



## Understanding peak oil - Why we need the national academy of sciences to study peak oil (petition)

Posted by [Gail the Actuary](#) on June 18, 2009 - 9:50am

Topic: [Policy/Politics](#)

Tags: [national academy of sciences](#), [original](#), [peak oil](#), [petition](#) [[list all tags](#)]

*This is a guest post by Phyllis Sladek. This post previously appeared in [Energy Bulletin](#). The petition can also be found at [Phyllis' blog](#).*

### Peak Oil: Our Need for Immediate Scientific Investigation – and Action

A growing number of international geologists and analysts warn of a looming catastrophe with the onset of the decline in the global supply of oil [1]. Likewise, reports by several federal agencies, including the US Army Corps of Engineers, point to the need for immediate action, because the foreseeable impacts on our infrastructure and economy are without precedent [2].

*Please [sign our petition](#), calling on President Obama and Congress to direct an immediate scientific investigation by the National Academy of Sciences (NAS).*

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Peak Oil will present our Nation with multiple and continuing crises that will require hard decisions. With a near-term peak, for example, we face the likelihood of shortages of gasoline and diesel fuel, along with the problem of how to allocate limited supplies. Beyond the direct effect on the movement of people and goods, we might well have difficulty maintaining components of our vital infrastructure such as roads, pipelines and the electrical grid. [3].

The National Academy of Sciences is the only source that can provide unbiased and authoritative answers to the questions of how to manage in the era of the “remorseless decline” in available oil and natural gas. The Academies occupy a special place, due to their unique history and mission as the scientific advisors to the Nation [4].

The Academies will have the opportunity to lay out the pieces of the peak oil crises in a clear overview that can provide a factual basis for the emotionally difficult reality we face. We can make our political process work for us to make changes in oil use and energy policy – and influence other nations to do the same...before it is too late.

This complete picture of “peak oil”, along with the Academies recommendations for policy guidelines, can galvanize our top political leaders to dramatically change the course of world history.

Our petition specifically asks for these specific and positive directions, so we will know what constructive actions might be taken at the national, state and local levels on short notice, such as community-based emergency plans and bolstering local food production.

Please [sign our petition](#) asking President Obama and Congress to act now.

## Full Text of "Petition for the NAS to Study the Decline of Worldwide Oil Production"

A Call to President Barack Obama and to the Congress of the United States of America to Commission a Comprehensive Study of Oil Production Decline (termed "Peak Oil"): Facts, Impacts and Mitigation and Preparedness Options to be undertaken by the National Academy of Sciences (NAS), the National Academy of Engineering (NAE), the Institute of Medicine (IOM) and the National Research Council (NRC).

**Whereas**, noted governmental, industrial and scientific authorities indicate the Nation and the World face unprecedented challenge and hardships due to the decline of worldwide oil production[1];

**Whereas**, many of these authorities indicate that time is of the utmost importance [2];

**Whereas**, many studies also conclude that leaving the problem unaddressed will result in major economic dislocations and the possibility of global economic collapse [3];

**Therefore**, we, the undersigned, petition the Congress and the President to commission the NAS, NAE, IOM and NRC to undertake a comprehensive, nonpartisan analysis of the facts, impacts and implications of "Peak Oil" in order to advise the Nation on appropriate responses [4].

**Further**, we request that this comprehensive study be undertaken with speed and with a formal mechanism whereby independent analyses regarding causes, impacts, and mitigation, risk management, and contingency options be considered by members of the study committees.

### Notes:

<sup>1</sup> US Army Corps of Engineers, Energy Trends and Their Implications for the US. Army Installations. Construction Engineering. Sep 05. ERDC/CERL TR-05-21. analysis of "primary issues affecting energy options" and the Executive Summary, p IV, states "Domestic production of both oil and natural gas are past their peak and world petroleum production is nearing its peak." <http://stinet.dtic.mil/cgi-bin/GetTRDoc?AD=A440265>

International Energy Agency (IEA) World Energy Outlook 2008. English Executive Summary, p. 3 "Current global trends in energy supply are patently unsustainable", and on page 7 "Some 64 mb/d of additional gross capacity - the equivalent of almost six times that of Saudi Arabia today - needs to be brought on stream between 2007 and 2030." [http://www.worldenergyoutlook.org/docs/weo2008/WEO2008\\_es\\_english.pdf](http://www.worldenergyoutlook.org/docs/weo2008/WEO2008_es_english.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> US Department of Energy: Peaking of World Oil Production: Feb 5, 07. DOE/NETL-2007/1263. p6 "The mitigation of the post peaking oil shortage will require extremely large-scale action, starting roughly 20 years before the onset of peaking" <http://www.netl.doe.gov/energy-analyses/pubs/Peaking%20of%20World%20Oil%20...>

<sup>3</sup> DOE NETL. Peaking of World Oil Production: Impacts, Mitigation, & Risk Management. February 2005 Hirsch, R.L., Bezdek, R., Wendling, R "... the failure to act on a timely basis could have debilitating impacts on the world economy." p.60 [http://www.netl.doe.gov/publications/others/pdf/Oil\\_Peaking\\_NETL.pdf](http://www.netl.doe.gov/publications/others/pdf/Oil_Peaking_NETL.pdf) ; also see (1) above.

4 US Government Accountability Office, Report to Congressional Requesters. Crude Oil. Uncertainty about Future Oil Supplies Makes It Important to Develop a Strategy Addressing a Peak and Decline in Oil Production. February 7, 2007. GAO-07-283. In the Highlights section , "no coordinated federal strategy for reducing uncertainty about the peak's timing or mitigating its consequences." <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d07283.pdf>

## More about the petition

We are dedicated to promoting the understanding of “peak oil” and the interlocking problems that relate to the impending decline in our global energy supply.

We urge a comprehensive, objective and integrated “peak oil” study by the US National Academy of Sciences and the affiliated Academies, to include a study of impacts and policy advice.

We support creative and practical strategies for sustainability, based on the values of civil liberties and fundamental human rights for all people.

Author of blog – Phyllis Sladek. Please note: The best way to reach us is to submit your comments on the blog. You can also send an email to [understandingpeak \(at\) gmail.com](mailto:understandingpeak@gmail.com).

## What can you do?

- Our elected representatives need to hear from us about “peak oil”! We want the National Academy of Sciences to investigate the likelihood of “near-term” peak and its impacts. Please tell your friends and neighbors!
- Want to do a one minute action? Go here to [sign the petition](#).
- Would you like to take another effective action? To reach your Congressperson, copy and paste the petition into [this site](#).
- Please take a minute to follow-up with a phone call to your Senators and members of Congress. The toll-free number is (866-220-0044.) Let them know you want a “peak oil impacts” study by our National Academy of Sciences – now!
- You can also paste the petition into President Obama’s contact page [here](#).
- And, you can call and leave your message for the President at (202) 456-1111.



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