

New report identifies possible next steps in US energy development

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America's Increasing Reliance on Natural Gas: Benefits and Risks of a Methane Economy

Report of the Critical Issues Forum

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The U.S. energy portfolio changes over time. Scientific and technologic advances related to hydraulic fracturing have dramatically increased the supply of U.S. oil and gas; because of this, a methane economy - in which natural gas provides the leading share of primary energy consumption - is now a possible scenario for U.S. energy development. In a report released by the American Geosciences Institute (AGI), the social, political, technical and environmental components of a methane economy are identified. The report also addresses how industry, government and the public might best work together to advance common energy goals.

The report is based on the inaugural AGI Critical Issues Forum where experts were asked to consider whether a [natural gas](#)-dominant economy is achievable in North America and if such an economy would be desirable. In this forum, U.S. geoscientists, economists and environmental experts identified barriers and enablers to such an economy. They reviewed geological, infrastructural, technological, and financial factors that may affect future gas supplies and the demand for natural gas. The experts also considered the environmental, health, and safety factors that may have a significant effect on the development of natural gas.

One of the conclusions of the report is that social license granted by consensus public opinion - at the national, state and local levels - can be either a substantial enabler or barrier to a methane [economy](#), and its importance cannot be overstated.

"In the U.S. we don't really understand much about energy: where it comes from, the scale of demand or the benefits and challenges of producing different kinds of energy." said Scott Tinker, Director of the Bureau of Economy Geology at the University of Texas at Austin, and State Geologist of Texas, "I don't know where things will stand 50 years from now, but I do know that, like today, we are still going to be looking for sources that are affordable, accessible, reliable and sustainable. Those tenets will drive the [energy](#) mix, whatever it turns out to be."

More information: The report is available for free download from the American Geosciences Institute website:

www.americangeosciences.org/po...um-2014/final-report or available for purchase from Amazon: www.amazon.com/Americas-Increa...1-Gas/dp/1508843503/

Provided by American Geosciences Institute

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