Alternative energy sources

Environment, Ecology

It is undeniable thatglobal warminghas been one of the most pressing issues facing the world today. Global warming is due to the greenhouse effect wherein greenhouse gases like carbon dioxide trap the sun's heat in our atmosphere and prevent it from radiating back into space. However the issue of global warming is not about global warming.

The greenhouse effect has been around for millions of years and is indeed responsible for the development of life as without it the earth would be too cold to support the variety of flora and fauna we see today. The issue of global warming has been accelerated global warming.

The issue is how the rate of heating by the earth's surface is proceeding at a much faster rate thanmother naturecan adapt to. If the predictions are correct, this will result in a multitude of changes. Environmental changes such as the rise in global sea levels due to the melting of the ice caps, an increase in the frequency of extreme weather due to changing precipitation patterns, and massive rates of extinction.

These massive environmental effects also translate to massive economic effects especially in agriculture. Drought will affect the production of essential foodstuffs like grain especially in the equatorial regions. The retreat of glaciers will also affect farms which are dependent on glacier runoff for irrigation.

Global warming will also strain government pockets as the need for preventive infrastructure like floodgates as well as for repair andreconstructionof old infrastructure which is damaged by the increased

temperature variation. Increasedhealthcosts will also be a burden on social services.

One of the key methods for mitigating the advance of global warming is by the reduction of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. Some of the ways of reducing greenhouse gases include changing practices in agriculture, stoppingdeforestation, as well as restoring and conserving degraded land.

Another way for reducing greenhouse gases is by switching our energy production from fossil fuels to renewable energy sources. Some renewable energy sources include solar power, wind power, hydrogen, and nuclear power. This paper discusses these alternative energy sources and the prospects for their use.

Most of the energy needs of the United States comes from fossil fuels such as coal, oil and natural gas. The combustion of these fossil fuels drive generators which provide electricity as well as engines that power our transportation.

However, these fossil fuels are considered nonrenewable energy sources simply because these fossil fuels are of limited supply. Sooner or later, the world's fossil fuel deposits will reach a point such that their extraction would not be economically feasible. Already, the huge demand for oil is pushing its price to record levels with each passing year.

As opposed to fossil fuel based energy sources, renewable energy comes from sources that wont run out in any anthropological time frame. Renewable sources such as wind or solar power come from sources which

are constantly replenished, and will be constantly replenished barring major changes of geological or astronomical scale.

As such, investments in renewable power is much more future proof. Because these renewable sources of energy wont run out, we can be sure that succeeding generations will be able to benefit from renewable energy sources we develop today. That much cannot be said for sources of energy from oil, gas and coal.