

A change we just can not make

Business



Urban smog, groundwater contamination, acid rain, oil spills, global warming, air pollution, crop failure ... the list of environmental impacts of oil seems endless (Miller). Researchers “ estimate that almost a billion gallons of oil are spilled into the world’s oceans and waterways each year,” and at the rate consumers use oil, worldwide reserves will only last another 40 to 60 years (Miller 1). We seem to think that our supply is limitless and consume greedily.

Although oil use results in pollution and impacts the world as a whole, all nations depend on oil, and converting to a different resource would threaten commodities and destroy the economy. Have you ever imagined a perfect world, where nothing went wrong? Well, take a good look at reality. Nothing is perfect. One resource that creates many problems is oil. Oil produces many problems, yet gives numerous benefits to life that people take for granted.

While consuming oil, many fail to acknowledge the problems and effects that result from it. Some problems form from “ oil drilling and extraction” while “ the worst impacts [come from] the shipping, refining, and use stages of the process” (Miller). The damage created from oil spills not only hurts water, but also kills off the marine life that resides within it. For these animals, oil is “ a toxic poison that they often [..

.] absorb [...] through direct contact and through their gills” (Greenpeace 2).

In addition, the fumes of oil cause health problems for the people living in the area.

If you think these effects are atrocious, “ Air pollution from oil is even worse. Transportation accounts for half of nitrogen oxide emissions in the US, and a third of carbon dioxide emissions, and a host of other air emissions” (Miller 3). Since the development of automobiles, the increased reliance of petroleum created these emissions which diluted the atmosphere with smog. Big corporation is not the main culprit of pollution, people who drive cars on a daily basis are the true masterminds behind the scenes (Miller 3). Lacking realization, people fail to see that they add to the overall pollution by just proceeding on with their daily lives.

Driving a car acts like taking a bucket filled with oil and dumping it into the ocean repeatedly based on the miles driven. Looking at Figure 1, one can view that the dilution of the oil is spreading very quickly throughout the water. Oil not only kills off marine life while damaging the world’s waters but also creates pollution to the air through the emissions of automobiles.

Problems like these would cause many people to worry and draw them in to help finding a solution. Although oil poses a large threat to the environment, we are unable to switch to an alternative to replace it; oil plays a big role in the worldwide economy, and removing it would spark a change too radical to take place. Because the majority of the oil lies in the Middle East, The United States has become “ more dependent on imports, importing more than half [of the world’s] oil every year since 1994” (Miller).

The mass amounts of oil imported suggests that the United States’ economy is heavily based on oil. Once oil supply becomes scarce in the near future, “ there are likely to be major price fluctuations [for oil]” (Miller 4). The dependency of oil in the economy illustrates that a slight change can alter

<https://assignbuster.com/a-change-we-just-can-not-make/>

the economy drastically. Because of this, it seems that we are unable to replace oil, and should continue to consume oil at a rapid pace. If the world decides to convert to an alternative for petroleum, numerous workers would lose their jobs and would no longer have an occupation to support their families.

With the economy's great reliance on oil, converting from oil to an alternative resource would be very difficult. It would be nice to reduce the amount of environmental problems with a replacement, but losing petroleum would just be too big of a change for the world as a whole. With a futuristic viewpoint, Miller states " While economic disruptions and resource depletion are bound to happen sooner or later, the environmental burden of oil demands that we change our energy habits long before then" (Miller 4). Miller realizes that the environmental problems created by oil is a large factor and explains that the amount of petroleum remaining is dwindling. Because there are many countries whose economies depend solely on oil imports and exports, it seems nearly impossible to change to a new resource.

Producing many environmental problems, oil use presents a problem between the continued use and conversion to an alternative resource. Although oil creates many environmental problems such as pollution, we are unable to change due to the heavy dependence of oil on the world's economy. Many countries depend on oil, such as the United States. With the increased reliance of cars in society, the necessity for petroleum becomes greater. Changing to an alternative resource would benefit society, but making the change would affect many jobs and is considered to be too

<https://assignbuster.com/a-change-we-just-can-not-make/>

radical of a change. ? Works Cited " A Century of Oil Has Taken a Heavy Toll on the Environment.

" Current Controversies: Oil. Debra A. Miller. Detroit: Greenhaven Press, 2010. SRCX.

Gale. AUSTIN HIGH SCHOOL- Sugarland FBISD. 24 Jan. 2011 ; <http://find.galegroup.com/ovrc/infomark>.

do?; contentSet= GSRC; type= retrieve; tabID= T010; prodId= OVRC; docId= EJ3010734212; source= gale; userGroupName= tlc 049072572; version= 1. 0;. Greenpeace. " Oil Spills and Leaks Cause Environmental Disasters." Current Controversies: Oil.

Ed. Debra A. Miller. Detroit: Greenhaven Press, 2010. SRCX. Gale.

AUSTIN HIGH SCHOOL- Sugarland FBISD. 25 Jan. 2011 ; <http://find.galegroup.com/ovrc/infomark>.

do?;. " Oil reaches \$30 a barrel." BBC News. Web. 25 Feb 2011.

; <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/business/644028.stm>; " Oil Spill.

" Oil Spills. Web. 25 Feb 2011. ; http://library.thinkquest.org/CR0215471/oil_spill_on_fire.jpg;