

## Natural gas is America's fuel in 21st Century

Written by Holyoke Enterprise

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Colorado is a leader in promoting the use of American natural gas as a transportation fuel. The Center for American Progress recently unveiled their report “Natural Gas: A Bridge Fuel for the 21st Century.” The report noted the recent discoveries of natural gas shale represented an “unprecedented opportunity to use gas as a bridge fuel to a 21st century energy economy that relies on efficiency, renewable sources and low-carbon fossil fuels.”

Unlike most natural resources in America, natural gas reserves have actually grown as modern drilling technology has opened vast new shale plays across the country to the economic and environmentally safe recovery of the natural gas they contain.

The latest study conducted by the Potential Gas Committee, in cooperation with the Colorado School of Mines, estimated there are more than 2,000 trillion cubic feet (Tcf) of natural gas available for recovery in the continental United States.

With enough natural gas to last more than a century, we have more than enough to turn away from imported gasoline and diesel to power our cars and trucks and create an entirely new industry around America's rolling stock running on clean, domestic natural gas.

In spite of the recession, we are still importing about two-thirds of all the oil we use in America. In July we imported 374 million barrels of oil at a cost of over \$24 billion. Seventy percent of that oil is used to fuel our 250 million cars and light trucks and millions of heavy duty trucks—including 18-wheelers.

There are over 10 million vehicles in the world running on natural gas, so we already know this technology works. Unfortunately only about 130,000 of them are in the United States.

The place to start this conversion process is with heavy-duty trucks. The U.S. House and Senate are considering the NAT GAS Act, which will provide incentives for truckers—companies large and small—to replace their trucks burning imported diesel with vehicles running on American natural gas. As a primary co-sponsor and ardent supporter, we were in attendance at the introduction of the House version on April 1 and have since been joined by 87 additional bi-partisan co-sponsors of this crucial legislation.

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If we replace some of the diesel trucks on America's roads with those running on domestic natural gas, that would keep billions of dollars circulating through the U.S. economy instead of sending it to places like Saudi Arabia, Angola or Venezuela.

Colorado has made an excellent start in this process. At Denver International Airport, almost every major airline is using natural gas vehicles (NGVs), from baggage tugs to parking shuttles. Many cities and counties across Colorado are already operating compressed natural gas buses as well as garbage and recycling trucks, with more on the way.

Natural gas also burns far cleaner than either gasoline or diesel and produces virtually no particulate emissions. As Colorado searches for new ways to protect the air from its cities to its farms, the value of switching from imported oil to domestic natural gas becomes more and more clear.

We are proud to co-sponsor and support the NAT GAS Act and will continue to work with members of the House, Senate and the Administration to ensure that this critical bill becomes law.