Current Events

How Does the United States Govern Energy? Fossil Fuels

Oil

The Political Geography: South Central U.S., North Dakota, Alaska, California, New Mexico, Colorado; offshore: Gulf of Mexico

The central problem for the industry: volatile prices
How can you control the production and price of oil?

- Solution 1: Using the Large Corporation to control markets, production & prices
  
  **Standard Oil**

  The breakup of Standard Oil, and big oil discoveries like Spindletop and East Texas made it impossible for one company to control prices and production.

- Solution 2: Using Government to control markets, production & prices
  
  How the **Texas Railroad Commission** came to regulate prices and prices

  The **Connally Hot Oil Act** allowed oil states to cooperate to regulate production and prices
Nuclear Power

Discussion: You should be prepared to explain the author’s standpoint, why they take that standpoint, and whether the U.S. should increase or decrease the use of nuclear power.

- Tiara Burtin  Marielle Esquivel
- Meagan Burwell  Brandon Fenton
- Harlee Custer  Christian Haskenhoff
- Chadwick Eaton  Sadie Hill

Taking Sides, pages 321-325, "Testimony … on Nuclear Power Decommissioning: Stakeholder Views"
- Senad Mujkic  Adam Weaver
- Becca Oswald  Elizabeth Willett
- Jenna Perryman  Nicole Wolff
- Angie Quiroga  Ari Zarkoff
- Rachel Weldon

Nuclear power emerged after World War II, led by the U.S. federal government

US Navy Admiral Hyman Rickover: A policy entrepreneur who promoted a nuclear navy & a nuclear energy industry to power it

Rickover built an “iron triangle” of support for nuclear power consisting of:
- Bureaucracy (The Atomic Energy Commission), Congress (Joint Committee on Atomic Energy), and private interests (Westinghouse, General Electric)
How about liability for accidental damage?

Congress passed the **Price Amendment** (1957) - limits the liability of private power companies

1975: Nuclear Power reached the height of its popularity

But highly publicized accidents generated a negative issue-attention cycle.

- 1979: Three Mile Island
- 1986: Chernobyl
- 2011: Fukushima

Lasting problems with nuclear power

- Technical Problems – Humans run nuclear power
- Economic Problems
- Security problems
- Nuclear Waste

**Nuclear Waste**

Radioactive waste from World War II weapons production
- Weldon Spring
- The West Lake Landfill

Disposing of Low-Level Waste

Low-Level Nuclear Waste Compacts

Disposing of High-Level Waste

On-site storage

Yucca Mountain