



DrumBeat: October 7, 2008

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[A Gift From the '70s: Energy Lessons](#)

The presidential candidates claim to see America's energy future, but their competing visions have a certain vintage quality. They've revived that classic debate: the hard path versus the soft path.

The soft path, as Amory Lovins defined it in the 1970s, is energy conservation and power from the sun, wind and plants — the technologies that Senator Barack Obama emphasizes in his plan to reduce greenhouse emissions. Senator John McCain is more enthusiastic about building nuclear power plants, the quintessential hard path.

As a rule, it's not a good idea to revive anything from the 1970s. But this debate is the exception, and not just because the threat of global warming has raised the stakes. The old lessons are as good a guide as any to the future, as William Tucker argues in "Terrestrial Energy," his history of the hard-soft debate.

[OPEC exports down 50,000 in 4 wks to Sept 21-LMIU](#)

LONDON (Reuters) - OPEC seaborne oil exports, excluding Angola and Ecuador, fell 50,000 barrels per day (bpd) in the four weeks to Sept. 21 and were down sharply from Gulf suppliers, Lloyd's Marine Intelligence (LMIU) said on Tuesday.

LMIU said oil shipments from 11 OPEC producers, including Iraq, fell to 23.528 million bpd versus 23.582 million bpd in the four weeks to Aug. 31.

[World 2009 oil demand growth cut by 140,000 bpd](#)

WASHINGTON - The 'deteriorating' global economy will cut into world oil demand growth next year by 140,000 barrels per day, the U.S. Energy Information Administration said Tuesday.

Global oil consumption was forecast to average 86.92 million bpd in 2009, about 780,000 bpd more than this year's demand but 140,000 bpd less than the agency had forecast just last month.

World oil use was projected to rise by only 330,000 bpd this year, about 340,000 bpd lower than EIA's projections last month.

[Russian Oil Companies Seek State Loans, Lukoil Says](#)

Bloomberg) -- Four of Russia's biggest energy companies have asked the government to approve state loans for refinancing debt, said a spokesman for OAO Lukoil, the country's second-biggest oil producer.

Lukoil is seeking between \$2 billion and \$5 billion to refinance loans, spokesman Dmitry Dolgov said by phone in Moscow today. The other three companies are OAO Gazprom, the world's biggest natural-gas company; OAO Rosneft, Russia's largest oil producer; and TNK-BP, BP Plc's 50 percent Russian venture.

The loans may be used for "force majeure situations" or long-term investments in energy projects, Gazprom said today in a statement distributed by the Regulatory News Service. The Moscow-based company said it doesn't need to increase its current borrowing program.

[Russia's LUKOIL urges Iraq to approve oil deal](#)

MOSCOW (Reuters) - Russian oil firm LUKOIL urged Iraq's oil minister on Tuesday to remove obstacles to its investment in the West Qurna deposit, a month after China became the first country to renegotiate a Saddam Hussein-era oil deal.

LUKOIL Chief Executive Vagit Alekperov told Reuters Iraqi Oil Minister Hussain al-Shahristani was solely responsible for delaying the West Qurna deal, despite Russia's willingness to write off most of the Middle Eastern country's debt.

[Kazakhstan drops Gazprom partnership](#)

Kazakhstan's state oil company has decided against forming a joint venture with Russia's Gazprom Neft to run a Kazakhstan-based oil production company, a source close to the matter said.

[Kazakhstan confident in oil sector despite crisis](#)

ALMATY (Reuters) - Kazakhstan's oil sector is facing limited access to borrowing due to a global credit crisis but the overall sentiment is good and foreign interest remains strong, the energy minister said on Tuesday.

The liquidity squeeze has hit Central Asia's biggest oil producer hard since last year,

raising concerns about banks' ability to refinance debt and putting many projects on hold, particularly in the once-booming construction sector.

[Old Libya contract may be corrupt, Statoil says](#)

OSLO: A company inherited by StatoilHydro of Norway may have made payments to win business in Libya that breached U.S. and Norwegian anti-corruption rules, the producer of oil and natural gas said Tuesday after an internal investigation.

[Shell Road Fuels Meeting U.K. Biofuel Targets as BP, Total Miss](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Royal Dutch Shell Plc is one of four suppliers meeting U.K. targets for mixing biofuels with road fuel, while BP Plc and Total SA are among companies falling short so far, according to the Renewable Fuels Agency.

[Ryanair boss accuses BA of 'scamming' passengers](#)

Ryanair boss Michael O'Leary has accused British Airways of "scamming" passengers with high fuel surcharges despite the price of oil continuing to fall.

[People love angry-faced cars](#)

If a Toyota Prius just looks too friendly for your tastes, you're not alone. People readily see faces and traits in cars, and a new study suggests that they prefer cars to appear dominant, masculine and angry.

[Seas turn to acid as they soak up CO2](#)

The Bay of Naples is renowned for its breathtaking beauty and glittering clear waters. For centuries, tourists have flocked to the region to experience its glories.

But beneath the waves, scientists have uncovered an alarming secret. They have found streams of gas bubbling up from the seabed around the island of Ischia. 'The waters are like a Jacuzzi - there is so much carbon dioxide fizzing up from the seabed,' said Dr Jason Hall-Spencer, of Plymouth University. 'Millions of litres of gas bubble up every day.'

The gas streams have turned Ischia's waters into acid, and this has had a major impact on sea life and aquatic plants. Now marine biologists fear that the world's seas could follow suit.

[Peak oil, bailout bunk, and the coming recession](#)

The concept of peak oil started as a geological theory* that went like this: if you knew the amount of oil produced in the past, the rate at which it was produced, and roughly how much oil remained under the earth's surface, the theory could help you determine when oil production would likely start declining. Over the years however, proponents and critics alike recognized that more factors than just the size of oil resources and the ease of exploiting them would determine when world oil production would peak and plateau.

In the inimitable words of Frenchman Jean Marie Boudaire, "it ain't the size of the tank [the resource], it's the size of the tap." And a veritable suite of factors can tweak "the size of the tap," or how fast oil can be extracted or produced.

Wars impact production rates. Iraqi production is down because they've had bullets flying over their oilfields off and on for about 30 years. Nigerian rebel factions attack and take down oil production facilities with alarming frequency. Nationalism has converted most of the world's oil reserves to state-controlled national oil companies that in many places produce oil inefficiently. International and domestic politics keep the efficient, well-funded, experienced international oil companies on the sidelines, away from many of the world's best remaining oilfields. This plus rapid inflation in the cost of oil production equipment and operations has resulted in serious under-investment in projects to produce new oil in the four-years-and-beyond time frame. (The upside here: "inefficient production" will likely lower the ultimate world oil peak and lengthen the plateau production period, thereby giving us more time to plan an adaptive transition.)

It now looks as if a new factor has come into the game, one that could severely limit the rate at which new oil fields are developed over the coming years. This factor is the financial/liquidity crisis and the rapidly deteriorating world economic situation.

[Oil weathers the storm](#)

DOWN \$US10 a barrel one night, up \$US4 a barrel the next. Week after week, oil has been unpredictable; you might even say irascible.

Futures contracts were changing hands at \$US147 a barrel in July; now analysts are talking somewhere around \$US85 as a floor in the coming months. No one really knows for sure, which doesn't do anything to ease investor concern.

Nor do conflicting theories. The July high gave credibility to the "peak oil" crowd; the fall since then has been attributed to fears of a slowing world economy. And the evil speculators are in the mix somewhere. Probably, it's a case of "all the above" to some degree or other.

[Tricks of tapping into oil investments](#)

His bottom line: it is getting harder and more expensive for Australian companies drilling to make economic discoveries. The latest edition of his Who's Drilling bulletin was quite clear on the matter.

"The availability of low-risk, high-return exploration acreage is non-existent," Oaten wrote.

The number of wells drilled per year has increased by about 25 per cent, but what he calls the "discovery size per well" has fallen by about 65 per cent. This means that, in general terms, the costs of finding new reserves are somewhere between 200 per cent and 300 per cent higher than five years ago.

Then comes the kicker: "This has significant implications for profitability for the sector over the next two to three years due to significantly higher future amortisation charges."

[Gas shortages linger in places despite deliveries](#)

ASHEVILLE, N.C. — Some signs of the gas shortage haven't disappeared in North Carolina's mountains despite increased deliveries of fuel.

Most gas stations have fuel and operators say the situation is greatly improved, but some area pumps still sport plastic bags showing there isn't fuel in them, The Asheville Citizen-Times reported Tuesday.

Buncombe County emergency services director Jerry VeHaun said Monday that 70 to 80 percent of the county's stations had gas. Some stations remained closed, however.

[Peru Suspends Oil Contracts, Fires Official In Scandal](#)

Peru's government on Monday suspended a number of recently awarded gas and oil concessions, fired one high-level government official and accepted the resignation of another official due to a widening scandal tied to the concessions.

The government suspended the contracts that gave exploration and development concessions for oil and gas lots to a partnership made up of state-owned Petroperu SA and junior Norwegian company Discover Petroleum.

[Bye-Bye Byproducts, Hello Shortages Of Technology Metals](#)

Investors should keep it in mind that subsidies, even those thinly disguised by euphemisms such as bailout or loan follow a kind of Gresham's law.

[Tibet moving on climate change threat](#)

A chilly winter with fuel shortages and snowstorms are not the only consequences of global warming in this region. Flooding has also become a major threat.

After the Arctic and Antarctic, the Qinghai-Tibet plateau has the third largest number of glaciers. However, in the past 50 years, 82 percent of the plateau's glaciers have melted. The plateau has lost 10 percent of its permafrost layer in the past decade, according to the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

[Pemex Still Struggling to Restore Oil Production](#)

Pemex is still struggling with oil production issues that forced the Company to shut in 250,000 barrels nearly two weeks ago.

The amount of production shut in has fluctuated between 150,000 barrels a day and 250,000 barrels a day during the period, and is still not back to normal, a company spokesman said Monday.

He said the company will have more information later Monday. The episode will erode Pemex's overall production numbers for September and October.

[Energy crisis hijacks heating plans](#)

Nearly three-quarters of Mainers who participated in a recent poll plan to turn down their thermostats this winter while 10 percent predicted they will not be able to adequately heat their homes due to rising energy costs.

Those are just two preliminary findings from a large, ongoing survey that examines Mainers' heating plans for the winter as well as how they are coping with the current energy crisis.

Not surprisingly, the survey found that a growing number of Maine residents will burn wood or wood pellets to reduce their reliance on heating oil. Forty-six percent of households said they planned to burn either cordwood or wood pellets during the coming season.

But the poll — commissioned by the American Lung Association of Maine and the Maine Centers for Disease Control and Prevention — showed that 50 percent of respondents already have made cutbacks in "critical" household or personal expenses, such as groceries or transportation.

[Macedonia 'should eye Bulgaria nuke role'](#)

Macedonia should take part in the building of a new Bulgarian nuclear plant or acquire some of Kosovo's coal mines to avoid a future energy crisis, the country's president urged.

Unfortunately, the government has so far stayed deaf to these suggestions, Branko Crvenkovski's office told local A1 TV on October 6 in a written statement.

[The Other Scarce Resource](#)

CHEAP AND PLENTIFUL, water was for centuries a manufacturing tool that industry took for granted. But population growth, globalization, and climate change are shepherding in a new water-constrained era. Good, clean water just cannot be replaced—and it is getting harder to come by.

Manufacturers have been keeping a keen eye on rising energy prices; their concerns about water, in contrast, are turning more and more to the risk of running out. "Everyone shares this water model where it's cheap, cheap, cheap—then unavailable," says Scott Noesen, director of sustainability and business integration at Dow Water Solutions. For Dow, water has become a major strategic issue. "It's huge because we're trying to grow around the world, and where we want to grow often has issues of fresh water," Noesen says.

[Army Looks to Build World's Strongest Solar Array](#)

The Army says it wants to build what could be the world's most powerful solar power plant, as part of a far-reaching effort to cut back on the service's dependence on fossil fuels. The question is whether the Army will actually make good on its green promises.

[Chinese demand will help recovery](#)

Jeff Rubin, chief economist at CIBC World Markets, agrees that the world is in a cyclical recession.

"I will point out that if oil is at US\$90 in a recession, it begs the question of where it's going to be in a recovery," he said. "And I think it's US\$150 --US\$250 in a recovery."

"I would argue that not just oil prices but most commodity prices have already discounted a deep global recession," he said.

[The tsunami is here: What we're facing could be a lot worse than a recession](#)

On Bay Street, leading the freefall was the energy sector, which lost a whopping 9.4%,

its lowest level since May 2005, as oil prices dipped below \$90 US a barrel for the first time since February.

To me, it looks like Jeff Rubin, chief strategist at CIBC World Markets and Bay Street's star-studded soothsayer, has lost his crystal ball. He predicted oil at \$200 US a barrel and a TSX at 14,300 by year-end.

Falling oil prices means Ottawa can no longer count on an energy boom in the West to keep Canada's economy afloat, while us Eastern bastards, who are losing jobs, freeze in the dark.

[Asia's Oil Production Expected to Increase, Ease Stress on Global Supplies](#)

After years of putting a strain on world energy supplies, Asia is expected to significantly increase its own oil production next year, a development that could add to downward pressure on prices.

China, India and other big energy users in Asia aren't about to become major oil exporters -- far from it. They still consume much more crude than they produce and that trend won't change.

But several countries, including China, are lifting oil output. The unexpected boost -- some industry analysts had said the region would struggle to maintain production levels in the current decade -- should help Asia meet more of its own demand and reduce stress on supplies for the rest of the world.

[Lower Demand and Falling Oil Prices Unlikely to Prompt OPEC Action: Abraham Energy Report](#)

The Abraham Energy Report today issued a special report to subscribers providing analysis on falling oil prices which dropped below \$88 a barrel on Monday.

A special Web-only bulletin from the Abraham Energy Report (AbrahamEnergyReport.com) advises subscribers that falling oil prices are due to the slowing world economy and unprecedented lower demand but "it doesn't seem likely that OPEC will take concerted action to defend prices at this time."

[Cold comfort for Britons with energy crisis on the cards](#)

IF Britain's Energy Minister was a poker player, he would look tired, worn out and increasingly desperate. His hand of cards would be dismal and though his excuse would be that he had been dealt a very bad hand, much of the blame would undoubtedly be his for not paying more attention to the game and being better prepared.

Britain's energy predicament is certainly not a game, but potentially a national disaster

with far-reaching consequences which could have been avoided with sufficient forward planning and investment years ago.

[Iran Fighters Force US Plane Down](#)

A US aeroplane has been forced to land in Iran after violating the country's territory, according to an Iranian news agency.

The agency added that the incursion was unintentional, and those on board were questioned and released.

It said five people were interrogated, but allowed to leave the following day after it became clear their trespass into Iranian airspace had been a mistake.

The interrogation revealed that they had strayed over the border unintentionally en route to Afghanistan.

[Inflationary U.S. bailout may boost oil: Merrill](#)

LONDON (Reuters) - The inflationary effects of the U.S. government's finance sector bailout could drive oil back above \$150 a barrel in the long term, a Merrill Lynch commodities specialist said on Tuesday.

"Near term, the oil price could drop due to the negative effects on the global economy of the ongoing credit contraction," Francisco Blanch, Merrill Lynch's global head, commodities research, told a commodities conference.

"The (U.S.) government-sponsored bank bailout is inflationary and we believe the oil price will go back above \$150 per barrel in the long run," he added.

[Oil rises to \\$91 after steep slide](#)

LONDON (Reuters) - Oil rose by \$3 a barrel on Tuesday after a large interest rate cut in Australia raised hopes that other policymakers would follow suit to bolster economic growth, a move that would support oil demand.

The gain recouped some of the losses on Monday, when oil fell by \$6 as part of an international market rout, and European equities also moved higher after. But oil traders were skeptical the rally would last.

"It's a bit of a recovery, but hardly anything to speak of after very steep falls," said Christopher Bellew, a broker at Bache Commodities.

"It would be foolish to think the dawn has come in terms of oil prices going back up again."

[Iran worried by falling oil demand](#)

DUBAI (Reuters) - Iran is concerned that the deepening global financial crisis is having a bigger impact on oil demand growth than previously expected, the Islamic Republic's OPEC governor said on Tuesday.

It was too early to say if the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) would have to cut production at its December meeting to match lower demand growth, Muhammad Ali Khatibi told Reuters in an interview.

"We are worried about demand," Khatibi said. "The financial crisis is deeper than we expected and this is definitely influencing world oil demand."

[Libya Urges OPEC to Cut Output to Halt Price Decline](#)

(Bloomberg) -- OPEC, the producer of more than 40 percent of the world's oil, should cut output after crude fell 38 percent from its July record in the wake of the credit crisis, Libya's top energy official said today.

"With oil prices collapsing and international banks being routed, it's better to keep our oil underground," Shokri Ghanem, chairman of Libya's National Oil Corp., said in a telephone interview from Tripoli. He declined to say by how much OPEC should lower production.

[Gasoline May Fall Below \\$3 a Gallon on Slowing Demand, Economy](#)

(Bloomberg) -- U.S. gasoline pump prices may fall below \$3 a gallon for the first time in almost a year because of declining crude oil costs and collapsing demand.

Retail prices may fall as low as \$2.70 a gallon by the end of November from about \$3.50 a gallon on average nationwide now, said Dominick Chirichella, a senior partner at the Energy Management Institute in New York, a consulting company. U.S. gasoline demand is the lowest since September 2005, and the number of miles driven by Americans this year may fall for the first time since 1980, according to the Federal Highway Administration.

[Energy Department warns of higher heating costs](#)

WASHINGTON (AP) -- Although global oil prices have plummeted, the cost of heating your home this winter will be a lot more expensive, especially for households that

depend on fuel oil, the Energy Department predicted Tuesday.

[Beijing hikes prices for gas, diesel oil](#)

BEIJING (Xinhua) -- Beijingers are paying more for gas and diesel oil Tuesday.

As of midnight, prices were up eight percent.

Beijing Municipal Commission of Development and Reform issued a release about the price hikes late Monday. It said, benchmark prices for gasoline and diesel oil would be hiked 200 yuan and 290 yuan per ton, respectively.

[Tropical Storm Marco prompts evacuation](#)

Petroleos Mexicanos, the third-largest supplier of crude to the U.S., closed six wells in the Gulf of Mexico and removed 33 workers from offshore platforms.

Output from the producer's Lankahuasa platform was shut at 3 p.m. yesterday, Mexico City-based Pemex, as the company is known, said in a statement on its Web site. The El Raudal natural-gas processing center was also shut, according to the statement.

[Gazprom Expects OPEC to Stop `Substantial' Drop in Oil Price](#)

(Bloomberg) -- OAO Gazprom, Russia's largest energy company, expects OPEC members to prevent a further ``substantial" drop in the oil price after it tumbled almost 40 percent since a July high, Deputy Chief Executive Officer Alexander Medvedev said.

``The oil price can't drop down substantially, at least through the policies of OPEC countries," Medvedev said in an interview with Bloomberg Television in Moscow today.

``We do hope the measures taken both in Europe and the U.S. will not allow the economy to freeze."

[Russia Stocks Gain on Bank Funding Pledge, Paring Record Slump](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Russian stocks rose, paring a record decline yesterday, after President Dmitry Medvedev called on the government to lend 950 billion rubles (\$36 billion) to the country's banks to ease credit markets.

OAO Sberbank and VTB Group, Russia's biggest banks, led the advance. OAO Rosneft, Russia's biggest oil producer, pared yesterday's 24 percent decline after crude rose in New York.

[Nigerian conflict a warning for Big Oil in Iraq](#)

BAGHDAD - Recurrent violence in oil-rich parts of Nigeria may provide a sobering lesson for oil companies hoping to work in Iraq — a place that is much more dangerous despite the fact that attacks are at their lowest level in more than four years.

Representatives of 35 international oil companies will meet with Iraqi government officials in London on Monday to discuss the bidding process for eight enormous oil and gas fields. If the contracts are approved, they could lead to the biggest foreign stake in Iraq since the industry was nationalized more than 30 years ago.

About 4,000 miles from Baghdad, oil companies are doing damage control in Nigeria — arguably the most dangerous place in the world where firms like Royal Dutch Shell PLC and Exxon Mobil Corp. currently operate.

Three years of attacks in the country's Niger Delta have cut oil production from 2.5 million barrels per day to around 1.5 million — demoting Nigeria to Africa's second largest oil producer behind Angola.

The violence in Nigeria pales next to Iraq, even now.

[Nigeria attacks starting to affect energy investment](#)

Militant attacks on oil companies in Nigeria's Niger Delta are scaring off investors and pushing up costs, according to Tunde Afolabi, chief executive officer of Lagos-based Amni International Petroleum Development Co.

"There has been noticeable capital flight" from the region, Afolabi told the Africa Independents Forum in Cape Town today. "The return on investment in the Niger Delta is lower than elsewhere. Attacks by militants have become part of our production plans."

[Qatar Is Cutting Oil Supplies to Return to Quota](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Qatar is reducing oil production to return to its official target in line with a decision made by OPEC last month, the country's Oil Minister said today.

``We are cutting to restrict ourselves to the official quota, as we agreed in the OPEC meeting," Abdullah bin Hamad al-Attiyah told Bloomberg by phone today from Doha. ``It is small amounts."

[Don't worry about oil](#)

Don't worry about oil. With oil and gas prices at all time highs, that seems a strange thing to say. Yet, we really shouldn't worry. Solutions are available and well under way.

Around 1880, visionaries in Paris painted a bleak picture of the future. If our city continues to grow at this rate, they argued, carriages couldn't ride our avenues anymore in the near future. They will be stuck in mounds of horseshit. The respected elders of their times didn't see that the solution to the problem was already coming. Henry Ford was about to introduce the automobile to the world.

Today's media are full of contemporaries of these Parisian visionaries. We read about peak oil and about the disasters waiting to happen when the last drop of fuel hits the pump. Even the nuclear industry sees an opportunity for a come back for unnecessarily dangerous power plants.

[BP's BTC Crude Oil Pipeline Will Export 18 Cargoes in November](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Shipments of Azeri crude via the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline will total 12.34 million barrels in November, 47 percent of the volume pumped before a spate of disruptions starting in August.

[China top refiners to raise Oct runs after repairs](#)

BEIJING (Reuters) - China's top refineries will likely raise crude throughput in October by more than 3 percent from last month as Lanzhou, the largest oil plant in western China, revs up operations after a delayed maintenance.

Twelve major plants that account for more than a third of China's capacity, most of them on the eastern and southern seaboard, plan to process 2.52 million barrels per day (bpd) of crude this month, up from 2.44 million bpd in September, a Reuters poll showed.

The rate is about 89.4 percent of China's total refining capacity.

[Norway sees oil/gas output rising 3.8 pct in 2009](#)

OSLO (Reuters) - Norway's total oil and gas output will grow by 3.8 percent next year from 2008 and rise further by 2012 as more production of natural gas offsets less oil, the government said on Tuesday.

Oil production, including natural gas liquids, was seen at 139 million cubic metres of oil equivalent -- or at about 2.4 million barrels per day -- next year, against 140 million cubic metres seen this year, according to the 2009 draft budget.

[Norway to spend more oil wealth](#)

Oil-rich Norway is set to spend more of its vast petroleum wealth in next year's national budget to help offset an economic slowdown expected on the heels of a four-year boom, the finance minister announced Tuesday.

Norway, a country of 4.7 million people, is a major exporter of oil and natural gas, giving the government surplus revenue each year that are invested in the Government Pension Fund - Global. The surplus for next year is projected to be 358 billion kroner (\$57.7 billion), based on 500 kroner (\$80) per barrel oil.

[Norway earmarks \\$309 mln for carbon storage in '09](#)

OSLO (Reuters) - Oil-rich Norway will spend 1.9 billion crowns (\$308.7 million) on carbon capture and storage (CCS) next year as it seeks to develop technology expected to play a leading role in combating climate change.

[Sharing rides makes sense in rural areas](#)

Tony McQuail can feel the winds of change blowing.

He tests them with his thumb whenever he gets a chance.

The NDP candidate in Huron-Bruce has achieved a bit of local renown for hitch-hiking to various campaign stops. It's all part of his efforts to reduce his impact on the environment.

"As somebody who wanted to try and run a low-carbon campaign, the idea of test-driving a rural ride-share concept during the election campaign had a lot of appeal to me," the Lucknow- area farmer said in an interview.

[India hopes to attract over \\$4bln in green energy](#)

NEW DELHI (Reuters) - India is hoping to attract investments of more than \$4 billion in renewable energy over the next 5-7 years, as it prepares to unveil a new biofuels policy within a month, renewable energy minister Vilas Muttemwar said.

Domestic and foreign companies such as India's Tata group and Reliance Industries as well as state-run utilities are among hundreds of companies vying for a stake in India's emerging green energy sector.

Another 150 companies are also keen to set up biofuel processing plants, Muttemwar told Reuters in an interview.

[States ranked on energy efficiency](#)

WASHINGTON - An advocacy group ranks California, Connecticut and Oregon at the top of a list of states improving energy efficiency to respond to high prices, energy security and global warming.

[Energy Star Doesn't Mean Your Fridge Is Green](#)

Consumer and environmental groups say it's often too easy for companies to win the right to display the star. According to descriptions from the Department of Energy (DOE), which manages the Energy Star appliance program, the coveted logo should ideally appear on dishwashers, refrigerators, and other appliances that score in the top 25% for energy efficiency in their categories. But in 2007 some 60% of all dishwasher models on the market qualified, the DOE says. The year before, 92% of them hit the mark. "If the DOE gives Energy Star to everyone, eventually it's worthless," says David B. Goldstein, a director at the Natural Resources Defense Council.

[Deadlines set for designating polar bear habitat](#)

ANCHORAGE, Alaska - The federal government will designate "critical habitat" for polar bears off Alaska's coast, a decision that could add restrictions to future offshore petroleum exploration or drilling.



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