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PVI. Voir les parties soulignées du resume.

Salutations,

U.L.

Congressional Research Service

US Energy: Overview and Key Statistics

Summary

Energy policy has been a recurring issue for Congress since the first major crises in the 1970s. As an aid in policymaking, this report presents a current and historical view of the supply and consumption of various forms of energy.

The historical trends show petroleum as the major source of primary energy, rising from about 38% in 1950 to 45% in 1975, and then declining to about 40% in response to the energy crises of the 1970s. Significantly, the transportation sector continues to be almost completely dependent on petroleum, mostly gasoline. Oil prices, which had been low and stable throughout the 1990s, resumed the volatility they had shown in the 1970s and early 1980s. Starting in 2004, perceptions of impending inability of the industry to meet increasing world demand led to rapid increases in the prices of oil and gasoline. The continuing high prices stimulated development of non-conventional oil resources, first in Canadian oil sands, then in the United States in shale deposits. U.S. oil production, which had apparently peaked, showed a dramatic increase starting in 2009. U.S. imports of oil have also been decreasing over the same time period, and there are calls to allow more exports.

Natural gas followed a long-term pattern of U.S. consumption similar to that of oil, at a lower level. Its share of total energy increased from about 17% in 1950 to more than 30% in 1970, then declined to about 20%. Recent developments of large deposits of shale gas in the United States have increased the outlook for U.S. natural gas supply and consumption in the near future, and imports have almost disappeared. The United States is projected to be a net natural gas exporter by 2018.

Consumption of coal in 1950 was 35% of total primary energy, almost equal to oil, but it declined to about 20% a decade later and has remained at about that proportion since then. Coal currently is used almost exclusively for electric power generation, and its contribution to increased production of carbon dioxide has made its use controversial in light of concerns about global climate change. U.S. coal exports have been on the rise in recent years.

Nuclear power started coming online in significant amounts in the late 1960s. By 1975, in the midst of the oil crisis, it was supplying 9% of total electricity generation. **However, increases in capital costs, construction delays, and public opposition to nuclear power following the Three Mile Island accident in 1979 curtailed growth in generation facilities, and many construction projects were cancelled.** Continuation of some construction increased the nuclear share of generation to 20% in 1990, where it remains currently. Licenses for a number of new nuclear units have been in the works for several years, and preliminary construction for a few units has begun, **but the economic downturn has discouraged action on new construction.**

Construction of major hydroelectric projects has also essentially ceased, and hydropower's share of electricity generation has gradually declined, from 30% in 1950 to 15% in 1975 and less than 10% in 2000. However, hydropower remains highly important on a regional basis.

Renewable energy sources (except hydropower) continue to offer more potential than actual energy production, although fuel ethanol has become a significant factor in transportation fuel. Wind power has recently grown rapidly, although it still contributes only a small percentage share of total electricity generation. Conservation and energy efficiency have shown significant gains