Written by **Ed Hiserodt** on June 22, 2009

Estimate of Natural-gas Reserves Jumps 35 Percent

Most of this increase resulted from development of a technique known as "hydraulic fracturing" where water is injected via special "wells" to shatter underground shale formations and release trapped gas. Areas such as Arkansas and Pennsylvania — not considered promising locations for natural-gas production in the past — are now being swarmed by purchasers of mineral rights and drilling rig erectors.

Current U.S. usage is about 25 Tcf per year, thus new reserve figures suggest at least 83 years at current usage. But this figure is certainly low. While this recent report relates to the latest biennial survey, reserve increases of a lesser amount are commonplace even with continuous increases in production. Not included in the committee's "reserves" are the discoveries in "unconventional resources" that are becoming technologically practical to tap. One of these is the presence of "geopressurized zones" with gas at depths on the order of 25,000 feet found on the Gulf Coast of the United States. Experts put these reserves at 5,000 to 49,000 Tcf. Beyond that are the methane hydrates on the seafloor, which if not banned to the United States by a Law of the Sea Treaty, could provide an estimated at 7,000 to 73,000 Tcf. Even if petroleum were replaced by natural gas as a transportation fuel, we would still enjoy many hundreds to several thousands of years of supply — just from what we know about today.

Unfortunately the Obama administration shows little interest in developing natural-gas resources but instead is funneling billions of tax dollars into wind and solar power "research" and subsidies — both unreliable sources of energy that have no affect on the need to bolster our transportation fuel requirements. Natural gas, with its energy content of about 1,030 BTU/cubic foot is 20 to 30 percent cheaper as a fuel when compared to gasoline at 125,000 BTU/gal given today's market prices. With an existing distribution system consisting of 300,000 miles of pipelines, 1,400 compressor stations, 11,000

delivery points, and 394 underground storage facilities, natural gas has both the infrastructure and potential to replace — or at least augment — petroleum as a motor fuel.

There are several possibilities for converting natural gas to a secondary or even primary transportation fuel. Already there are 1.25 million vehicles worldwide — including 130,000 in the United States — that operate on compressed natural gas (CNG), most of which are buses and trucks that can afford the large volume tanks required for fuel storage. (For example, a Honda Civic would require a tank three times its current volume to provide CNG for a 40-mile excursion.)

By cooling natural gas to minus 260 degrees Fahrenheit, however, it can be stored in the form of liquefied natural gas (LNG) in well-insulated pressure tanks with only about 1/3 more volume than gasoline tanks. Tanks, however, must be vented to prevent a build-up in pressure, certainly an inconvenience if parked in your garage. (Scavenging the vented gases may be a possibility.) And there may be an even better idea.

Syntroleum Corporation, a 20-year-old thinking-out-of-the-box company in Tulsa, has developed a process to blend natural gas with pure oxygen under heat and pressure to produce “synthesis gas,” a mixture of carbon monoxide and hydrogen. With the help of a catalyst, this gas is transformed into a hydrocarbon form that be “cracked” into diesel-like fuel molecules and piped in normal pipelines. All this can be done in the gas field. Unlike the crude oil from diesel, the synthetic version virtually eliminates engine wear, emits no sulfur, metals, and few particulates. Even the California Energy Commission likes it. (That’s scary.)

And just what is the problem with developing domestic sources of transportation fuels? Ah, yes, the global-warming thing. We’re to cut our “carbon footprint” back to that of 1867 Americana so that future generations won’t be roasted and/or drowned because of a rise in planetary temperature. It is time, dear reader, that we stop being mesmerized by the plight of polar bears, the snows on Kilimanjaro, and bleaching of South Pacific corals; and it is time for us to ask the real question of this decade:

> Mr. politician, what evidence do you have that carbon dioxide is causing a rise in global temperatures? Please don’t point to the supposed consequences of such a rise, such as melting glaciers (which, in truth, began melting long before increased levels of carbon dioxide), because I’m asking for proof that carbon dioxide is causing any warming. The “scientists” of the International Panel on Climate Change have no answer. They agree that the signature of global heating from greenhouse gases is not present, even though they have sent thousands of temperature-recording balloons aloft and logged hundreds of thousands of satellite measurements in a vain attempt to find it. Former “climate catastrophe believers” have abandoned the theory on this basis. And none of the computer models that are used as the basis of the predictions of dire consequences were able to forecast the decrease in global temperatures we have recorded over the last eight years, temperatures that often set record lows. What is your conclusive evidence that we need to lower our fossil-fuel usage, thereby dramatically lowering our standard of living?

Mr. Gore, Mr. Hansen, President Obama, Senator Reid, Congresswoman Pelosi, show us the evidence that carbon dioxide is causing global warming, or be honest and admit that fictional “anthropogenic global warming” is merely an excuse for a tax on energy to fund an increase in the size, scope, and power of government.