

ENERGY MATTERS

Scientists Seek New Sources of Energy

(NAPSA)—Chew on this fact: Fossil teeth from ancient marine animals may point the way to new sources of energy. That's the good news from government scientists, who believe knowing about the history of the earth and its resources can help to ensure the safety and security of our energy future.

Extracting fuel from fossil plants and other sources here in the U.S. and in nations around the world is increasingly important—our nation imports more than 50 percent of the oil it consumes. What's more, while the demand for energy continues to increase, production from existing domestic oil and gas fields has declined.

Fortunately, our government is exploring new fuel sources while taking care to protect the environment. Through its Energy Resources Program, the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) is engaged in:

- assessing national and world energy resources and their geological framework. For example, the USGS is assessing the nation's natural gas endowment and the potential for producing natural gas, along with ways to improve assessment techniques. Also being assessed: U.S. coal resources and the 76 most productive oil and gas producing regions in the world;

- evaluating the environmental and economic effects of the production and use of fossil fuels; and



- delivering energy resource information to the land and resource management bureaus of the Department of the Interior, other federal agencies, state geological surveys, the energy industry and the environmental community.

Looking ahead, agency scientists are using the power of science to investigate new sources of clean, abundant energy, including geothermal energy, natural gas—also known as methane—from coal beds, and methane hydrates. Good energy strategies depend on such credible assessments of undiscovered resources, believes USGS Director Chip Groat. “Energy policy for this country needs to be guided by good science,” says Groat.

To learn more about earth science solutions, visit <http://ask.usgs.gov>.