things, including the ability to find and harness more energy. The authors develop intriguing contrarian challenges to the conventional wisdom (improved energy efficiency, they argue cogently, boosts energy demand instead of curbing it) and their discussions of new technologies—electric drive trains, awesome lasers, "dexterous robots"—that may profoundly reshape energy usage is illuminating. But their treatment of energy-consumption pitfalls like global warming is cursory and unconvincing, and they devote too little space to explaining exactly where new energy supplies will come from, and too much to assurances that "[f]uels recede, demand grows... but logic ascends, and with the rise of logic we attain the impossible—*infinite energy, perpetual motion and the triumph of power.*" Long on Nietzschean bombast but short on some crucial specifics, theirs is an intriguing but incomplete vision of energy policy and prospects.

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From Booklist

The authors point out that America consumes 25 percent of the world's natural gas, 23 percent of its hard coal, 25 percent of its crude petroleum, 43 percent of its motor gasoline, and 26 percent of its electricity. They reveal that our main use of energy isn't lighting, locomotion, or cooling; what we use energy for, mainly, is to extract, refine, process, and purify energy itself. Huber and Mills list what they call the seven energy heresies: the cost of energy as we use it has less and less to do with the cost of fuel; "waste" is virtuous; the more efficient our technology, the more energy we consume; the competitive advantage in manufacturing is now swinging decisively back toward the U.S.; human demand for energy is insatiable; the raw fuels are not running out; and America's relentless pursuit of high-grade energy does not add chaos to the global environment but rather restores its order. Readers with prior knowledge of this complicated subject will appreciate their conclusions the most. *George Cohen*

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Review

"This is the only book I've seen that really explains energy, its history, and what it will be like going forward." Bill Gates"

Users Review

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Brian Wilson:

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