

Many Americans are concerned with our country's dependence on foreign oil and our rising gas prices. American politicians have offered distinct approaches to improving energy policy. While these policies are not entirely at odds with each other, the government will likely prioritize one policy approach over the other.

One approach is to make it easier for companies to receive permits to drill for oil off the coast of the US (most significantly oil-rich Alaska). The argument is that easing the application process for drilling will increase oil production. It will remove the nearly endless regulations that oil producers must overcome, many of which have no apparent positive role—it is widely agreed that these excessive regulations do not protect the environment. Easing restrictions would expand the US energy supply, create American jobs, and help lower gas prices. Republicans often support this approach.

Another approach is to encourage the use of domestically produced alternative fuels (for example, wind and solar power) and increase incentives for designing more energy efficient vehicles. The argument is that many environmental and taxpayer savings would come from tightening fuel efficiency regulations and reducing reliance on gas-guzzling vehicles that harm the environment. The government would provide assistance to companies working to improve the efficiency and gas mileage of gas-powered cars and trucks. Emphasizing alternative energies would reduce our demand for oil, both at home and abroad, therefore reducing gas prices, while generating new jobs in renewable energy development. Democrats often support this approach.