



**JUST
THE
FACTS**



A Practical Worldview of Energy and the Essential Role of Fossil Fuels, Courtesy of Mike Rowe

For August's Just the Facts, PIOGA is leaning a bit on a social media post from well-known television personality Mike Rowe, whose credits include eight seasons hosting the Discovery Channel's *Dirty Jobs*, along with a range of other work. Rowe has also recently spent time in Oklahoma to learn about the oil and natural gas industry, and appears in a number of movie previews in theaters in the state on behalf of the Oklahoma Energy Resources Board (OERB).

Rowe received a message from a person who saw one of his OERB segments prior to a screening of "Top Gun 2" at a theatre in Oklahoma City, urging him to use his visibility and influence to warn the public of the perils of fossil fuels, the need to "get off oil and gas now" and that "the United Nations said we have less than 12 years to avert an irreversible climate catastrophe" without taking such action.

Rowe's pragmatic, reasonable and informed response is summarized below.

He first cites a response from *Scientific American* to the United Nations' dire assessment and concludes that he, and the journal's editors, are not claiming there's nothing to worry about. "We both believe the planet is warming, that the seas are rising, and that human activity is a contributing factor. For that reason, *The Scientific American* and I, along with everyone I know in the energy industry, is very supportive of the ongoing quest to find alternative ways to power America." He goes on to note that nuclear power is the only source with the potential to replace fossil fuels, and the fact that widespread resistance to nuclear is likely to continue well into the future.

Rowe next turns to the global realities of CO₂, starting with the three billion people who must burn millions of tons of wood and dung daily to cook their food and stay warm - putting huge amounts of CO₂ into the atmosphere in the process - and asks what options are available to that population of the globe.



Mike Rowe

Photo Courtesy of the
Oklahoma Energy Resources Board

He follows with the current energy realities in China and India, which combine to burn over 14 million tons of coal every day, and have announced plans over the next 30 years to build thousands of new coal-fired plants that lack the emission controls required in the U.S. Rowe again asks what other energy sources are available in those countries.

Rowe next logically asks what might happen to global CO2 emissions if the billions of people currently relying on wood, dung and coal were able to transition to natural gas, noting that the letter writer wants to eliminate that option as well –both in the U.S. and globally – without another reliable alternative available.

Finally, Rowe asks the writer how much sense it makes for America to abandon the environmental benefits provided by natural gas when billions of people the world over double down on these much-dirtier sources of energy. He concludes with the argument that America's economy will collapse, along with our military, our healthcare system, our transportation grid, and our food supply if we were to go along with eliminating oil and natural gas as strong components of our energy mix, with millions starving, freezing or suffering from excessive heat.

Rowe turns his response next to thousands of products we rely on today that are made from the petroleum the writer seeks to eschew, along with the fact that there are no viable substitutes to their use in manufacturing those products.

To put an exclamation point on his post, he blasts the idea of the U.S. cancelling pipelines and buying and importing fuel from countries like Saudi Arabia and Venezuela, especially when we have domestic energy under our feet – along with more advanced technology, environmental protection controls and safety protocols.

Rowe's full social media post can be found here: https://pioga.org/publication_file/Mike_Rowe.pdf

Thank you, Mr. Rowe, for allowing PIOGA to borrow your common-sense approach to energy, both here and around the globe.

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- Mike Rowe

The Facts

Sometimes it takes a television personality to simplify the complexities of the world's demand for energy, the limited sources available in many regions to meet their most basic of needs and the fact that supply, demand and impacts to the environment are intertwined.

It is also well known that access to reliable and affordable energy is the most important factor in improving the health, quality of life and life expectancies of people around the globe, and oil and natural gas can be one of the sources that provide that energy in those regions.



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