



## Dealing with the High Price of Gas

Is the high price of gas at the pump getting you down? If you're like most people I speak with the answer is a resounding "yes!"

Those of you who know me are aware of the fact that, for at least a decade now, I've been trying desperately to inform the public about the coming oil crisis. This is a major reason why I've been driving electric since 1998 and why I get so discouraged every time I see a new gas-guzzler on the road. I can't blame consumers much, however, because (despite my own best attempts at "telling the truth") the media – and our elected officials – haven't given you adequate fair warning. It happened with electricity supply in California several years back and now it's beginning to happen with oil.

It's been hard to convince consumers that oil supply will have trouble keeping up with demand in the future. Even the most compassionate and intelligent of those I've spoken with have told me, honestly, that until they can experience the problem – in other words the problem is "tangible" and not "speculative" - they won't change. People have been asking me lately "is the current rise in oil pricing the result of physical constraints or just speculation?"

I've been reading all the news that's fit to print (and some that, frankly, isn't) on this issue for decades and from a variety of viewpoints. I'm convinced that, in our lifetime, we are going to see demand exceed supply. When that happens, the price of oil - and everything tied to it - which is modern civilization as we know it, will become perpetually more and more expensive.

What we're seeing right now is mostly the result of geopolitical concerns and speculation. But, that said, there is an underlying element of physical constraint in supply, relative to growing demand, in "the speculations" that we need to be prepared for. Most of the world's large oil deposits have been found and exploited. The remaining oil is more difficult and expensive to produce because it's located miles deep in the ocean, frozen beneath the Arctic, or stuck in sand and shale. The new discoveries are mostly smaller than previous ones and they can take decades to bring online. As a result, new supply isn't keeping up with the decline of existing supply at a time of growing global demand.

What do I recommend? First, don't wait until the economy has fully tanked before you act. Act now because it will be cheaper and easier than waiting. Do you or your family really need (keyword "need") an SUV, truck or van? Obviously most people want (keyword "want") one and it's easy to see why - they've been the "in" thing to be seen driving around in, they look cool, they're highly versatile, offer high visibility, seem safer than a car, etc.

But equally obvious is that most people don't need (keyword "need") these types of vehicles. Sustainability is, by definition, about meeting our needs (keyword "needs") today without

compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. It's crystal clear to me – and virtually everyone else with expertise in sustainability - that our “wants” are compromising the ability of others to meet their “needs”, and not just “in the future” but now. Prices are tied to demand and everyone who demands more than they need are increasing prices for everyone.

I'm not suggesting everyone run out and buy an electric vehicle or a hybrid – they're a perfect match for some but not everyone can afford one. What I am recommending is that you consider this idea of driving a vehicle more suitable to your needs. I'm also recommending we find ways to reduce our driving, drive more efficiently and maybe even not drive at all (I know an increasing number of folks who are doing just that).

Think of it this way – “Are you for the future or against it? What you drive, how you drive and how much you drive will answer this question.”

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