



Bloomberg on Oil, Energy

Posted by [Glenn](#) on August 7, 2006 - 7:48am in [The Oil Drum: Local](#)

Topic: [Demand/Consumption](#)

Tags: [asthma](#), [climate change](#), [global warming](#), [new york city](#), [oil](#), [peak oil](#), [quality of life](#), [terrorism](#) [[list all tags](#)]

In mayor Bloomberg's [weekly radio address](#) last week, he made a plea for conservation to reduce peak demand during the heat wave that hit New York last week and came [very close to causing a blackout](#) in parts of the city where feeder cables had failed. While the press only picked up on the more sensational charge he made, that [oil imports from the Middle East fund terrorism](#), he actually made some very good points about energy consumption in general:

We have to make a decision in our society, given that we are never going to have enough energy in this country as we would like, at any price range: What do we want to spend our energy on? You can't for instance, spend it on air conditioning the outside. It would just cost an infinite amount of money.

He also discussed how the current electricity situation was based more on distribution problems rather than a lack of production capacity. Then he came back to the energy conservation theme:

Mayor Bloomberg: If we are ever going to get rid of our dependence on foreign oil, which leaves us vulnerable to a stoppage..(then the Al Qaida reference)..it's going to require a sea change in how we use energy, what energy we use and how much we are willing to pay for it.

Interviewer (John Gambling): But our consumption is never going to go down, only up....

Mayor Bloomberg: Well, no, no, no, in Europe they use much smaller cars, that are much more energy efficient.

Interviewer: But on an annual basis, it still grows. It always grows.

Mayor Bloomberg: Well if you replaced those cars over a five or ten year period, I guess most cars are replaced in ten years, and you went from 25 mpg to 45 mpg, we use so much energy there, it might actually come down. You can go to alternative sources, there are windmills. Everyone says "Hey, great idea, it doesn't pollute or anything" but then if you put them offshore, they say "That's ruining my view or hurting the fish or the birds"...

Interviewer: Did you see the one the other day about waves?

Mayor Bloomberg: Harnessing wave power from the east river...There's never going to be anything perfect.

He then went on to support more nuclear power because "fossil fuels are killing us now" and more offshore domestic drilling "as long as it is done responsibly" and doesn't "damage the environment we are going to leave our kids". But he reiterated his message about reducing consumption of oil and energy in general as the best policy.

Then the interviewer really dug into him on that last point:

Interviewer: Why should we hinder ourselves, if you consider it a hinderance, by going to a lower energy future, when China and India are just going to suck it all up anyway?

Bloomberg: Well, they aren't. Their cars aren't gas guzzlers like ours. I mean, they have a right to own cars...But we have to be willing to do our part even if other people don't do their part. You're saying it's ok to drive unsafely because other people don't drive safely. I mean C'mon.

I hope this signifies a new willingness on the part of the Mayor to really take this issue head-on.

Meanwhile Gov. Pataki is going to deliver a [major energy policy address](#) in Washington DC, as he begins looking at his presidential prospects (cough, not going anywhere, cough).

The relevance of energy issues has never been higher in 30 years. It's time for the Mayor and the Governor, as well as the NY City Council and all public administrators to get serious about this and take dramatic actions to reduce energy demand. There should be a big bang approach at this point after so much time - by implementing a slew of policy proposals that are sitting and waiting for action, from congestion pricing, to converting all taxis to 40+ mpg, making cycling safer, to little things like compact fluorescent bulbs that together could make a huge difference. A piecemeal approach will only encourage special interests to sink them one by one.

People are willing to sacrifice, if they know it is the right thing to do, if they see that it is practical, if they know that they are sacrificing for something greater than themselves. Our country has in its history shown a great willingness to sacrifice for great causes that are worthwhile. What's more is that this sacrifice will save them money in the short term and provide numerous public benefits: less air pollution, less asthma, less traffic congestion, less lung cancer, less noise, less money going to terrorists, better quality of life and a better sense of community togetherness in accomplishing a goal. I could see newspapers publicizing weekly numbers showing the impact on all these efforts to reduce consumption.

Reducing energy consumption is our generation's moral equivalent to fighting fascism. Reducing consumption The leader who picks up this issue and runs with it will become a hero to the people.



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 United States License](#).