

Energy Insider by Cliff Burglin

Alaska can end U.S. oil dependence

An aggressive leasing program, drilling 1,000 wells per year, could end U.S. oil dependence in five years.

Last year California, Illinois, Ohio, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, and Texas drilled over 1,000 oil wells without any notorious environmental damage. These states regularly drill between 1,000 and 10,000 wells per year.

If 1,000 wells per year were drilled in Alaska for five years, the U.S. would have no need to be sending troops to the Mideast. The U.S. government and the state government control all of the offshore acreage in Alaska and most of the rest of the land onshore. So why are our troops protecting Saudi Arabia's oil?

Again, let me emphasize that if the federal and state governments allowed 1,000 wells per year to be drilled in Alaska, the United States would not have to import any foreign oil or jeopardize any of our young people's lives. With limited exploration, Alaska ranks with the top producing countries in the world. If we were aggressively looking for oil, we could be one of the top five producing nations in the world. As an item of interest, Alaska produces more oil than Kuwait.

The environmentalists' demand that the U.S. leave all its undiscovered oil in the ground and just use other countries' production, is going to haunt all Americans. With the help of the federal government, state government, the native corporations, and the news media, the State of Alaska's resources are completely locked up. Despite the fact that there are 22 known basins in Alaska that have been subject to little or no exploration, the aforementioned combined entities

have made the U.S. completely dependent on the Mideast and other foreign oil producers. Wouldn't it be great if the U.S. had Alaska's potential reserves to use as backup? Of course, that would have meant that state and federal politicians and bureaucrats would have had to have had some knowledge of the oil industry, economics, and history. It would be easier to produce a do-do bird or a passenger pigeon than a politician with foresight. As you know, all three are extinct.

Alaska has several fields that are capable of producing between 15,000 and 500,000 barrels per day if the price of oil is close to \$20 a barrel. These fields have not been developed due to lack of market. They are the West Sak, Point Thompson, Point McIntyre, Umiat, Seal Island, Gwydyr Bay, and Niakuk. There is also a discovery well in the Mikkelsen Bay area.

Alaska can thank Governors Walter Hickel and Jay Hammond for destroying Alaska's potential development. Unfortunately, Alaska has not had political leaders who had the strength to do the things that were right instead of popular.

The news media throughout the years have done nothing to help Alaska achieve its potential. There has not been one segment or one entity in any part of the news media that has not supported socialism, monopoly, and bureaucracy. If you doubt the truth of that statement, just read today's, yesterday's, and tomorrow's papers, and listen to the news commentators and our political leaders and politicians

both in and out of office. They can all parrot the problems, but none of them have any workable solutions.

To solve the U.S. oil and gas dependence on foreign countries, the federal government, state government, and native corporations could initiate an aggressive oil and gas leasing program on Alaska's land. Contrary to the lies and hypocrisy of the well-paid environmentalists, this would have little, if any, long-range negative environmental effect. It would and could, however, keep the United States and Alaska independent of foreign oil. There has been little effort on the part of the federal government, state government, or native corporations to explore and develop their respective land holdings for oil and gas or minerals or timber or agriculture or anything else. Alaskan development has been deliberately held back by the monopoly of the environmentalists, the multinational oil companies, and government bureaucrats.

And, it is regarded as the crime of the century in the State of Alaska to allow any of the public land to fall into private hands. Of course, it must be obvious to every Alaskan by now that every move that has been made over the past 30 years in the State of Alaska has been to keep any individual from participating in the development of Alaska's land or resources.

The ongoing tragedy in the Mideast spotlights the neglect of the development of Alaska's resources. It is sad to contemplate the dangers of the U.S.'s Mideast operation to the young men and women serving in our Armed Forces. None of this would have happened if federal and state leaders had steadily and consistently allowed Alaska's resources to be developed. Because of this lack of leadership, our state and nation are in grave danger and will undergo unnecessary hardship, suffering, and poverty.