


<b>Question of the Day:</b> <b><i>ANWR Drilling Policy Debate</i></b>	<b>Name:</b>
 Your bar code label here	<b>Perm:</b>

Today we consider the question of drilling for oil in the Arctic National Wildlife Reserve, as a timely example of the interplay between science and politics. Should we drill, or shouldn't we? Some of the issues are presented in the text. You are asked to come up with a position on this issue, then discuss it with those closest to you. Read the news item on the back of this page first.

President George Bush says that developing ANWR oil fields will reduce our dependence on foreign oil, while environmentalists claim that increasing our energy efficiency is the answer. Some claims are made that a) developing ANWR equals 48 years of imports from Iraq, or 19 years of imports from Saudi Arabia, and b) we can increase our automobile fuel efficiency instead of extracting oil from ANWR. What do you think? Can you think of other arguments pro or con? Let's analyze the above arguments.

**What do you need to know to analyze this issue?** You may not have all of the facts. What do you need to find out to begin an analysis?

**Analysis of claim a (in box):**

**Analysis of claim b (in box):**

**Some facts:**

The amount of oil in ANWR is controversial, and there are serious unknowns. Estimates range from 5 to 10.4 billion barrels of oil. Oil would be pumped at 1.9 million barrels per day (693 million/year) when the field is in full production, about 2020. Gasoline consumption in the US is expected to increase every year. For example, we now (Spring 2003) consume 19 million bbl/day, in comparison to 14.8 million bbl/day in 2000.

Gasoline from 1 barrel of oil: 19.5 gallons

**From the Bureau of Transportation Statistics web site (figures are from 2000):**  
(<http://www.bts.gov/publications/nts/>) (2001 report)

Highway miles traveled:	1,601,914 million miles/year
Gasoline consumed:	73,125 million gallons/year
Domestic crude oil production:	2,128 million bbl (barrels) /year
Imported crude oil:	3,260 million bbl/year
% of world oil consumed by US:	26.1%
Imports from Iraq:	226 million bbl/year
Imports from Saudi Arabia:	573 million bbl/year

## US Interior Dept issues Alaska oil drilling plan

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WASHINGTON - The U.S. Interior Department released a draft proposal on expanding oil and natural gas drilling in the National Petroleum Reserve, which may give energy companies access to millions more acres in a pristine reserve in Alaska.

In a 1,000-page report, the department's Bureau of Land Management proposed four scenarios for the northwest area of the National Petroleum Reserve, ranging from having no drilling to giving oil companies access to parts of the reserve.

The report addressed three major issues: what lands should be offered for oil and gas leasing, what measures should be developed to protect important surface resources, and what non-oil and gas land allocations should be considered.

BLM will take public comment on the four scenarios for 60 days until March 18 and then present one to Interior Secretary Gale Norton in a final environmental impact statement expected later this year, the official said.

Environmentalists fear that because this area was targeted for development in the Bush administration's energy plan to help reduce U.S. oil imports, it is likely that Norton will eventually call for oil and gas leasing in almost the entire 8.8 million acres (3.6 million hectares) of the reserve's northwest planning area.

If this happens, they contend it would be the largest ever single onshore lease sale of Alaska's Arctic. The reserve's northwest area provides a critical habitat for polar bears, caribou, spotted seals and beluga whales.

"The Bush administration is busy scouring the American landscape for more places to punch holes and set up oil rigs, when instead we should be investing in renewable energy and working to permanently protect special places in the Western Arctic," said Sierra Club lobbyist Melinda Pierce.

Conservationists said that drilling in this region is not the answer to the nation's energy needs.

"Since America possesses only 3 percent of the world's oil resources, but consumes 25 percent of the world's production, we cannot drill our way out of our oil import dependency," said Chuck Clusen, director of the Natural Resources Defense Council's Alaska Project.

Public meetings will be held on the plan Feb. 12 in Fairbanks and Feb. 13 in Anchorage.

The 23-million-acre (9.3-million-hectare) National Petroleum Reserve - about the size of Indiana - is in the northwest corner of Alaska, and was established in 1923 to provide a source of energy for the nation's military forces. Despite sporadic exploration since the 1940s, there has never been commercial oil development there.

The Clinton administration opened about 4 million acres in the eastern portion of the reserve to oil drilling after a long industry hiatus in the area. But oil companies had been disappointed that certain segments were kept off-limits because of environmental concerns.

The Bush administration is separately pushing to open the nearby Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to drilling. Republican lawmakers are considering including language in federal budget legislation to allow drilling in ANWR.

Story by Tom Doggett

**Story Date:** 20/1/2003