



3000 billion tons of coal off Norway's coastline

Posted by [Stuart Staniford](#) on January 6, 2006 - 7:15pm

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This summer, students from Norwegian University of Science and Technology analyzed data from 600 wells drilled on the Norwegian Shelf of the North Sea. They calculated that there are 3000 billion tons of coal off the Norwegian coast. Most of the reserves are located at Haltenbanken. This compares to today's proven and recoverable world reserves of 900 billion tons of coal.

If we suppose a CTL yield of about 3 barrels/ton (Miller, Coal Energy Systems, p274), the 3 trillion tons of coal under the North Sea corresponds to about 9gb of liquid fuels.

Update [2006-1-6 19:51:50 by Stuart Staniford]: Oops - I meant to say 9 *trillion* barrels of liquid fuels, not nine billion (ie around 4 times as much as linearization suggests is available in conventional liquid hydrocarbons globally).

Ok, that coal is a little hard to get at. Railway tunnels under the North Sea? Right now they're thinking smaller than that:

"By injecting oxygen, we can ignite the coal where it is. This will produce a mix of gas which we can recover and use for energy-production. The problem however, is that one of the components of this gas mix will be the greenhouse gas CO₂. We have to research a lot before we can utilize the resource in a way that doesn't harm the environment."

Still and all, it makes it clear that the 2050 problem is not having hydrocarbons to burn, it's what it's going to take to get them, what's going to happen to the economy in the meantime, and what it's going to do to the climate if we put that stuff out of our tailpipes.



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