



**COALITION OF ENERGY USERS FOUNDATION**

## **How to start a citizen's energy group**

*By Eric Eisenhammer*

# **Energy Activism Manual**

COALITION OF ENERGY USERS FOUNDATION

# Energy Activism Manual

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# Introduction

**A**ccess to reliable and affordable power is critical to maintaining and expanding a prosperous American economy. In fact, energy is so critical that the effective development of coal as a power source played a principal role in spurring the Industrial Revolution in the 1880's.

The past century has brought the creation or advancement of additional sources of abundant, reliable and affordable power such as oil and gas, nuclear and large scale hydro. The glittering lights and casino palaces of Las Vegas owe their existence just as much to Hoover Dam as to Nevada's legalized gambling.

Energy advancement is the single biggest factor in giving human beings the best quality of life in history. Practically everything we see around us is fueled by energy. Factories, automobiles, televisions, smart phones and computers are all powered by energy. Innovations we use every day and that we don't necessarily associate with energy – including plastics, polyester, contact lenses and capsules holding medicine – are derived from petroleum.



In fact, a society's life expectancy and quality of life are directly related to the amount of energy its people are able to access and use.

Discredited British philosopher and economist Thomas Malthus, who predicted in the late 1700's that the world would soon face catastrophic mass starvations because of an inability to feed the growing population, has been definitively proven wrong in no small part because of energy.

Today, our resources continue to offer opportunity. Advanced oil extraction technologies have dramatically expanded the amount of energy that can be accessed safely and responsibly. In locations where in the recent past many wells may have been needed, now only one is needed – an advancement that has greatly reduced the environmental impact of energy production.

Advances in hydraulic fracturing, or "fracking" have made America an energy exporter, enhancing our national security and standing in the world., creating good jobs and lowering utility bills. Reduced energy costs resulting from natural gas produced

through fracking are creating a renaissance in American manufacturing – many factories are again humming and we are making real things.

Technology also has overcome many of the obstacles that once posed a challenge to offshore energy development. Now, offshore energy resources can sometimes be extracted using rigs onshore.

America's CO<sub>2</sub> emissions have dropped to their lowest level in 20 years fueled by new supplies of clean and affordable natural gas. President Obama has said, "After years of talking about it, we're finally poised to control our own energy future. We produce more oil at home than we have in 15 years."

Unfortunately, the general public lacks an accurate understanding of energy issues. *Scientific American* recently published the results of a poll finding most Americans are totally uninformed when it comes to energy: Most like natural gas, but don't know it comes from fracking (which they say they don't like). They also wrongly think Saudi Arabia is our biggest source of oil imports (the right answer is Canada).

With so many citizens either uninformed or misinformed when it comes to energy, the result has been misguided and counterproductive policy that harms not only our economy, but our environment. Misplaced enthusiasm over costly and unreliable wind and solar power has resulted in cronyism and wasted billions of taxpayer dollars, such as in the Solyndra debacle, and also killed thousands of birds, including endangered eagles.

That's why your activism is so important. As our Founders understood, an educated citizenry is necessary to the preservation of freedom. As an organized force, energy consumers can set the record straight when deceptive rhetoric is presented; defend jobs and economic growth and work proactively to enact smarter regulatory policies that can free our economy to rise to greater heights.

# About CEU Foundation

The Coalition of Energy Users Foundation is a California-based nonprofit educational organization that supports objective discussions on energy, jobs and the environment.

CEU Foundation was established by the Coalition of Energy Users, an advocacy-oriented organization founded in 2010 that has saved California energy consumers billions of dollars through its efforts including the defeat of Solyndra-style subsidies. CEU Foundation engages in educational efforts including holding community forums and the development of online energy education.

This manual was produced as a national outreach designed to equip citizens nationwide to speak as an effective voice for energy consumers in their state and community.

As in California, many people in your own state or community lack an objective understanding of energy issues.

I sometimes talk with citizens who are under the false impression that solar energy is free because it comes from the sun! (solar power is actually one of the most costly energy sources according to official Department of Energy data.)

By getting involved, you can be part of the solution – your involvement can help save and create jobs, improve the economy and environment and enhance consumer access to more affordable power and fuel.

# Energy basics

## *Background*

**Definition of energy: power derived from the utilization of physical or chemical resources, esp. to provide light and heat or to work machines.**

Man's first use of energy occurred in prehistoric caveman days when people began harnessing fire to light their homes and cook. Researchers believe this breakthrough occurred in Africa early in human history. When a brush fire or forest fire occurred by the strike of lightning, an innovative caveman was inspired to capture one of the embers and keep it burning continually for his society's use. Most primitive societies had a person designated "keeper of the flame," who was responsible for keeping a fire burning.

Some of the first energy innovations beyond burning wood occurred in China. In 2000 BC the Chinese began burning coal to cook and heat their homes. Around the year 1 AD, the Chinese refined petroleum as a fuel for lamps.

In 200 AD, Europeans discovered how to harness hydroelectric power, building wheels in rivers

Windmills were invented in Persia around 1000 AD. In the 1600's to 1700s Europeans further refined technology for burning and developing coal. These innovations made coal civilization's leading source of energy. Coal made abundant, reliable and affordable energy available for the first time, leading to the Industrial Revolution, which improved people's lives tremendously.

In the early 1800's, the first oil and natural gas wells were drilled in the United States, in New York and Pennsylvania.

In 1860, the first solar panel was invented in France by focusing a mirror on the sun to turn water into steam.

In 1885, Germany's Karl Benz (the namesake of Mercedes Benz cars) invented the first gasoline powered automobile. Henry Ford then introduced his first gas powered car in 1896.

The invention of nuclear power brought the first nuclear reactors to Russia and the United States in the 1950's.

Today, all of these energy sources comprise part of the modern energy supply. Researchers continuously work to make each of these technologies better. Their work results in constant improvements to the way we produce energy, making production cleaner, more affordable, safer and more reliable.

## *Where your energy comes from*

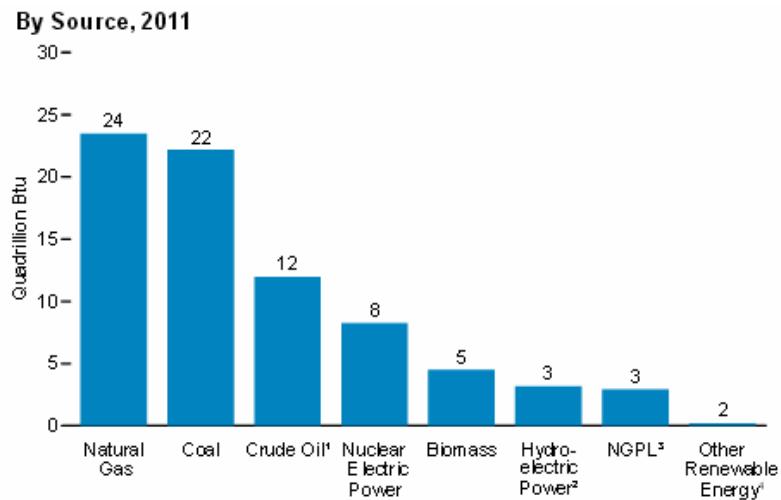
The electricity we use on a daily basis to light our homes, cook and power a multitude of electronic devices usually comes from a power plant (unless you have some type of generator of your own), where it is generated and then transmitted across power lines. Among the types of power plants your energy may come from include:

- Natural gas
- Coal
- Nuclear
- Hydroelectric
- Solar
- Wind

The gasoline you fill up with at the gas station is refined from crude oil in refineries. A national renewable fuel mandate requires refineries to mix fuel with plant-based biofuel additives such as ethanol, which is produced from corn.

Natural gas, coal and oil represent about three quarters of the energy consumed in the US. Nuclear power represents an additional 10% of American energy production. Solar and wind power comprise less than 3% of our nation's energy supply, despite enthusiastic government efforts to subsidize and mandate these power sources.

While the precise energy mix, or portfolio, varies by state, the following chart shows where energy comes from nationally:



<sup>1</sup> Includes lease condensate.

<sup>2</sup> Conventional hydroelectric power.

<sup>3</sup> Natural gas plant liquids.

Source: <http://www.eia.gov/totalenergy/data/annual/pdf/aer.pdf>

## *Types of energy*

Does it matter how our energy is produced? YES! It matters a great deal. How our energy is produced impacts the price of your utility bill, the price you pay at the pump and what job opportunities are available for you and your family. Here's a little more detail on various major energy sources.

- Natural gas

Natural gas, not to be confused with gasoline, is a naturally occurring gas composed of methane and other hydrocarbons. Natural gas is the cleanest fossil fuel, and has become available in huge new supplies due to the development of advanced extraction technologies such as hydraulic fracturing or "fracking," and horizontal drilling.

Besides being the cleanest fossil fuel, natural gas is currently also the most affordable. Production of this energy source has helped decrease American greenhouse gas emissions, create thousands of new jobs and revitalize manufacturing with a new supply of abundant and affordable power. Natural gas is currently America's leading energy source and generates power in power plants across the country.

- Coal

Coal is composed of combustible black or brown rocks, formed from carbonized plant matter. Coal is usually found underground and exists in vast supplies in the US. Coal is an affordable, abundant and reliable power source and generates almost half of our country's electricity. Continuing improvements in technology have made coal cleaner to use and safer to extract.

- Oil

Oil is a thick liquid derived from petroleum. Like natural gas, new technologies have greatly increased the amount of oil that can be safely and economically extracted. Oil is refined into gasoline in refineries, where laws often require it be mixed with biofuels. Refined fuel is then transported to gas stations, where we use it to power our cars and trucks.

- Biofuels

Biofuels are fuels derived from plant sources such as corn and sugar. These fuels are mandated by the government and their production is subsidized with

taxpayer dollars. Biofuels are intended to help the environment, but have also led to unintended consequences such as food shortages, increases in the price of livestock feed and harm to people's engines.

- Nuclear

Nuclear power is a type of energy produced through an ongoing atomic reaction taking place in a reactor. Nuclear power is affordable, reliable and can produce a lot of power. Some countries, such as France, rely on nuclear power for the bulk of their energy generation. However, despite continuous improvements in safety, nuclear power still presents the risk of catastrophe in the event of a meltdown.

- Hydroelectric

Hydroelectric power, as its name suggests, is energy derived from water. Hydroelectric power is produced through the use of turbines placed by fast moving water. Large dams can produce tremendous amounts of clean, affordable power. However, not all locations present geographical conditions that make building large dams possible – they generally require mountainous terrain and large rivers to work best. An additional benefit of the construction of hydroelectric dams is the creation of reservoirs, which store water for use by our farms and communities and provide flood control.

- Solar

Solar power is generated by harnessing the sun's rays. Solar energy is produced with large fields of panels transmitting energy to the electrical grid as well as panels installed on the roofs of individual homes and businesses. Solar power produces no emissions directly but presents numerous challenges that have not yet been effectively resolved. These challenges include high costs and intermittency due to its dependence on sunny weather. This intermittency forces other power plants to be put on standby, causing increased emissions elsewhere. Development of the solar industry has been assisted by large taxpayer-funded subsidies and mandates requiring utilities to purchase solar power.

- Wind

Wind power generates energy by harnessing wind with turbines, or windmills. Wind power, like solar, poses yet to be resolved challenges. These challenges include intermittency caused by its dependence on the weather as well as negative impacts on birds, including endangered eagles, which are killed when they fly into the spinning blades. Wind power's development has also been boosted by large scale taxpayer subsidies and mandates.

## *Politics of energy*

Because energy is such an important part of our lives, energy policy has also become one of our century's most talked about political topics. Energy policy decisions are determined based on the interaction of citizens, elected leaders and numerous organized groups, each of whom have energy policy preferences. These organized groups include the following:

- Energy producers

Producers of every major power source sponsor trade organizations. These trade groups urge the adoption of policies that help their businesses continue to operate and expand. These groups can make positive contributions to the energy conversation but can also sometimes take positions reflecting self-interest.

- Business associations

Numerous associations exist to advocate for favorable economic conditions that allow businesses to grow. Manufacturers, construction contractors, farmers, truckers and many others sponsor advocacy groups large and small in addition to chambers of commerce which represent a range of businesses in their communities.

- Consumer advocates

The Coalition of Energy Users is an example of a consumer advocacy organization because CEU represents citizen energy users. From this perspective, CEU advocates policies that produce access to affordable energy and quality jobs for everyday citizens.

- Labor unions

Labor unions exist primarily to represent workers and secure jobs with good pay and benefits. Labor unions therefore prefer policies that create opportunities in their respective industries. Energy producers employ members of unions. Union members in industries such as trucking, construction and manufacturing may not produce energy directly but they likewise have a stake in energy policy because the cost of gasoline and electrical power directly affects their opportunities or lack thereof.

- Civil rights advocates

Energy policies sometimes carry unintended consequences that harm disadvantaged communities. For example, in California, a surcharge was placed on utility bills statewide, and the money collected was used to help people install solar panels on their roofs. Unfortunately, many of those who

could afford to install solar panels lived in wealthy communities, making the surcharge an effective wealth transfer from inner city and rural communities to the wealthy. Civil rights advocates exist to make sure everyone is treated fairly, although not all have the same perspective on how best equality should be achieved.

- Green organizations

The green movement exists to advocate for the natural environment, including fish, birds, insects, animals and plants. Many green organizations advocate for increased use of solar and wind power, despite wind power's apparent negative consequences for birds. Some more extreme members of the green movement want an immediate end to the use of fossil fuels and even commit acts of terrorism to make their views known broadly. However, many other environmentalists are pragmatic people who want to balance concerns about the economy and equity with their concern for the environment.

### *Suggestions for future study*

There is a wealth of perspectives on energy available on the Internet from the types of organizations described above. You can find some of the most objective information available from the Department of Energy's Energy Information Administration at [www.eia.gov](http://www.eia.gov).

# Getting started

You can make a constructive difference in your community by organizing a group that educates fellow citizens on energy policy and advocates for smart policies that grow our economy while protecting our environment. The smartest policies for affordability and job creation are often those that emphasize limited government intervention and maximum consumer choice.

Citizen energy user activism works best when you approach your organization with a non-partisan, single-issue focus. If you define your organization as being affiliated with a particular political movement or organization, you will miss out on opportunities for support from people who agree with your energy policy goals but may not agree with other unrelated aspects of your philosophy. The broader coalition you can build, the more likely you are to be successful.

If you wish to work directly with CEU Foundation on developing and growing a successful organization, feel free to email me at [Eric@Coalitionofenergyusers.org](mailto:Eric@Coalitionofenergyusers.org).

# Legal rudiments

As you form your organization, you should give some thought to what form or forms you want your group to take legally. I am not a lawyer and cannot give legal advice, but offer the following information to help you in this process:

- A 501(c)3 can engage only in activities considered educational. While a 501(c)3 can express a point of view, it may not advocate on legislation and may not endorse candidates. A 501(c)3 can receive tax deductible donations.
- A 501(c)4 can engage in both education and political advocacy. However, contributions to a 501(c)4 are NOT tax deductible and the organization may not endorse candidates
- A political action committee or PAC can endorse candidates and engage in advocacy. Contributions to a PAC are NOT tax deductible.

There is no reason your organization cannot have more than one entity through which to operate. However, if you choose to set up more than one entity, you must take care to set up separate boards of directors and keep the activities of each organization separate and distinct.

It is helpful to consult an attorney when completing this organizing process but it is not absolutely essential. While I found the process confusing and time intensive, I was fortunate to have friends who had already completed the paperwork for their own organizations who I was able to turn to for guidance.

# Structuring your organization

Finding the right people to serve in leadership capacities of your organization is likely to take some time and won't happen overnight.

However, it is worth thinking about the different functions that should be performed and what kind of individuals are best to include in your team. Over time, competent people will step forward to help and you can begin assigning people to take responsibility for different activities.

## *Good candidates for leadership*

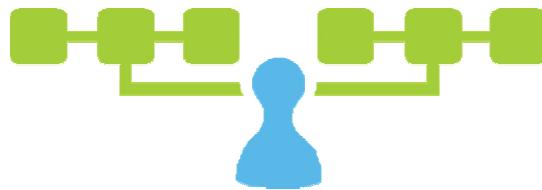
Look for individuals who want to support the vision of your organization, are ethical, have a strong work ethic, a can-do spirit and a positive attitude. If they do not have any of these qualities, you could run into problems later.

If human beings were animals, the best to be a part of your organization's leadership would be **beavers** – beavers have a strong work ethic and can-do spirit. In the natural world, beavers are nature's construction workers, building dams. They enjoy working and are there to focus on getting the job done.

## *Organizing your team*

**The word organization is derived from the Greek word organon, which is itself derived from the better-known word ergon which means "organ" – a compartment for a particular task.**

Therefore, an organization has to have a compartmentalization of tasks. This compartmentalization is best accomplished through the use of an org board, dividing up responsibilities among individuals. Note that an individual may occupy more than one spot on the org board. This will be necessary when your group is small. As the organization grows, more positions may be created to accommodate others who will want to help.



The Coalition of Energy Users includes the following departments:

- Policy
- Communications

- Human Resources
- Promotion and Marketing
- Finance
- Regulatory Affairs
- Leadership Development
- Certification
- Volunteer Coordination

Because “form follows function,” the exact structure of your organization may not be exactly the same, but you will still want to address most of these functions to work effectively. Some of these areas are discussed in further detail in the chapters ahead.

Question: What if I don’t have enough individuals to place in the necessary org board departments?

Answer: The chief executive of the organization (that’s you if you’re willing to accept your mission!) has ultimate responsibility for making sure tasks are completed. Therefore, you will be responsible for filling in where necessary until someone can be placed. Rest assured, when people see the good work your organization is doing, ethical and competent individuals will step forward to help.

# Policy

Affordable and reliable energy brings productivity, clean water, sanitation, food, and industry to our society. This vision is only achieved through free markets and strong property rights.

Seize opportunities to educate members of your community on the critical nature of affordable and reliable energy, and articulate policy mechanisms that best achieve prosperity.

Monitor proposals from government entities for opportunities to act in support or opposition. Local industry groups can be a good resource for opportunities to get involved. Monitoring the activities of local Green groups also can give you an idea of what energy issues may require action from your group.

Some major issues in energy policy that you should consider opportunities to engage in activism are:

- **Cap and trade programs and carbon taxes**

*These policies are effectively energy taxes that kill good jobs, especially in energy intensive fields such as manufacturing and raise the price of gas and consumer goods. Meanwhile, the taxes collected may be designated to political pet projects or to crony capitalists, such as politically connected donors.*

- **Renewable fuel standards**

*Biofuel mandates are “food for fuel” policies that drive up the price of food and feed, exacerbate food shortages in poor countries and damage engines.*

- **Renewable portfolio standards**

*Many states have policies mandating a certain portion of consumer’s electricity be purchased from renewable sources. Definitions of “renewable” vary greatly. These policies drive up energy costs, give an unfair advantage to certain energy producers at the expense of others and harm consumer choice, all while threatening reliability.*

- **Green energy subsidies**

*Subsidies effectively reward companies that have trouble raising money due to their reliance on technologies that cannot compete effectively on a level playing field. Is it smart for taxpayers to invest in companies that can’t attract private capital? No, of course not, why are we even considering this? Furthermore, the money often goes to the politically connected such as in the case of the Solyndra debacle.*

- **Energy production**

*America is currently experiencing an energy boom due to advanced oil extraction technologies such as hydraulic fracturing, or fracking. Technology for offshore production has made more reserves accessible than ever before, and with the advent of horizontal drilling techniques, many*

*rigs which once had to be located offshore can now access energy from onshore. Meanwhile, people who are ideologically opposed to oil and gas production are trying to stop the development of these newly accessible resources by spreading hysteria with scare tactics. New energy production offers the opportunity to create jobs, lower energy costs and enhance national security.*

Fortunately, many states are now reevaluating their failed energy policies as the consequences in terms of lost jobs and rising energy prices begin to be felt. However, hucksters will continue to promote these bad policies knowing that the general public has limited understanding of energy issues allowing them to lie without being challenged.

Appoint an individual with excellent analytical skills to be your Director of Policy and to perform the following functions:

- Provide analysis regarding complex proposals originated by policymaking bodies such as your state legislature, local governments and regulatory agencies
- Communicate with energy producers and sympathetic policy institutes to find out what is needed and/or wanted from your organization
- Provide strategic guidance with respect to successful enactment of policy goals, coalition development and acquisition of financial resources

# Communications

Your communications department, also known as “public relations,” has as its basic function the main objective of PR: good works made well known.

Your organization should develop relationships among local news outlets such as TV news stations, local newspapers, ethnic media and blogs. These media relationships can be a valuable resource for promoting your activities.

When you have an event, be sure your media contacts receive a press release. When issues come up that your group is concerned about, pursue opportunities to write a thoughtful op-ed on the situation at hand and have it published in your local paper.

If you have the opportunity to speak with a reporter, be positive and to the point. Talk about the good work your group does and the benefits of the policies you support.



You should choose a pleasant man or woman to be your Director of Communications. This position will be responsible for the following functions:

- Handle public relations functions including representing the organization in a positive manner to the media and the public at large
- Draft press releases and opinion articles for coverage by the media
- Achieve success in the online realm by ensuring website and social media properties are kept up to date.
- Represent the organization at public functions such as Chamber of Commerce meetings

# Promotion and Marketing

In order to maximize your impact, you are going to want to engage in activities which require financial resources. From major actions such as airing commercials, convening conferences, and holding rallies to more minor actions like hosting your website, buying matching tee shirts for your volunteers or holding a bumper sticker campaign all require an outlay of finances.

The Green Movement is a multi-billion dollar powerhouse. The Natural Resources Defense Council alone takes in well over \$100 million in revenue. If you are to effectively fight back, you need to make raising a significant amount of money a top priority.

This is not to say that you cannot be effective on a shoestring budget. However, you should not and need not settle for allowing your capabilities to be limited by finances.

There are numerous ways of bringing in financial resources to your organization and many different avenues through which you can ask for money. Following are a few ideas, some simple and some more complex:

- Set up an online donation system and feature it prominently on your website
- Send email solicitations to your supporters asking for donations. People like to donate to specific projects so be sure to say what you need the money for
- Set up a Partnership program where people make a sustained commitment to the organization, pledging a particular amount every month. You can create tiered levels to accommodate individuals who would like to participate in a greater way
- Ask small and large businesses in your area if they would be willing to help you with a donation
- Locate likeminded foundations with grant programs and apply
- Offer businesses event sponsorship opportunities. Being listed as a sponsor allows a business to receive free advertising while also making a positive difference
- Implement an incentive program among your leadership team that rewards individuals who successfully acquire donations
- End in-person meetings with an opportunity to give

You should appoint an industrious individual to be your Director of Promotion and Marketing, and this person's responsibilities should include the following functions:

- Coordinates with other members of your leadership team, supporters and members of the public to gain widespread positive recognition of the organization
- Develop new and innovative ways of increasing email and social media following and expanding number of financial supporters
- Organize fundraising events to promote the organization mission and inspire new donors

# Field

## *Outreach, volunteer coordination and activism*

Just as political campaigns, have staff who work “field,” your organization should have a field division to communicate with supporters in the area over which you have responsibility.

Supporters will lose interest if you don’t communicate with them or offer them opportunities to be involved. Just as importantly, you need your supporters to be an effective advocate for affordable energy and job creation.

Supporters are a resource for the following activities and more:

- Volunteers to help at events
- Legislative action through organizing supporters to testify at hearings and contact their representatives
- Sending letters to the editor to local newspaper
- Making donations to your organization

As discussed above, you must stay in communication with your supporters so they’re apprised of your activities and the latest developments in the issue areas with which you are concerned.

Technology has made the widespread dissemination of information far easier and cheaper than it was a generation ago. The following web-based platforms are essential to your ability to effectively communicate with your field:

- Engaging, interactive and up-to-date website
- Social media presence – Facebook is essential because it is the most widely used but you may also choose to communicate through other platforms in addition to Facebook such as Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram and Pinterest
- Mass email distribution system such as MailChimp or Constant Contact

The activities of the field division are extremely important for the greater goal of creating a citizenry which is informed on energy issues. When you build up a large email list and strong social media following, you will gain the ability to mobilize large numbers of people on behalf of smarter policy.

## OK I want to do this! What do I do next?

Awesome! Send an email to [Eric@Coalitionofenergyusers.org](mailto:Eric@Coalitionofenergyusers.org). The Coalition of Energy Users Foundation will work with you directly to help you start a successful citizen's energy advocacy organization in your community.

By becoming an advocate for citizen energy consumers, you are taking a positive step toward making energy more affordable and more reliable and therefore creating a more prosperous society for all citizens.

# Conclusions

Energy policy impacts our daily lives both individually and as a society. The cost of fuel and electricity affects how much you and your family pay for things you buy every day and helps determine whether or not good job opportunities are available.

As a rising tide lifts all ships, smart energy policy can uplift disadvantaged communities, provide resources for services such as education and public safety and enhance American energy security.

Unfortunately, counterproductive policies sometimes make it into law just because citizens lack an objective understanding of the issues at hand.

By starting a citizen's energy group in your state or community, you can be part of the solution. Your involvement will help your fellow citizens to become more informed and to gain the tools to effectively engage in the political process on behalf of access to jobs and affordable power.

And if you need any help, the Coalition of Energy Users Foundation is here to work with you! We want you and other informed consumers across the country to be successful in creating literally a brighter tomorrow!

## About the author



Eric Eisenhammer is the founder of the Coalition of Energy Users, a California-based nonprofit advocating for access to affordable energy and quality jobs and Founder of CEU Foundation, an education organization for objective discussions on energy and jobs. He has been interviewed by numerous media outlets and testified before California legislative committees speaking on behalf of energy consumers.

Eric also is a small business owner in the field of community outreach and web solutions. His clients have included statewide political campaigns, community groups, churches and other small businesses.

Eric first got involved in politics volunteering on the gubernatorial campaign of his local state representative and then served as a staff member in the State Capitol. In addition to energy policy, Eric is also knowledgeable about tax and public safety issues.

He holds a Master's in Public Policy and Administration from California State University, Sacramento and a Bachelors of Science degree in Business Administration with an emphasis in Finance from the California State University, Northridge.

You can contact Eric at [Eric@Coalitionofenergyusers.org](mailto:Eric@Coalitionofenergyusers.org).



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As in California, many people in your own state or community lack an objective understanding of energy issues.

I sometimes talk with citizens who are under the false impression that solar energy is free because it comes from the sun! (solar power is actually one of the most costly energy sources according to official Department of Energy data.)

By getting involved, you can be part of the solution – your involvement can help save and create jobs, improve the economy and environment and enhance consumer access to more affordable power and fuel.

# Energy basics

## *Background*

**Definition of energy: power derived from the utilization of physical or chemical resources, esp. to provide light and heat or to work machines.**

Man's first use of energy occurred in prehistoric caveman days when people began harnessing fire to light their homes and cook. Researchers believe this breakthrough occurred in Africa early in human history. When a brush fire or forest fire occurred by the strike of lightning, an innovative caveman was inspired to capture one of the embers and keep it burning continually for his society's use. Most primitive societies had a person designated "keeper of the flame," who was responsible for keeping a fire burning.

Some of the first energy innovations beyond burning wood occurred in China. In 2000 BC the Chinese began burning coal to cook and heat their homes. Around the year 1 AD, the Chinese refined petroleum as a fuel for lamps.

In 200 AD, Europeans discovered how to harness hydroelectric power, building wheels in rivers

Windmills were invented in Persia around 1000 AD. In the 1600's to 1700s Europeans further refined technology for burning and developing coal. These innovations made coal civilization's leading source of energy. Coal made abundant, reliable and affordable energy available for the first time, leading to the Industrial Revolution, which improved people's lives tremendously.

In the early 1800's, the first oil and natural gas wells were drilled in the United States, in New York and Pennsylvania.

In 1860, the first solar panel was invented in France by focusing a mirror on the sun to turn water into steam.

In 1885, Germany's Karl Benz (the namesake of Mercedes Benz cars) invented the first gasoline powered automobile. Henry Ford then introduced his first gas powered car in 1896.

The invention of nuclear power brought the first nuclear reactors to Russia and the United States in the 1950's.

Today, all of these energy sources comprise part of the modern energy supply. Researchers continuously work to make each of these technologies better. Their work results in constant improvements to the way we produce energy, making production cleaner, more affordable, safer and more reliable.

## *Where your energy comes from*

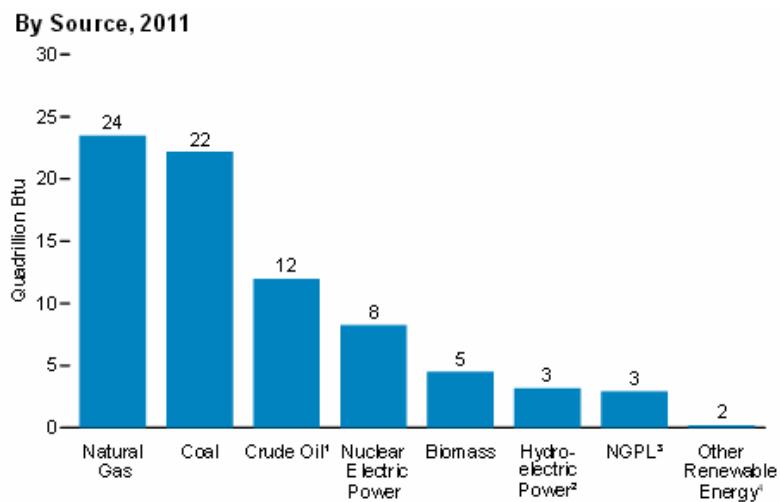
The electricity we use on a daily basis to light our homes, cook and power a multitude of electronic devices usually comes from a power plant (unless you have some type of generator of your own), where it is generated and then transmitted across power lines. Among the types of power plants your energy may come from include:

- Natural gas
- Coal
- Nuclear
- Hydroelectric
- Solar
- Wind

The gasoline you fill up with at the gas station is refined from crude oil in refineries. A national renewable fuel mandate requires refineries to mix fuel with plant-based biofuel additives such as ethanol, which is produced from corn.

Natural gas, coal and oil represent about three quarters of the energy consumed in the US. Nuclear power represents an additional 10% of American energy production. Solar and wind power comprise less than 3% of our nation's energy supply, despite enthusiastic government efforts to subsidize and mandate these power sources.

While the precise energy mix, or portfolio, varies by state, the following chart shows where energy comes from nationally:



<sup>1</sup> Includes lease condensate.

<sup>2</sup> Conventional hydroelectric power.

<sup>3</sup> Natural gas plant liquids.

Source: <http://www.eia.gov/totalenergy/data/annual/pdf/aer.pdf>

## *Types of energy*

Does it matter how our energy is produced? YES! It matters a great deal. How our energy is produced impacts the price of your utility bill, the price you pay at the pump and what job opportunities are available for you and your family. Here's a little more detail on various major energy sources.

- Natural gas

Natural gas, not to be confused with gasoline, is a naturally occurring gas composed of methane and other hydrocarbons. Natural gas is the cleanest fossil fuel, and has become available in huge new supplies due to the development of advanced extraction technologies such as hydraulic fracturing or "fracking," and horizontal drilling.

Besides being the cleanest fossil fuel, natural gas is currently also the most affordable. Production of this energy source has helped decrease American greenhouse gas emissions, create thousands of new jobs and revitalize manufacturing with a new supply of abundant and affordable power. Natural gas is currently America's leading energy source and generates power in power plants across the country.

- Coal

Coal is composed of combustible black or brown rocks, formed from carbonized plant matter. Coal is usually found underground and exists in vast supplies in the US. Coal is an affordable, abundant and reliable power source and generates almost half of our country's electricity. Continuing improvements in technology have made coal cleaner to use and safer to extract.

- Oil

Oil is a thick liquid derived from petroleum. Like natural gas, new technologies have greatly increased the amount of oil that can be safely and economically extracted. Oil is refined into gasoline in refineries, where laws often require it be mixed with biofuels. Refined fuel is then transported to gas stations, where we use it to power our cars and trucks.

- Biofuels

Biofuels are fuels derived from plant sources such as corn and sugar. These fuels are mandated by the government and their production is subsidized with

taxpayer dollars. Biofuels are intended to help the environment, but have also led to unintended consequences such as food shortages, increases in the price of livestock feed and harm to people's engines.

- Nuclear

Nuclear power is a type of energy produced through an ongoing atomic reaction taking place in a reactor. Nuclear power is affordable, reliable and can produce a lot of power. Some countries, such as France, rely on nuclear power for the bulk of their energy generation. However, despite continuous improvements in safety, nuclear power still presents the risk of catastrophe in the event of a meltdown.

- Hydroelectric

Hydroelectric power, as its name suggests, is energy derived from water. Hydroelectric power is produced through the use of turbines placed by fast moving water. Large dams can produce tremendous amounts of clean, affordable power. However, not all locations present geographical conditions that make building large dams possible – they generally require mountainous terrain and large rivers to work best. An additional benefit of the construction of hydroelectric dams is the creation of reservoirs, which store water for use by our farms and communities and provide flood control.

- Solar

Solar power is generated by harnessing the sun's rays. Solar energy is produced with large fields of panels transmitting energy to the electrical grid as well as panels installed on the roofs of individual homes and businesses. Solar power produces no emissions directly but presents numerous challenges that have not yet been effectively resolved. These challenges include high costs and intermittency due to its dependence on sunny weather. This intermittency forces other power plants to be put on standby, causing increased emissions elsewhere. Development of the solar industry has been assisted by large taxpayer-funded subsidies and mandates requiring utilities to purchase solar power.

- Wind

Wind power generates energy by harnessing wind with turbines, or windmills. Wind power, like solar, poses yet to be resolved challenges. These challenges include intermittency caused by its dependence on the weather as well as negative impacts on birds, including endangered eagles, which are killed when they fly into the spinning blades. Wind power's development has also been boosted by large scale taxpayer subsidies and mandates.

## *Politics of energy*

Because energy is such an important part of our lives, energy policy has also become one of our century's most talked about political topics. Energy policy decisions are determined based on the interaction of citizens, elected leaders and numerous organized groups, each of whom have energy policy preferences. These organized groups include the following:

- Energy producers

Producers of every major power source sponsor trade organizations. These trade groups urge the adoption of policies that help their businesses continue to operate and expand. These groups can make positive contributions to the energy conversation but can also sometimes take positions reflecting self-interest.

- Business associations

Numerous associations exist to advocate for favorable economic conditions that allow businesses to grow. Manufacturers, construction contractors, farmers, truckers and many others sponsor advocacy groups large and small in addition to chambers of commerce which represent a range of businesses in their communities.

- Consumer advocates

The Coalition of Energy Users is an example of a consumer advocacy organization because CEU represents citizen energy users. From this perspective, CEU advocates policies that produce access to affordable energy and quality jobs for everyday citizens.

- Labor unions

Labor unions exist primarily to represent workers and secure jobs with good pay and benefits. Labor unions therefore prefer policies that create opportunities in their respective industries. Energy producers employ members of unions. Union members in industries such as trucking, construction and manufacturing may not produce energy directly but they likewise have a stake in energy policy because the cost of gasoline and electrical power directly affects their opportunities or lack thereof.

- Civil rights advocates

Energy policies sometimes carry unintended consequences that harm disadvantaged communities. For example, in California, a surcharge was placed on utility bills statewide, and the money collected was used to help people install solar panels on their roofs. Unfortunately, many of those who

could afford to install solar panels lived in wealthy communities, making the surcharge an effective wealth transfer from inner city and rural communities to the wealthy. Civil rights advocates exist to make sure everyone is treated fairly, although not all have the same perspective on how best equality should be achieved.

- Green organizations

The green movement exists to advocate for the natural environment, including fish, birds, insects, animals and plants. Many green organizations advocate for increased use of solar and wind power, despite wind power's apparent negative consequences for birds. Some more extreme members of the green movement want an immediate end to the use of fossil fuels and even commit acts of terrorism to make their views known broadly. However, many other environmentalists are pragmatic people who want to balance concerns about the economy and equity with their concern for the environment.

### *Suggestions for future study*

There is a wealth of perspectives on energy available on the Internet from the types of organizations described above. You can find some of the most objective information available from the Department of Energy's Energy Information Administration at [www.eia.gov](http://www.eia.gov).

# Getting started

You can make a constructive difference in your community by organizing a group that educates fellow citizens on energy policy and advocates for smart policies that grow our economy while protecting our environment. The smartest policies for affordability and job creation are often those that emphasize limited government intervention and maximum consumer choice.

Citizen energy user activism works best when you approach your organization with a non-partisan, single-issue focus. If you define your organization as being affiliated with a particular political movement or organization, you will miss out on opportunities for support from people who agree with your energy policy goals but may not agree with other unrelated aspects of your philosophy. The broader coalition you can build, the more likely you are to be successful.

If you wish to work directly with CEU Foundation on developing and growing a successful organization, feel free to email me at [Eric@Coalitionofenergyusers.org](mailto:Eric@Coalitionofenergyusers.org).

# Legal rudiments

As you form your organization, you should give some thought to what form or forms you want your group to take legally. I am not a lawyer and cannot give legal advice, but offer the following information to help you in this process:

- A 501(c)3 can engage only in activities considered educational. While a 501(c)3 can express a point of view, it may not advocate on legislation and may not endorse candidates. A 501(c)3 can receive tax deductible donations.
- A 501(c)4 can engage in both education and political advocacy. However, contributions to a 501(c)4 are NOT tax deductible and the organization may not endorse candidates
- A political action committee or PAC can endorse candidates and engage in advocacy. Contributions to a PAC are NOT tax deductible.

There is no reason your organization cannot have more than one entity through which to operate. However, if you choose to set up more than one entity, you must take care to set up separate boards of directors and keep the activities of each organization separate and distinct.

It is helpful to consult an attorney when completing this organizing process but it is not absolutely essential. While I found the process confusing and time intensive, I was fortunate to have friends who had already completed the paperwork for their own organizations who I was able to turn to for guidance.

# Structuring your organization

Finding the right people to serve in leadership capacities of your organization is likely to take some time and won't happen overnight.

However, it is worth thinking about the different functions that should be performed and what kind of individuals are best to include in your team. Over time, competent people will step forward to help and you can begin assigning people to take responsibility for different activities.

## *Good candidates for leadership*

Look for individuals who want to support the vision of your organization, are ethical, have a strong work ethic, a can-do spirit and a positive attitude. If they do not have any of these qualities, you could run into problems later.

If human beings were animals, the best to be a part of your organization's leadership would be **beavers** – beavers have a strong work ethic and can-do spirit. In the natural world, beavers are nature's construction workers, building dams. They enjoy working and are there to focus on getting the job done.

## *Organizing your team*

**The word organization is derived from the Greek word organon, which is itself derived from the better-known word ergon which means "organ" – a compartment for a particular task.**

Therefore, an organization has to have a compartmentalization of tasks. This compartmentalization is best accomplished through the use of an org board, dividing up responsibilities among individuals. Note that an individual may occupy more than one spot on the org board. This will be necessary when your group is small. As the organization grows, more positions may be created to accommodate others who will want to help.



The Coalition of Energy Users includes the following departments:

- Policy
- Communications

- Human Resources
- Promotion and Marketing
- Finance
- Regulatory Affairs
- Leadership Development
- Certification
- Volunteer Coordination

Because “form follows function,” the exact structure of your organization may not be exactly the same, but you will still want to address most of these functions to work effectively. Some of these areas are discussed in further detail in the chapters ahead.

Question: What if I don’t have enough individuals to place in the necessary org board departments?

Answer: The chief executive of the organization (that’s you if you’re willing to accept your mission!) has ultimate responsibility for making sure tasks are completed. Therefore, you will be responsible for filling in where necessary until someone can be placed. Rest assured, when people see the good work your organization is doing, ethical and competent individuals will step forward to help.

# Policy

Affordable and reliable energy brings productivity, clean water, sanitation, food, and industry to our society. This vision is only achieved through free markets and strong property rights.

Seize opportunities to educate members of your community on the critical nature of affordable and reliable energy, and articulate policy mechanisms that best achieve prosperity.

Monitor proposals from government entities for opportunities to act in support or opposition. Local industry groups can be a good resource for opportunities to get involved. Monitoring the activities of local Green groups also can give you an idea of what energy issues may require action from your group.

Some major issues in energy policy that you should consider opportunities to engage in activism are:

- **Cap and trade programs and carbon taxes**

*These policies are effectively energy taxes that kill good jobs, especially in energy intensive fields such as manufacturing and raise the price of gas and consumer goods. Meanwhile, the taxes collected may be designated to political pet projects or to crony capitalists, such as politically connected donors.*

- **Renewable fuel standards**

*Biofuel mandates are “food for fuel” policies that drive up the price of food and feed, exacerbate food shortages in poor countries and damage engines.*

- **Renewable portfolio standards**

*Many states have policies mandating a certain portion of consumer’s electricity be purchased from renewable sources. Definitions of “renewable” vary greatly. These policies drive up energy costs, give an unfair advantage to certain energy producers at the expense of others and harm consumer choice, all while threatening reliability.*

- **Green energy subsidies**

*Subsidies effectively reward companies that have trouble raising money due to their reliance on technologies that cannot compete effectively on a level playing field. Is it smart for taxpayers to invest in companies that can’t attract private capital? No, of course not, why are we even considering this? Furthermore, the money often goes to the politically connected such as in the case of the Solyndra debacle.*

- **Energy production**

*America is currently experiencing an energy boom due to advanced oil extraction technologies such as hydraulic fracturing, or fracking. Technology for offshore production has made more reserves accessible than ever before, and with the advent of horizontal drilling techniques, many*

*rigs which once had to be located offshore can now access energy from onshore. Meanwhile, people who are ideologically opposed to oil and gas production are trying to stop the development of these newly accessible resources by spreading hysteria with scare tactics. New energy production offers the opportunity to create jobs, lower energy costs and enhance national security.*

Fortunately, many states are now reevaluating their failed energy policies as the consequences in terms of lost jobs and rising energy prices begin to be felt. However, hucksters will continue to promote these bad policies knowing that the general public has limited understanding of energy issues allowing them to lie without being challenged.

Appoint an individual with excellent analytical skills to be your Director of Policy and to perform the following functions:

- Provide analysis regarding complex proposals originated by policymaking bodies such as your state legislature, local governments and regulatory agencies
- Communicate with energy producers and sympathetic policy institutes to find out what is needed and/or wanted from your organization
- Provide strategic guidance with respect to successful enactment of policy goals, coalition development and acquisition of financial resources

# Communications

Your communications department, also known as "public relations," has as its basic function the main objective of PR: good works made well known.

Your organization should develop relationships among local news outlets such as TV news stations, local newspapers, ethnic media and blogs. These media relationships can be a valuable resource for promoting your activities.

When you have an event, be sure your media contacts receive a press release. When issues come up that your group is concerned about, pursue opportunities to write a thoughtful op-ed on the situation at hand and have it published in your local paper.

If you have the opportunity to speak with a reporter, be positive and to the point. Talk about the good work your group does and the benefits of the policies you support.



You should choose a pleasant man or woman to be your Director of Communications. This position will be responsible for the following functions:

- Handle public relations functions including representing the organization in a positive manner to the media and the public at large
- Draft press releases and opinion articles for coverage by the media
- Achieve success in the online realm by ensuring website and social media properties are kept up to date.
- Represent the organization at public functions such as Chamber of Commerce meetings

# Promotion and Marketing

In order to maximize your impact, you are going to want to engage in activities which require financial resources. From major actions such as airing commercials, convening conferences, and holding rallies to more minor actions like hosting your website, buying matching tee shirts for your volunteers or holding a bumper sticker campaign all require an outlay of finances.

The Green Movement is a multi-billion dollar powerhouse. The Natural Resources Defense Council alone takes in well over \$100 million in revenue. If you are to effectively fight back, you need to make raising a significant amount of money a top priority.

This is not to say that you cannot be effective on a shoestring budget. However, you should not and need not settle for allowing your capabilities to be limited by finances.

There are numerous ways of bringing in financial resources to your organization and many different avenues through which you can ask for money. Following are a few ideas, some simple and some more complex:

- Set up an online donation system and feature it prominently on your website
- Send email solicitations to your supporters asking for donations. People like to donate to specific projects so be sure to say what you need the money for
- Set up a Partnership program where people make a sustained commitment to the organization, pledging a particular amount every month. You can create tiered levels to accommodate individuals who would like to participate in a greater way
- Ask small and large businesses in your area if they would be willing to help you with a donation
- Locate likeminded foundations with grant programs and apply
- Offer businesses event sponsorship opportunities. Being listed as a sponsor allows a business to receive free advertising while also making a positive difference
- Implement an incentive program among your leadership team that rewards individuals who successfully acquire donations
- End in-person meetings with an opportunity to give

You should appoint an industrious individual to be your Director of Promotion and Marketing, and this person's responsibilities should include the following functions:

- Coordinates with other members of your leadership team, supporters and members of the public to gain widespread positive recognition of the organization
- Develop new and innovative ways of increasing email and social media following and expanding number of financial supporters
- Organize fundraising events to promote the organization mission and inspire new donors

# Field

## *Outreach, volunteer coordination and activism*

Just as political campaigns, have staff who work “field,” your organization should have a field division to communicate with supporters in the area over which you have responsibility.

Supporters will lose interest if you don’t communicate with them or offer them opportunities to be involved. Just as importantly, you need your supporters to be an effective advocate for affordable energy and job creation.

Supporters are a resource for the following activities and more:

- Volunteers to help at events
- Legislative action through organizing supporters to testify at hearings and contact their representatives
- Sending letters to the editor to local newspaper
- Making donations to your organization

As discussed above, you must stay in communication with your supporters so they’re apprised of your activities and the latest developments in the issue areas with which you are concerned.

Technology has made the widespread dissemination of information far easier and cheaper than it was a generation ago. The following web-based platforms are essential to your ability to effectively communicate with your field:

- Engaging, interactive and up-to-date website
- Social media presence – Facebook is essential because it is the most widely used but you may also choose to communicate through other platforms in addition to Facebook such as Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram and Pinterest
- Mass email distribution system such as MailChimp or Constant Contact

The activities of the field division are extremely important for the greater goal of creating a citizenry which is informed on energy issues. When you build up a large email list and strong social media following, you will gain the ability to mobilize large numbers of people on behalf of smarter policy.

## OK I want to do this! What do I do next?

Awesome! Send an email to [Eric@Coalitionofenergyusers.org](mailto:Eric@Coalitionofenergyusers.org). The Coalition of Energy Users Foundation will work with you directly to help you start a successful citizen's energy advocacy organization in your community.

By becoming an advocate for citizen energy consumers, you are taking a positive step toward making energy more affordable and more reliable and therefore creating a more prosperous society for all citizens.

# Conclusions

Energy policy impacts our daily lives both individually and as a society. The cost of fuel and electricity affects how much you and your family pay for things you buy every day and helps determine whether or not good job opportunities are available.

As a rising tide lifts all ships, smart energy policy can uplift disadvantaged communities, provide resources for services such as education and public safety and enhance American energy security.

Unfortunately, counterproductive policies sometimes make it into law just because citizens lack an objective understanding of the issues at hand.

By starting a citizen's energy group in your state or community, you can be part of the solution. Your involvement will help your fellow citizens to become more informed and to gain the tools to effectively engage in the political process on behalf of access to jobs and affordable power.

And if you need any help, the Coalition of Energy Users Foundation is here to work with you! We want you and other informed consumers across the country to be successful in creating literally a brighter tomorrow!

## About the author



Eric Eisenhammer is the founder of the Coalition of Energy Users, a California-based nonprofit advocating for access to affordable energy and quality jobs and Founder of CEU Foundation, an education organization for objective discussions on energy and jobs. He has been interviewed by numerous media outlets and testified before California legislative committees speaking on behalf of energy consumers.

Eric also is a small business owner in the field of community outreach and web solutions. His clients have included statewide political campaigns, community groups, churches and other small businesses.

Eric first got involved in politics volunteering on the gubernatorial campaign of his local state representative and then served as a staff member in the State Capitol. In addition to energy policy, Eric is also knowledgeable about tax and public safety issues.

He holds a Master's in Public Policy and Administration from California State University, Sacramento and a Bachelors of Science degree in Business Administration with an emphasis in Finance from the California State University, Northridge.

You can contact Eric at [Eric@Coalitionofenergyusers.org](mailto:Eric@Coalitionofenergyusers.org).



**COALITION OF ENERGY USERS FOUNDATION**

## **How to start a citizen's energy group**

*By Eric Eisenhammer*

# **Energy Activism Manual**

COALITION OF ENERGY USERS FOUNDATION

# Energy Activism Manual

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# Introduction

**A**ccess to reliable and affordable power is critical to maintaining and expanding a prosperous American economy. In fact, energy is so critical that the effective development of coal as a power source played a principal role in spurring the Industrial Revolution in the 1880's.

The past century has brought the creation or advancement of additional sources of abundant, reliable and affordable power such as oil and gas, nuclear and large scale hydro. The glittering lights and casino palaces of Las Vegas owe their existence just as much to Hoover Dam as to Nevada's legalized gambling.

Energy advancement is the single biggest factor in giving human beings the best quality of life in history. Practically everything we see around us is fueled by energy. Factories, automobiles, televisions, smart phones and computers are all powered by energy. Innovations we use every day and that we don't necessarily associate with energy – including plastics, polyester, contact lenses and capsules holding medicine – are derived from petroleum.



In fact, a society's life expectancy and quality of life are directly related to the amount of energy its people are able to access and use.

Discredited British philosopher and economist Thomas Malthus, who predicted in the late 1700's that the world would soon face catastrophic mass starvations because of an inability to feed the growing population, has been definitively proven wrong in no small part because of energy.

Today, our resources continue to offer opportunity. Advanced oil extraction technologies have dramatically expanded the amount of energy that can be accessed safely and responsibly. In locations where in the recent past many wells may have been needed, now only one is needed – an advancement that has greatly reduced the environmental impact of energy production.

Advances in hydraulic fracturing, or "fracking" have made America an energy exporter, enhancing our national security and standing in the world., creating good jobs and lowering utility bills. Reduced energy costs resulting from natural gas produced

through fracking are creating a renaissance in American manufacturing – many factories are again humming and we are making real things.

Technology also has overcome many of the obstacles that once posed a challenge to offshore energy development. Now, offshore energy resources can sometimes be extracted using rigs onshore.

America's CO<sub>2</sub> emissions have dropped to their lowest level in 20 years fueled by new supplies of clean and affordable natural gas. President Obama has said, "After years of talking about it, we're finally poised to control our own energy future. We produce more oil at home than we have in 15 years."

Unfortunately, the general public lacks an accurate understanding of energy issues. *Scientific American* recently published the results of a poll finding most Americans are totally uninformed when it comes to energy: Most like natural gas, but don't know it comes from fracking (which they say they don't like). They also wrongly think Saudi Arabia is our biggest source of oil imports (the right answer is Canada).

With so many citizens either uninformed or misinformed when it comes to energy, the result has been misguided and counterproductive policy that harms not only our economy, but our environment. Misplaced enthusiasm over costly and unreliable wind and solar power has resulted in cronyism and wasted billions of taxpayer dollars, such as in the Solyndra debacle, and also killed thousands of birds, including endangered eagles.

That's why your activism is so important. As our Founders understood, an educated citizenry is necessary to the preservation of freedom. As an organized force, energy consumers can set the record straight when deceptive rhetoric is presented; defend jobs and economic growth and work proactively to enact smarter regulatory policies that can free our economy to rise to greater heights.

# About CEU Foundation

The Coalition of Energy Users Foundation is a California-based nonprofit educational organization that supports objective discussions on energy, jobs and the environment.

CEU Foundation was established by the Coalition of Energy Users, an advocacy-oriented organization founded in 2010 that has saved California energy consumers billions of dollars through its efforts including the defeat of Solyndra-style subsidies. CEU Foundation engages in educational efforts including holding community forums and the development of online energy education.

This manual was produced as a national outreach designed to equip citizens nationwide to speak as an effective voice for energy consumers in their state and community.

As in California, many people in your own state or community lack an objective understanding of energy issues.

I sometimes talk with citizens who are under the false impression that solar energy is free because it comes from the sun! (solar power is actually one of the most costly energy sources according to official Department of Energy data.)

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# Energy basics

## *Background*

**Definition of energy: power derived from the utilization of physical or chemical resources, esp. to provide light and heat or to work machines.**

Man's first use of energy occurred in prehistoric caveman days when people began harnessing fire to light their homes and cook. Researchers believe this breakthrough occurred in Africa early in human history. When a brush fire or forest fire occurred by the strike of lightning, an innovative caveman was inspired to capture one of the embers and keep it burning continually for his society's use. Most primitive societies had a person designated "keeper of the flame," who was responsible for keeping a fire burning.

Some of the first energy innovations beyond burning wood occurred in China. In 2000 BC the Chinese began burning coal to cook and heat their homes. Around the year 1 AD, the Chinese refined petroleum as a fuel for lamps.

In 200 AD, Europeans discovered how to harness hydroelectric power, building wheels in rivers

Windmills were invented in Persia around 1000 AD. In the 1600's to 1700s Europeans further refined technology for burning and developing coal. These innovations made coal civilization's leading source of energy. Coal made abundant, reliable and affordable energy available for the first time, leading to the Industrial Revolution, which improved people's lives tremendously.

In the early 1800's, the first oil and natural gas wells were drilled in the United States, in New York and Pennsylvania.

In 1860, the first solar panel was invented in France by focusing a mirror on the sun to turn water into steam.

In 1885, Germany's Karl Benz (the namesake of Mercedes Benz cars) invented the first gasoline powered automobile. Henry Ford then introduced his first gas powered car in 1896.

The invention of nuclear power brought the first nuclear reactors to Russia and the United States in the 1950's.

Today, all of these energy sources comprise part of the modern energy supply. Researchers continuously work to make each of these technologies better. Their work results in constant improvements to the way we produce energy, making production cleaner, more affordable, safer and more reliable.

## *Where your energy comes from*

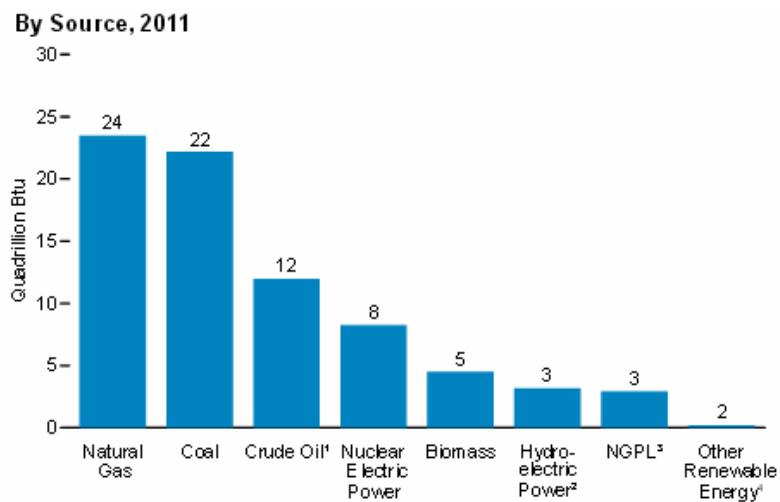
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- Natural gas
- Coal
- Nuclear
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- Wind

The gasoline you fill up with at the gas station is refined from crude oil in refineries. A national renewable fuel mandate requires refineries to mix fuel with plant-based biofuel additives such as ethanol, which is produced from corn.

Natural gas, coal and oil represent about three quarters of the energy consumed in the US. Nuclear power represents an additional 10% of American energy production. Solar and wind power comprise less than 3% of our nation's energy supply, despite enthusiastic government efforts to subsidize and mandate these power sources.

While the precise energy mix, or portfolio, varies by state, the following chart shows where energy comes from nationally:



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## *Types of energy*

Does it matter how our energy is produced? YES! It matters a great deal. How our energy is produced impacts the price of your utility bill, the price you pay at the pump and what job opportunities are available for you and your family. Here's a little more detail on various major energy sources.

- Natural gas

Natural gas, not to be confused with gasoline, is a naturally occurring gas composed of methane and other hydrocarbons. Natural gas is the cleanest fossil fuel, and has become available in huge new supplies due to the development of advanced extraction technologies such as hydraulic fracturing or "fracking," and horizontal drilling.

Besides being the cleanest fossil fuel, natural gas is currently also the most affordable. Production of this energy source has helped decrease American greenhouse gas emissions, create thousands of new jobs and revitalize manufacturing with a new supply of abundant and affordable power. Natural gas is currently America's leading energy source and generates power in power plants across the country.

- Coal

Coal is composed of combustible black or brown rocks, formed from carbonized plant matter. Coal is usually found underground and exists in vast supplies in the US. Coal is an affordable, abundant and reliable power source and generates almost half of our country's electricity. Continuing improvements in technology have made coal cleaner to use and safer to extract.

- Oil

Oil is a thick liquid derived from petroleum. Like natural gas, new technologies have greatly increased the amount of oil that can be safely and economically extracted. Oil is refined into gasoline in refineries, where laws often require it be mixed with biofuels. Refined fuel is then transported to gas stations, where we use it to power our cars and trucks.

- Biofuels

Biofuels are fuels derived from plant sources such as corn and sugar. These fuels are mandated by the government and their production is subsidized with

taxpayer dollars. Biofuels are intended to help the environment, but have also led to unintended consequences such as food shortages, increases in the price of livestock feed and harm to people's engines.

- Nuclear

Nuclear power is a type of energy produced through an ongoing atomic reaction taking place in a reactor. Nuclear power is affordable, reliable and can produce a lot of power. Some countries, such as France, rely on nuclear power for the bulk of their energy generation. However, despite continuous improvements in safety, nuclear power still presents the risk of catastrophe in the event of a meltdown.

- Hydroelectric

Hydroelectric power, as its name suggests, is energy derived from water. Hydroelectric power is produced through the use of turbines placed by fast moving water. Large dams can produce tremendous amounts of clean, affordable power. However, not all locations present geographical conditions that make building large dams possible – they generally require mountainous terrain and large rivers to work best. An additional benefit of the construction of hydroelectric dams is the creation of reservoirs, which store water for use by our farms and communities and provide flood control.

- Solar

Solar power is generated by harnessing the sun's rays. Solar energy is produced with large fields of panels transmitting energy to the electrical grid as well as panels installed on the roofs of individual homes and businesses. Solar power produces no emissions directly but presents numerous challenges that have not yet been effectively resolved. These challenges include high costs and intermittency due to its dependence on sunny weather. This intermittency forces other power plants to be put on standby, causing increased emissions elsewhere. Development of the solar industry has been assisted by large taxpayer-funded subsidies and mandates requiring utilities to purchase solar power.

- Wind

Wind power generates energy by harnessing wind with turbines, or windmills. Wind power, like solar, poses yet to be resolved challenges. These challenges include intermittency caused by its dependence on the weather as well as negative impacts on birds, including endangered eagles, which are killed when they fly into the spinning blades. Wind power's development has also been boosted by large scale taxpayer subsidies and mandates.

## *Politics of energy*

Because energy is such an important part of our lives, energy policy has also become one of our century's most talked about political topics. Energy policy decisions are determined based on the interaction of citizens, elected leaders and numerous organized groups, each of whom have energy policy preferences. These organized groups include the following:

- Energy producers

Producers of every major power source sponsor trade organizations. These trade groups urge the adoption of policies that help their businesses continue to operate and expand. These groups can make positive contributions to the energy conversation but can also sometimes take positions reflecting self-interest.

- Business associations

Numerous associations exist to advocate for favorable economic conditions that allow businesses to grow. Manufacturers, construction contractors, farmers, truckers and many others sponsor advocacy groups large and small in addition to chambers of commerce which represent a range of businesses in their communities.

- Consumer advocates

The Coalition of Energy Users is an example of a consumer advocacy organization because CEU represents citizen energy users. From this perspective, CEU advocates policies that produce access to affordable energy and quality jobs for everyday citizens.

- Labor unions

Labor unions exist primarily to represent workers and secure jobs with good pay and benefits. Labor unions therefore prefer policies that create opportunities in their respective industries. Energy producers employ members of unions. Union members in industries such as trucking, construction and manufacturing may not produce energy directly but they likewise have a stake in energy policy because the cost of gasoline and electrical power directly affects their opportunities or lack thereof.

- Civil rights advocates

Energy policies sometimes carry unintended consequences that harm disadvantaged communities. For example, in California, a surcharge was placed on utility bills statewide, and the money collected was used to help people install solar panels on their roofs. Unfortunately, many of those who

could afford to install solar panels lived in wealthy communities, making the surcharge an effective wealth transfer from inner city and rural communities to the wealthy. Civil rights advocates exist to make sure everyone is treated fairly, although not all have the same perspective on how best equality should be achieved.

- Green organizations

The green movement exists to advocate for the natural environment, including fish, birds, insects, animals and plants. Many green organizations advocate for increased use of solar and wind power, despite wind power's apparent negative consequences for birds. Some more extreme members of the green movement want an immediate end to the use of fossil fuels and even commit acts of terrorism to make their views known broadly. However, many other environmentalists are pragmatic people who want to balance concerns about the economy and equity with their concern for the environment.

### *Suggestions for future study*

There is a wealth of perspectives on energy available on the Internet from the types of organizations described above. You can find some of the most objective information available from the Department of Energy's Energy Information Administration at [www.eia.gov](http://www.eia.gov).

# Getting started

You can make a constructive difference in your community by organizing a group that educates fellow citizens on energy policy and advocates for smart policies that grow our economy while protecting our environment. The smartest policies for affordability and job creation are often those that emphasize limited government intervention and maximum consumer choice.

Citizen energy user activism works best when you approach your organization with a non-partisan, single-issue focus. If you define your organization as being affiliated with a particular political movement or organization, you will miss out on opportunities for support from people who agree with your energy policy goals but may not agree with other unrelated aspects of your philosophy. The broader coalition you can build, the more likely you are to be successful.

If you wish to work directly with CEU Foundation on developing and growing a successful organization, feel free to email me at [Eric@Coalitionofenergyusers.org](mailto:Eric@Coalitionofenergyusers.org).

# Legal rudiments

As you form your organization, you should give some thought to what form or forms you want your group to take legally. I am not a lawyer and cannot give legal advice, but offer the following information to help you in this process:

- A 501(c)3 can engage only in activities considered educational. While a 501(c)3 can express a point of view, it may not advocate on legislation and may not endorse candidates. A 501(c)3 can receive tax deductible donations.
- A 501(c)4 can engage in both education and political advocacy. However, contributions to a 501(c)4 are NOT tax deductible and the organization may not endorse candidates
- A political action committee or PAC can endorse candidates and engage in advocacy. Contributions to a PAC are NOT tax deductible.

There is no reason your organization cannot have more than one entity through which to operate. However, if you choose to set up more than one entity, you must take care to set up separate boards of directors and keep the activities of each organization separate and distinct.

It is helpful to consult an attorney when completing this organizing process but it is not absolutely essential. While I found the process confusing and time intensive, I was fortunate to have friends who had already completed the paperwork for their own organizations who I was able to turn to for guidance.

# Structuring your organization

Finding the right people to serve in leadership capacities of your organization is likely to take some time and won't happen overnight.

However, it is worth thinking about the different functions that should be performed and what kind of individuals are best to include in your team. Over time, competent people will step forward to help and you can begin assigning people to take responsibility for different activities.

## *Good candidates for leadership*

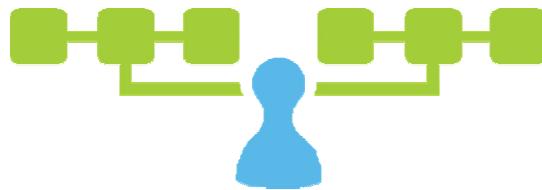
Look for individuals who want to support the vision of your organization, are ethical, have a strong work ethic, a can-do spirit and a positive attitude. If they do not have any of these qualities, you could run into problems later.

If human beings were animals, the best to be a part of your organization's leadership would be **beavers** – beavers have a strong work ethic and can-do spirit. In the natural world, beavers are nature's construction workers, building dams. They enjoy working and are there to focus on getting the job done.

## *Organizing your team*

**The word organization is derived from the Greek word organon, which is itself derived from the better-known word ergon which means "organ" – a compartment for a particular task.**

Therefore, an organization has to have a compartmentalization of tasks. This compartmentalization is best accomplished through the use of an org board, dividing up responsibilities among individuals. Note that an individual may occupy more than one spot on the org board. This will be necessary when your group is small. As the organization grows, more positions may be created to accommodate others who will want to help.



The Coalition of Energy Users includes the following departments:

- Policy
- Communications

- Human Resources
- Promotion and Marketing
- Finance
- Regulatory Affairs
- Leadership Development
- Certification
- Volunteer Coordination

Because “form follows function,” the exact structure of your organization may not be exactly the same, but you will still want to address most of these functions to work effectively. Some of these areas are discussed in further detail in the chapters ahead.

Question: What if I don’t have enough individuals to place in the necessary org board departments?

Answer: The chief executive of the organization (that’s you if you’re willing to accept your mission!) has ultimate responsibility for making sure tasks are completed. Therefore, you will be responsible for filling in where necessary until someone can be placed. Rest assured, when people see the good work your organization is doing, ethical and competent individuals will step forward to help.

# Policy

Affordable and reliable energy brings productivity, clean water, sanitation, food, and industry to our society. This vision is only achieved through free markets and strong property rights.

Seize opportunities to educate members of your community on the critical nature of affordable and reliable energy, and articulate policy mechanisms that best achieve prosperity.

Monitor proposals from government entities for opportunities to act in support or opposition. Local industry groups can be a good resource for opportunities to get involved. Monitoring the activities of local Green groups also can give you an idea of what energy issues may require action from your group.

Some major issues in energy policy that you should consider opportunities to engage in activism are:

- **Cap and trade programs and carbon taxes**

*These policies are effectively energy taxes that kill good jobs, especially in energy intensive fields such as manufacturing and raise the price of gas and consumer goods. Meanwhile, the taxes collected may be designated to political pet projects or to crony capitalists, such as politically connected donors.*

- **Renewable fuel standards**

*Biofuel mandates are “food for fuel” policies that drive up the price of food and feed, exacerbate food shortages in poor countries and damage engines.*

- **Renewable portfolio standards**

*Many states have policies mandating a certain portion of consumer’s electricity be purchased from renewable sources. Definitions of “renewable” vary greatly. These policies drive up energy costs, give an unfair advantage to certain energy producers at the expense of others and harm consumer choice, all while threatening reliability.*

- **Green energy subsidies**

*Subsidies effectively reward companies that have trouble raising money due to their reliance on technologies that cannot compete effectively on a level playing field. Is it smart for taxpayers to invest in companies that can’t attract private capital? No, of course not, why are we even considering this? Furthermore, the money often goes to the politically connected such as in the case of the Solyndra debacle.*

- **Energy production**

*America is currently experiencing an energy boom due to advanced oil extraction technologies such as hydraulic fracturing, or fracking. Technology for offshore production has made more reserves accessible than ever before, and with the advent of horizontal drilling techniques, many*

*rigs which once had to be located offshore can now access energy from onshore. Meanwhile, people who are ideologically opposed to oil and gas production are trying to stop the development of these newly accessible resources by spreading hysteria with scare tactics. New energy production offers the opportunity to create jobs, lower energy costs and enhance national security.*

Fortunately, many states are now reevaluating their failed energy policies as the consequences in terms of lost jobs and rising energy prices begin to be felt. However, hucksters will continue to promote these bad policies knowing that the general public has limited understanding of energy issues allowing them to lie without being challenged.

Appoint an individual with excellent analytical skills to be your Director of Policy and to perform the following functions:

- Provide analysis regarding complex proposals originated by policymaking bodies such as your state legislature, local governments and regulatory agencies
- Communicate with energy producers and sympathetic policy institutes to find out what is needed and/or wanted from your organization
- Provide strategic guidance with respect to successful enactment of policy goals, coalition development and acquisition of financial resources

# Communications

Your communications department, also known as "public relations," has as its basic function the main objective of PR: good works made well known.

Your organization should develop relationships among local news outlets such as TV news stations, local newspapers, ethnic media and blogs. These media relationships can be a valuable resource for promoting your activities.

When you have an event, be sure your media contacts receive a press release. When issues come up that your group is concerned about, pursue opportunities to write a thoughtful op-ed on the situation at hand and have it published in your local paper.

If you have the opportunity to speak with a reporter, be positive and to the point. Talk about the good work your group does and the benefits of the policies you support.



You should choose a pleasant man or woman to be your Director of Communications. This position will be responsible for the following functions:

- Handle public relations functions including representing the organization in a positive manner to the media and the public at large
- Draft press releases and opinion articles for coverage by the media
- Achieve success in the online realm by ensuring website and social media properties are kept up to date.
- Represent the organization at public functions such as Chamber of Commerce meetings

# Promotion and Marketing

In order to maximize your impact, you are going to want to engage in activities which require financial resources. From major actions such as airing commercials, convening conferences, and holding rallies to more minor actions like hosting your website, buying matching tee shirts for your volunteers or holding a bumper sticker campaign all require an outlay of finances.

The Green Movement is a multi-billion dollar powerhouse. The Natural Resources Defense Council alone takes in well over \$100 million in revenue. If you are to effectively fight back, you need to make raising a significant amount of money a top priority.

This is not to say that you cannot be effective on a shoestring budget. However, you should not and need not settle for allowing your capabilities to be limited by finances.

There are numerous ways of bringing in financial resources to your organization and many different avenues through which you can ask for money. Following are a few ideas, some simple and some more complex:

- Set up an online donation system and feature it prominently on your website
- Send email solicitations to your supporters asking for donations. People like to donate to specific projects so be sure to say what you need the money for
- Set up a Partnership program where people make a sustained commitment to the organization, pledging a particular amount every month. You can create tiered levels to accommodate individuals who would like to participate in a greater way
- Ask small and large businesses in your area if they would be willing to help you with a donation
- Locate likeminded foundations with grant programs and apply
- Offer businesses event sponsorship opportunities. Being listed as a sponsor allows a business to receive free advertising while also making a positive difference
- Implement an incentive program among your leadership team that rewards individuals who successfully acquire donations
- End in-person meetings with an opportunity to give

You should appoint an industrious individual to be your Director of Promotion and Marketing, and this person's responsibilities should include the following functions:

- Coordinates with other members of your leadership team, supporters and members of the public to gain widespread positive recognition of the organization
- Develop new and innovative ways of increasing email and social media following and expanding number of financial supporters
- Organize fundraising events to promote the organization mission and inspire new donors

# Field

## *Outreach, volunteer coordination and activism*

Just as political campaigns, have staff who work “field,” your organization should have a field division to communicate with supporters in the area over which you have responsibility.

Supporters will lose interest if you don’t communicate with them or offer them opportunities to be involved. Just as importantly, you need your supporters to be an effective advocate for affordable energy and job creation.

Supporters are a resource for the following activities and more:

- Volunteers to help at events
- Legislative action through organizing supporters to testify at hearings and contact their representatives
- Sending letters to the editor to local newspaper
- Making donations to your organization

As discussed above, you must stay in communication with your supporters so they’re apprised of your activities and the latest developments in the issue areas with which you are concerned.

Technology has made the widespread dissemination of information far easier and cheaper than it was a generation ago. The following web-based platforms are essential to your ability to effectively communicate with your field:

- Engaging, interactive and up-to-date website
- Social media presence – Facebook is essential because it is the most widely used but you may also choose to communicate through other platforms in addition to Facebook such as Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram and Pinterest
- Mass email distribution system such as MailChimp or Constant Contact

The activities of the field division are extremely important for the greater goal of creating a citizenry which is informed on energy issues. When you build up a large email list and strong social media following, you will gain the ability to mobilize large numbers of people on behalf of smarter policy.

## OK I want to do this! What do I do next?

Awesome! Send an email to [Eric@Coalitionofenergyusers.org](mailto:Eric@Coalitionofenergyusers.org). The Coalition of Energy Users Foundation will work with you directly to help you start a successful citizen's energy advocacy organization in your community.

By becoming an advocate for citizen energy consumers, you are taking a positive step toward making energy more affordable and more reliable and therefore creating a more prosperous society for all citizens.

# Conclusions

Energy policy impacts our daily lives both individually and as a society. The cost of fuel and electricity affects how much you and your family pay for things you buy every day and helps determine whether or not good job opportunities are available.

As a rising tide lifts all ships, smart energy policy can uplift disadvantaged communities, provide resources for services such as education and public safety and enhance American energy security.

Unfortunately, counterproductive policies sometimes make it into law just because citizens lack an objective understanding of the issues at hand.

By starting a citizen's energy group in your state or community, you can be part of the solution. Your involvement will help your fellow citizens to become more informed and to gain the tools to effectively engage in the political process on behalf of access to jobs and affordable power.

And if you need any help, the Coalition of Energy Users Foundation is here to work with you! We want you and other informed consumers across the country to be successful in creating literally a brighter tomorrow!

## About the author



Eric Eisenhammer is the founder of the Coalition of Energy Users, a California-based nonprofit advocating for access to affordable energy and quality jobs and Founder of CEU Foundation, an education organization for objective discussions on energy and jobs. He has been interviewed by numerous media outlets and testified before California legislative committees speaking on behalf of energy consumers.

Eric also is a small business owner in the field of community outreach and web solutions. His clients have included statewide political campaigns, community groups, churches and other small businesses.

Eric first got involved in politics volunteering on the gubernatorial campaign of his local state representative and then served as a staff member in the State Capitol. In addition to energy policy, Eric is also knowledgeable about tax and public safety issues.

He holds a Master's in Public Policy and Administration from California State University, Sacramento and a Bachelors of Science degree in Business Administration with an emphasis in Finance from the California State University, Northridge.

You can contact Eric at [Eric@Coalitionofenergyusers.org](mailto:Eric@Coalitionofenergyusers.org).



**COALITION OF ENERGY USERS FOUNDATION**

## **How to start a citizen's energy group**

*By Eric Eisenhammer*

# **Energy Activism Manual**

COALITION OF ENERGY USERS FOUNDATION

# Energy Activism Manual

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# Introduction

**A**ccess to reliable and affordable power is critical to maintaining and expanding a prosperous American economy. In fact, energy is so critical that the effective development of coal as a power source played a principal role in spurring the Industrial Revolution in the 1880's.

The past century has brought the creation or advancement of additional sources of abundant, reliable and affordable power such as oil and gas, nuclear and large scale hydro. The glittering lights and casino palaces of Las Vegas owe their existence just as much to Hoover Dam as to Nevada's legalized gambling.

Energy advancement is the single biggest factor in giving human beings the best quality of life in history. Practically everything we see around us is fueled by energy. Factories, automobiles, televisions, smart phones and computers are all powered by energy. Innovations we use every day and that we don't necessarily associate with energy – including plastics, polyester, contact lenses and capsules holding medicine – are derived from petroleum.



In fact, a society's life expectancy and quality of life are directly related to the amount of energy its people are able to access and use.

Discredited British philosopher and economist Thomas Malthus, who predicted in the late 1700's that the world would soon face catastrophic mass starvations because of an inability to feed the growing population, has been definitively proven wrong in no small part because of energy.

Today, our resources continue to offer opportunity. Advanced oil extraction technologies have dramatically expanded the amount of energy that can be accessed safely and responsibly. In locations where in the recent past many wells may have been needed, now only one is needed – an advancement that has greatly reduced the environmental impact of energy production.

Advances in hydraulic fracturing, or "fracking" have made America an energy exporter, enhancing our national security and standing in the world., creating good jobs and lowering utility bills. Reduced energy costs resulting from natural gas produced

through fracking are creating a renaissance in American manufacturing – many factories are again humming and we are making real things.

Technology also has overcome many of the obstacles that once posed a challenge to offshore energy development. Now, offshore energy resources can sometimes be extracted using rigs onshore.

America's CO<sub>2</sub> emissions have dropped to their lowest level in 20 years fueled by new supplies of clean and affordable natural gas. President Obama has said, "After years of talking about it, we're finally poised to control our own energy future. We produce more oil at home than we have in 15 years."

Unfortunately, the general public lacks an accurate understanding of energy issues. *Scientific American* recently published the results of a poll finding most Americans are totally uninformed when it comes to energy: Most like natural gas, but don't know it comes from fracking (which they say they don't like). They also wrongly think Saudi Arabia is our biggest source of oil imports (the right answer is Canada).

With so many citizens either uninformed or misinformed when it comes to energy, the result has been misguided and counterproductive policy that harms not only our economy, but our environment. Misplaced enthusiasm over costly and unreliable wind and solar power has resulted in cronyism and wasted billions of taxpayer dollars, such as in the Solyndra debacle, and also killed thousands of birds, including endangered eagles.

That's why your activism is so important. As our Founders understood, an educated citizenry is necessary to the preservation of freedom. As an organized force, energy consumers can set the record straight when deceptive rhetoric is presented; defend jobs and economic growth and work proactively to enact smarter regulatory policies that can free our economy to rise to greater heights.

# About CEU Foundation

The Coalition of Energy Users Foundation is a California-based nonprofit educational organization that supports objective discussions on energy, jobs and the environment.

CEU Foundation was established by the Coalition of Energy Users, an advocacy-oriented organization founded in 2010 that has saved California energy consumers billions of dollars through its efforts including the defeat of Solyndra-style subsidies. CEU Foundation engages in educational efforts including holding community forums and the development of online energy education.

This manual was produced as a national outreach designed to equip citizens nationwide to speak as an effective voice for energy consumers in their state and community.

As in California, many people in your own state or community lack an objective understanding of energy issues.

I sometimes talk with citizens who are under the false impression that solar energy is free because it comes from the sun! (solar power is actually one of the most costly energy sources according to official Department of Energy data.)

By getting involved, you can be part of the solution – your involvement can help save and create jobs, improve the economy and environment and enhance consumer access to more affordable power and fuel.

# Energy basics

## *Background*

**Definition of energy: power derived from the utilization of physical or chemical resources, esp. to provide light and heat or to work machines.**

Man's first use of energy occurred in prehistoric caveman days when people began harnessing fire to light their homes and cook. Researchers believe this breakthrough occurred in Africa early in human history. When a brush fire or forest fire occurred by the strike of lightning, an innovative caveman was inspired to capture one of the embers and keep it burning continually for his society's use. Most primitive societies had a person designated "keeper of the flame," who was responsible for keeping a fire burning.

Some of the first energy innovations beyond burning wood occurred in China. In 2000 BC the Chinese began burning coal to cook and heat their homes. Around the year 1 AD, the Chinese refined petroleum as a fuel for lamps.

In 200 AD, Europeans discovered how to harness hydroelectric power, building wheels in rivers

Windmills were invented in Persia around 1000 AD. In the 1600's to 1700s Europeans further refined technology for burning and developing coal. These innovations made coal civilization's leading source of energy. Coal made abundant, reliable and affordable energy available for the first time, leading to the Industrial Revolution, which improved people's lives tremendously.

In the early 1800's, the first oil and natural gas wells were drilled in the United States, in New York and Pennsylvania.

In 1860, the first solar panel was invented in France by focusing a mirror on the sun to turn water into steam.

In 1885, Germany's Karl Benz (the namesake of Mercedes Benz cars) invented the first gasoline powered automobile. Henry Ford then introduced his first gas powered car in 1896.

The invention of nuclear power brought the first nuclear reactors to Russia and the United States in the 1950's.

Today, all of these energy sources comprise part of the modern energy supply. Researchers continuously work to make each of these technologies better. Their work results in constant improvements to the way we produce energy, making production cleaner, more affordable, safer and more reliable.

## *Where your energy comes from*

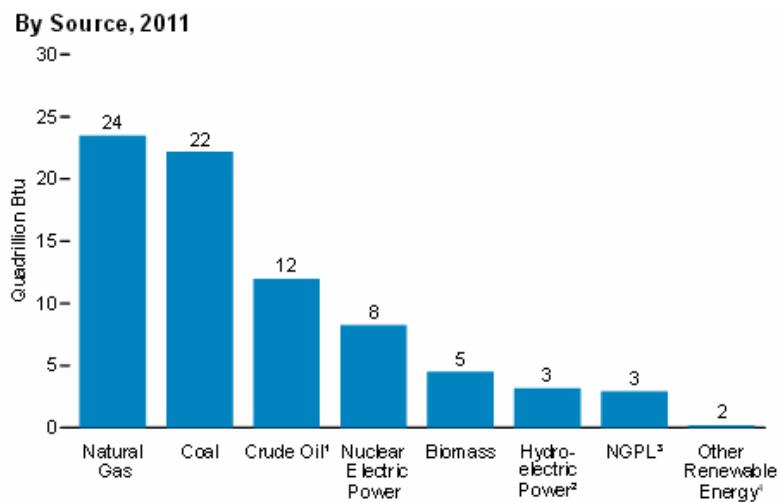
The electricity we use on a daily basis to light our homes, cook and power a multitude of electronic devices usually comes from a power plant (unless you have some type of generator of your own), where it is generated and then transmitted across power lines. Among the types of power plants your energy may come from include:

- Natural gas
- Coal
- Nuclear
- Hydroelectric
- Solar
- Wind

The gasoline you fill up with at the gas station is refined from crude oil in refineries. A national renewable fuel mandate requires refineries to mix fuel with plant-based biofuel additives such as ethanol, which is produced from corn.

Natural gas, coal and oil represent about three quarters of the energy consumed in the US. Nuclear power represents an additional 10% of American energy production. Solar and wind power comprise less than 3% of our nation's energy supply, despite enthusiastic government efforts to subsidize and mandate these power sources.

While the precise energy mix, or portfolio, varies by state, the following chart shows where energy comes from nationally:



<sup>1</sup> Includes lease condensate.

<sup>2</sup> Conventional hydroelectric power.

<sup>3</sup> Natural gas plant liquids.

Source: <http://www.eia.gov/totalenergy/data/annual/pdf/aer.pdf>

## *Types of energy*

Does it matter how our energy is produced? YES! It matters a great deal. How our energy is produced impacts the price of your utility bill, the price you pay at the pump and what job opportunities are available for you and your family. Here's a little more detail on various major energy sources.

- Natural gas

Natural gas, not to be confused with gasoline, is a naturally occurring gas composed of methane and other hydrocarbons. Natural gas is the cleanest fossil fuel, and has become available in huge new supplies due to the development of advanced extraction technologies such as hydraulic fracturing or "fracking," and horizontal drilling.

Besides being the cleanest fossil fuel, natural gas is currently also the most affordable. Production of this energy source has helped decrease American greenhouse gas emissions, create thousands of new jobs and revitalize manufacturing with a new supply of abundant and affordable power. Natural gas is currently America's leading energy source and generates power in power plants across the country.

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Hydroelectric power, as its name suggests, is energy derived from water. Hydroelectric power is produced through the use of turbines placed by fast moving water. Large dams can produce tremendous amounts of clean, affordable power. However, not all locations present geographical conditions that make building large dams possible – they generally require mountainous terrain and large rivers to work best. An additional benefit of the construction of hydroelectric dams is the creation of reservoirs, which store water for use by our farms and communities and provide flood control.

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Energy policies sometimes carry unintended consequences that harm disadvantaged communities. For example, in California, a surcharge was placed on utility bills statewide, and the money collected was used to help people install solar panels on their roofs. Unfortunately, many of those who

could afford to install solar panels lived in wealthy communities, making the surcharge an effective wealth transfer from inner city and rural communities to the wealthy. Civil rights advocates exist to make sure everyone is treated fairly, although not all have the same perspective on how best equality should be achieved.

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The green movement exists to advocate for the natural environment, including fish, birds, insects, animals and plants. Many green organizations advocate for increased use of solar and wind power, despite wind power's apparent negative consequences for birds. Some more extreme members of the green movement want an immediate end to the use of fossil fuels and even commit acts of terrorism to make their views known broadly. However, many other environmentalists are pragmatic people who want to balance concerns about the economy and equity with their concern for the environment.

### *Suggestions for future study*

There is a wealth of perspectives on energy available on the Internet from the types of organizations described above. You can find some of the most objective information available from the Department of Energy's Energy Information Administration at [www.eia.gov](http://www.eia.gov).

# Getting started

You can make a constructive difference in your community by organizing a group that educates fellow citizens on energy policy and advocates for smart policies that grow our economy while protecting our environment. The smartest policies for affordability and job creation are often those that emphasize limited government intervention and maximum consumer choice.

Citizen energy user activism works best when you approach your organization with a non-partisan, single-issue focus. If you define your organization as being affiliated with a particular political movement or organization, you will miss out on opportunities for support from people who agree with your energy policy goals but may not agree with other unrelated aspects of your philosophy. The broader coalition you can build, the more likely you are to be successful.

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- A 501(c)4 can engage in both education and political advocacy. However, contributions to a 501(c)4 are NOT tax deductible and the organization may not endorse candidates
- A political action committee or PAC can endorse candidates and engage in advocacy. Contributions to a PAC are NOT tax deductible.

There is no reason your organization cannot have more than one entity through which to operate. However, if you choose to set up more than one entity, you must take care to set up separate boards of directors and keep the activities of each organization separate and distinct.

It is helpful to consult an attorney when completing this organizing process but it is not absolutely essential. While I found the process confusing and time intensive, I was fortunate to have friends who had already completed the paperwork for their own organizations who I was able to turn to for guidance.

# Structuring your organization

Finding the right people to serve in leadership capacities of your organization is likely to take some time and won't happen overnight.

However, it is worth thinking about the different functions that should be performed and what kind of individuals are best to include in your team. Over time, competent people will step forward to help and you can begin assigning people to take responsibility for different activities.

## *Good candidates for leadership*

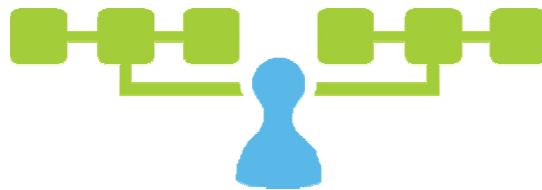
Look for individuals who want to support the vision of your organization, are ethical, have a strong work ethic, a can-do spirit and a positive attitude. If they do not have any of these qualities, you could run into problems later.

If human beings were animals, the best to be a part of your organization's leadership would be **beavers** – beavers have a strong work ethic and can-do spirit. In the natural world, beavers are nature's construction workers, building dams. They enjoy working and are there to focus on getting the job done.

## *Organizing your team*

**The word organization is derived from the Greek word organon, which is itself derived from the better-known word ergon which means "organ" – a compartment for a particular task.**

Therefore, an organization has to have a compartmentalization of tasks. This compartmentalization is best accomplished through the use of an org board, dividing up responsibilities among individuals. Note that an individual may occupy more than one spot on the org board. This will be necessary when your group is small. As the organization grows, more positions may be created to accommodate others who will want to help.



The Coalition of Energy Users includes the following departments:

- Policy
- Communications

- Human Resources
- Promotion and Marketing
- Finance
- Regulatory Affairs
- Leadership Development
- Certification
- Volunteer Coordination

Because “form follows function,” the exact structure of your organization may not be exactly the same, but you will still want to address most of these functions to work effectively. Some of these areas are discussed in further detail in the chapters ahead.

Question: What if I don’t have enough individuals to place in the necessary org board departments?

Answer: The chief executive of the organization (that’s you if you’re willing to accept your mission!) has ultimate responsibility for making sure tasks are completed. Therefore, you will be responsible for filling in where necessary until someone can be placed. Rest assured, when people see the good work your organization is doing, ethical and competent individuals will step forward to help.

# Policy

Affordable and reliable energy brings productivity, clean water, sanitation, food, and industry to our society. This vision is only achieved through free markets and strong property rights.

Seize opportunities to educate members of your community on the critical nature of affordable and reliable energy, and articulate policy mechanisms that best achieve prosperity.

Monitor proposals from government entities for opportunities to act in support or opposition. Local industry groups can be a good resource for opportunities to get involved. Monitoring the activities of local Green groups also can give you an idea of what energy issues may require action from your group.

Some major issues in energy policy that you should consider opportunities to engage in activism are:

- **Cap and trade programs and carbon taxes**

*These policies are effectively energy taxes that kill good jobs, especially in energy intensive fields such as manufacturing and raise the price of gas and consumer goods. Meanwhile, the taxes collected may be designated to political pet projects or to crony capitalists, such as politically connected donors.*

- **Renewable fuel standards**

*Biofuel mandates are “food for fuel” policies that drive up the price of food and feed, exacerbate food shortages in poor countries and damage engines.*

- **Renewable portfolio standards**

*Many states have policies mandating a certain portion of consumer’s electricity be purchased from renewable sources. Definitions of “renewable” vary greatly. These policies drive up energy costs, give an unfair advantage to certain energy producers at the expense of others and harm consumer choice, all while threatening reliability.*

- **Green energy subsidies**

*Subsidies effectively reward companies that have trouble raising money due to their reliance on technologies that cannot compete effectively on a level playing field. Is it smart for taxpayers to invest in companies that can’t attract private capital? No, of course not, why are we even considering this? Furthermore, the money often goes to the politically connected such as in the case of the Solyndra debacle.*

- **Energy production**

*America is currently experiencing an energy boom due to advanced oil extraction technologies such as hydraulic fracturing, or fracking. Technology for offshore production has made more reserves accessible than ever before, and with the advent of horizontal drilling techniques, many*

*rigs which once had to be located offshore can now access energy from onshore. Meanwhile, people who are ideologically opposed to oil and gas production are trying to stop the development of these newly accessible resources by spreading hysteria with scare tactics. New energy production offers the opportunity to create jobs, lower energy costs and enhance national security.*

Fortunately, many states are now reevaluating their failed energy policies as the consequences in terms of lost jobs and rising energy prices begin to be felt. However, hucksters will continue to promote these bad policies knowing that the general public has limited understanding of energy issues allowing them to lie without being challenged.

Appoint an individual with excellent analytical skills to be your Director of Policy and to perform the following functions:

- Provide analysis regarding complex proposals originated by policymaking bodies such as your state legislature, local governments and regulatory agencies
- Communicate with energy producers and sympathetic policy institutes to find out what is needed and/or wanted from your organization
- Provide strategic guidance with respect to successful enactment of policy goals, coalition development and acquisition of financial resources

# Communications

Your communications department, also known as "public relations," has as its basic function the main objective of PR: good works made well known.

Your organization should develop relationships among local news outlets such as TV news stations, local newspapers, ethnic media and blogs. These media relationships can be a valuable resource for promoting your activities.

When you have an event, be sure your media contacts receive a press release. When issues come up that your group is concerned about, pursue opportunities to write a thoughtful op-ed on the situation at hand and have it published in your local paper.

If you have the opportunity to speak with a reporter, be positive and to the point. Talk about the good work your group does and the benefits of the policies you support.



You should choose a pleasant man or woman to be your Director of Communications. This position will be responsible for the following functions:

- Handle public relations functions including representing the organization in a positive manner to the media and the public at large
- Draft press releases and opinion articles for coverage by the media
- Achieve success in the online realm by ensuring website and social media properties are kept up to date.
- Represent the organization at public functions such as Chamber of Commerce meetings

# Promotion and Marketing

In order to maximize your impact, you are going to want to engage in activities which require financial resources. From major actions such as airing commercials, convening conferences, and holding rallies to more minor actions like hosting your website, buying matching tee shirts for your volunteers or holding a bumper sticker campaign all require an outlay of finances.

The Green Movement is a multi-billion dollar powerhouse. The Natural Resources Defense Council alone takes in well over \$100 million in revenue. If you are to effectively fight back, you need to make raising a significant amount of money a top priority.

This is not to say that you cannot be effective on a shoestring budget. However, you should not and need not settle for allowing your capabilities to be limited by finances.

There are numerous ways of bringing in financial resources to your organization and many different avenues through which you can ask for money. Following are a few ideas, some simple and some more complex:

- Set up an online donation system and feature it prominently on your website
- Send email solicitations to your supporters asking for donations. People like to donate to specific projects so be sure to say what you need the money for
- Set up a Partnership program where people make a sustained commitment to the organization, pledging a particular amount every month. You can create tiered levels to accommodate individuals who would like to participate in a greater way
- Ask small and large businesses in your area if they would be willing to help you with a donation
- Locate likeminded foundations with grant programs and apply
- Offer businesses event sponsorship opportunities. Being listed as a sponsor allows a business to receive free advertising while also making a positive difference
- Implement an incentive program among your leadership team that rewards individuals who successfully acquire donations
- End in-person meetings with an opportunity to give

You should appoint an industrious individual to be your Director of Promotion and Marketing, and this person's responsibilities should include the following functions:

- Coordinates with other members of your leadership team, supporters and members of the public to gain widespread positive recognition of the organization
- Develop new and innovative ways of increasing email and social media following and expanding number of financial supporters
- Organize fundraising events to promote the organization mission and inspire new donors

# Field

## *Outreach, volunteer coordination and activism*

Just as political campaigns, have staff who work “field,” your organization should have a field division to communicate with supporters in the area over which you have responsibility.

Supporters will lose interest if you don’t communicate with them or offer them opportunities to be involved. Just as importantly, you need your supporters to be an effective advocate for affordable energy and job creation.

Supporters are a resource for the following activities and more:

- Volunteers to help at events
- Legislative action through organizing supporters to testify at hearings and contact their representatives
- Sending letters to the editor to local newspaper
- Making donations to your organization

As discussed above, you must stay in communication with your supporters so they’re apprised of your activities and the latest developments in the issue areas with which you are concerned.

Technology has made the widespread dissemination of information far easier and cheaper than it was a generation ago. The following web-based platforms are essential to your ability to effectively communicate with your field:

- Engaging, interactive and up-to-date website
- Social media presence – Facebook is essential because it is the most widely used but you may also choose to communicate through other platforms in addition to Facebook such as Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram and Pinterest
- Mass email distribution system such as MailChimp or Constant Contact

The activities of the field division are extremely important for the greater goal of creating a citizenry which is informed on energy issues. When you build up a large email list and strong social media following, you will gain the ability to mobilize large numbers of people on behalf of smarter policy.

## OK I want to do this! What do I do next?

Awesome! Send an email to [Eric@Coalitionofenergyusers.org](mailto:Eric@Coalitionofenergyusers.org). The Coalition of Energy Users Foundation will work with you directly to help you start a successful citizen's energy advocacy organization in your community.

By becoming an advocate for citizen energy consumers, you are taking a positive step toward making energy more affordable and more reliable and therefore creating a more prosperous society for all citizens.

# Conclusions

Energy policy impacts our daily lives both individually and as a society. The cost of fuel and electricity affects how much you and your family pay for things you buy every day and helps determine whether or not good job opportunities are available.

As a rising tide lifts all ships, smart energy policy can uplift disadvantaged communities, provide resources for services such as education and public safety and enhance American energy security.

Unfortunately, counterproductive policies sometimes make it into law just because citizens lack an objective understanding of the issues at hand.

By starting a citizen's energy group in your state or community, you can be part of the solution. Your involvement will help your fellow citizens to become more informed and to gain the tools to effectively engage in the political process on behalf of access to jobs and affordable power.

And if you need any help, the Coalition of Energy Users Foundation is here to work with you! We want you and other informed consumers across the country to be successful in creating literally a brighter tomorrow!

## About the author



Eric Eisenhammer is the founder of the Coalition of Energy Users, a California-based nonprofit advocating for access to affordable energy and quality jobs and Founder of CEU Foundation, an education organization for objective discussions on energy and jobs. He has been interviewed by numerous media outlets and testified before California legislative committees speaking on behalf of energy consumers.

Eric also is a small business owner in the field of community outreach and web solutions. His clients have included statewide political campaigns, community groups, churches and other small businesses.

Eric first got involved in politics volunteering on the gubernatorial campaign of his local state representative and then served as a staff member in the State Capitol. In addition to energy policy, Eric is also knowledgeable about tax and public safety issues.

He holds a Master's in Public Policy and Administration from California State University, Sacramento and a Bachelors of Science degree in Business Administration with an emphasis in Finance from the California State University, Northridge.

You can contact Eric at [Eric@Coalitionofenergyusers.org](mailto:Eric@Coalitionofenergyusers.org).



**COALITION OF ENERGY USERS FOUNDATION**

## **How to start a citizen's energy group**

*By Eric Eisenhammer*

# **Energy Activism Manual**

COALITION OF ENERGY USERS FOUNDATION

# Energy Activism Manual

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# Introduction

**A**ccess to reliable and affordable power is critical to maintaining and expanding a prosperous American economy. In fact, energy is so critical that the effective development of coal as a power source played a principal role in spurring the Industrial Revolution in the 1880's.

The past century has brought the creation or advancement of additional sources of abundant, reliable and affordable power such as oil and gas, nuclear and large scale hydro. The glittering lights and casino palaces of Las Vegas owe their existence just as much to Hoover Dam as to Nevada's legalized gambling.

Energy advancement is the single biggest factor in giving human beings the best quality of life in history. Practically everything we see around us is fueled by energy. Factories, automobiles, televisions, smart phones and computers are all powered by energy. Innovations we use every day and that we don't necessarily associate with energy – including plastics, polyester, contact lenses and capsules holding medicine – are derived from petroleum.



In fact, a society's life expectancy and quality of life are directly related to the amount of energy its people are able to access and use.

Discredited British philosopher and economist Thomas Malthus, who predicted in the late 1700's that the world would soon face catastrophic mass starvations because of an inability to feed the growing population, has been definitively proven wrong in no small part because of energy.

Today, our resources continue to offer opportunity. Advanced oil extraction technologies have dramatically expanded the amount of energy that can be accessed safely and responsibly. In locations where in the recent past many wells may have been needed, now only one is needed – an advancement that has greatly reduced the environmental impact of energy production.

Advances in hydraulic fracturing, or "fracking" have made America an energy exporter, enhancing our national security and standing in the world., creating good jobs and lowering utility bills. Reduced energy costs resulting from natural gas produced

through fracking are creating a renaissance in American manufacturing – many factories are again humming and we are making real things.

Technology also has overcome many of the obstacles that once posed a challenge to offshore energy development. Now, offshore energy resources can sometimes be extracted using rigs onshore.

America's CO<sub>2</sub> emissions have dropped to their lowest level in 20 years fueled by new supplies of clean and affordable natural gas. President Obama has said, "After years of talking about it, we're finally poised to control our own energy future. We produce more oil at home than we have in 15 years."

Unfortunately, the general public lacks an accurate understanding of energy issues. *Scientific American* recently published the results of a poll finding most Americans are totally uninformed when it comes to energy: Most like natural gas, but don't know it comes from fracking (which they say they don't like). They also wrongly think Saudi Arabia is our biggest source of oil imports (the right answer is Canada).

With so many citizens either uninformed or misinformed when it comes to energy, the result has been misguided and counterproductive policy that harms not only our economy, but our environment. Misplaced enthusiasm over costly and unreliable wind and solar power has resulted in cronyism and wasted billions of taxpayer dollars, such as in the Solyndra debacle, and also killed thousands of birds, including endangered eagles.

That's why your activism is so important. As our Founders understood, an educated citizenry is necessary to the preservation of freedom. As an organized force, energy consumers can set the record straight when deceptive rhetoric is presented; defend jobs and economic growth and work proactively to enact smarter regulatory policies that can free our economy to rise to greater heights.

# About CEU Foundation

The Coalition of Energy Users Foundation is a California-based nonprofit educational organization that supports objective discussions on energy, jobs and the environment.

CEU Foundation was established by the Coalition of Energy Users, an advocacy-oriented organization founded in 2010 that has saved California energy consumers billions of dollars through its efforts including the defeat of Solyndra-style subsidies. CEU Foundation engages in educational efforts including holding community forums and the development of online energy education.

This manual was produced as a national outreach designed to equip citizens nationwide to speak as an effective voice for energy consumers in their state and community.

As in California, many people in your own state or community lack an objective understanding of energy issues.

I sometimes talk with citizens who are under the false impression that solar energy is free because it comes from the sun! (solar power is actually one of the most costly energy sources according to official Department of Energy data.)

By getting involved, you can be part of the solution – your involvement can help save and create jobs, improve the economy and environment and enhance consumer access to more affordable power and fuel.

# Energy basics

## *Background*

**Definition of energy: power derived from the utilization of physical or chemical resources, esp. to provide light and heat or to work machines.**

Man's first use of energy occurred in prehistoric caveman days when people began harnessing fire to light their homes and cook. Researchers believe this breakthrough occurred in Africa early in human history. When a brush fire or forest fire occurred by the strike of lightning, an innovative caveman was inspired to capture one of the embers and keep it burning continually for his society's use. Most primitive societies had a person designated "keeper of the flame," who was responsible for keeping a fire burning.

Some of the first energy innovations beyond burning wood occurred in China. In 2000 BC the Chinese began burning coal to cook and heat their homes. Around the year 1 AD, the Chinese refined petroleum as a fuel for lamps.

In 200 AD, Europeans discovered how to harness hydroelectric power, building wheels in rivers

Windmills were invented in Persia around 1000 AD. In the 1600's to 1700s Europeans further refined technology for burning and developing coal. These innovations made coal civilization's leading source of energy. Coal made abundant, reliable and affordable energy available for the first time, leading to the Industrial Revolution, which improved people's lives tremendously.

In the early 1800's, the first oil and natural gas wells were drilled in the United States, in New York and Pennsylvania.

In 1860, the first solar panel was invented in France by focusing a mirror on the sun to turn water into steam.

In 1885, Germany's Karl Benz (the namesake of Mercedes Benz cars) invented the first gasoline powered automobile. Henry Ford then introduced his first gas powered car in 1896.

The invention of nuclear power brought the first nuclear reactors to Russia and the United States in the 1950's.

Today, all of these energy sources comprise part of the modern energy supply. Researchers continuously work to make each of these technologies better. Their work results in constant improvements to the way we produce energy, making production cleaner, more affordable, safer and more reliable.

## *Where your energy comes from*

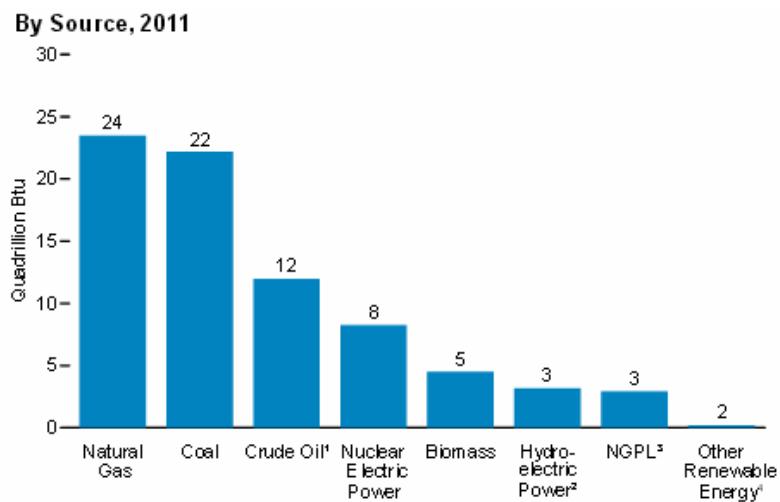
The electricity we use on a daily basis to light our homes, cook and power a multitude of electronic devices usually comes from a power plant (unless you have some type of generator of your own), where it is generated and then transmitted across power lines. Among the types of power plants your energy may come from include:

- Natural gas
- Coal
- Nuclear
- Hydroelectric
- Solar
- Wind

The gasoline you fill up with at the gas station is refined from crude oil in refineries. A national renewable fuel mandate requires refineries to mix fuel with plant-based biofuel additives such as ethanol, which is produced from corn.

Natural gas, coal and oil represent about three quarters of the energy consumed in the US. Nuclear power represents an additional 10% of American energy production. Solar and wind power comprise less than 3% of our nation's energy supply, despite enthusiastic government efforts to subsidize and mandate these power sources.

While the precise energy mix, or portfolio, varies by state, the following chart shows where energy comes from nationally:



<sup>1</sup> Includes lease condensate.

<sup>2</sup> Conventional hydroelectric power.

<sup>3</sup> Natural gas plant liquids.

Source: <http://www.eia.gov/totalenergy/data/annual/pdf/aer.pdf>

## *Types of energy*

Does it matter how our energy is produced? YES! It matters a great deal. How our energy is produced impacts the price of your utility bill, the price you pay at the pump and what job opportunities are available for you and your family. Here's a little more detail on various major energy sources.

- Natural gas

Natural gas, not to be confused with gasoline, is a naturally occurring gas composed of methane and other hydrocarbons. Natural gas is the cleanest fossil fuel, and has become available in huge new supplies due to the development of advanced extraction technologies such as hydraulic fracturing or "fracking," and horizontal drilling.

Besides being the cleanest fossil fuel, natural gas is currently also the most affordable. Production of this energy source has helped decrease American greenhouse gas emissions, create thousands of new jobs and revitalize manufacturing with a new supply of abundant and affordable power. Natural gas is currently America's leading energy source and generates power in power plants across the country.

- Coal

Coal is composed of combustible black or brown rocks, formed from carbonized plant matter. Coal is usually found underground and exists in vast supplies in the US. Coal is an affordable, abundant and reliable power source and generates almost half of our country's electricity. Continuing improvements in technology have made coal cleaner to use and safer to extract.

- Oil

Oil is a thick liquid derived from petroleum. Like natural gas, new technologies have greatly increased the amount of oil that can be safely and economically extracted. Oil is refined into gasoline in refineries, where laws often require it be mixed with biofuels. Refined fuel is then transported to gas stations, where we use it to power our cars and trucks.

- Biofuels

Biofuels are fuels derived from plant sources such as corn and sugar. These fuels are mandated by the government and their production is subsidized with

taxpayer dollars. Biofuels are intended to help the environment, but have also led to unintended consequences such as food shortages, increases in the price of livestock feed and harm to people's engines.

- Nuclear

Nuclear power is a type of energy produced through an ongoing atomic reaction taking place in a reactor. Nuclear power is affordable, reliable and can produce a lot of power. Some countries, such as France, rely on nuclear power for the bulk of their energy generation. However, despite continuous improvements in safety, nuclear power still presents the risk of catastrophe in the event of a meltdown.

- Hydroelectric

Hydroelectric power, as its name suggests, is energy derived from water. Hydroelectric power is produced through the use of turbines placed by fast moving water. Large dams can produce tremendous amounts of clean, affordable power. However, not all locations present geographical conditions that make building large dams possible – they generally require mountainous terrain and large rivers to work best. An additional benefit of the construction of hydroelectric dams is the creation of reservoirs, which store water for use by our farms and communities and provide flood control.

- Solar

Solar power is generated by harnessing the sun's rays. Solar energy is produced with large fields of panels transmitting energy to the electrical grid as well as panels installed on the roofs of individual homes and businesses. Solar power produces no emissions directly but presents numerous challenges that have not yet been effectively resolved. These challenges include high costs and intermittency due to its dependence on sunny weather. This intermittency forces other power plants to be put on standby, causing increased emissions elsewhere. Development of the solar industry has been assisted by large taxpayer-funded subsidies and mandates requiring utilities to purchase solar power.

- Wind

Wind power generates energy by harnessing wind with turbines, or windmills. Wind power, like solar, poses yet to be resolved challenges. These challenges include intermittency caused by its dependence on the weather as well as negative impacts on birds, including endangered eagles, which are killed when they fly into the spinning blades. Wind power's development has also been boosted by large scale taxpayer subsidies and mandates.

## *Politics of energy*

Because energy is such an important part of our lives, energy policy has also become one of our century's most talked about political topics. Energy policy decisions are determined based on the interaction of citizens, elected leaders and numerous organized groups, each of whom have energy policy preferences. These organized groups include the following:

- Energy producers

Producers of every major power source sponsor trade organizations. These trade groups urge the adoption of policies that help their businesses continue to operate and expand. These groups can make positive contributions to the energy conversation but can also sometimes take positions reflecting self-interest.

- Business associations

Numerous associations exist to advocate for favorable economic conditions that allow businesses to grow. Manufacturers, construction contractors, farmers, truckers and many others sponsor advocacy groups large and small in addition to chambers of commerce which represent a range of businesses in their communities.

- Consumer advocates

The Coalition of Energy Users is an example of a consumer advocacy organization because CEU represents citizen energy users. From this perspective, CEU advocates policies that produce access to affordable energy and quality jobs for everyday citizens.

- Labor unions

Labor unions exist primarily to represent workers and secure jobs with good pay and benefits. Labor unions therefore prefer policies that create opportunities in their respective industries. Energy producers employ members of unions. Union members in industries such as trucking, construction and manufacturing may not produce energy directly but they likewise have a stake in energy policy because the cost of gasoline and electrical power directly affects their opportunities or lack thereof.

- Civil rights advocates

Energy policies sometimes carry unintended consequences that harm disadvantaged communities. For example, in California, a surcharge was placed on utility bills statewide, and the money collected was used to help people install solar panels on their roofs. Unfortunately, many of those who

could afford to install solar panels lived in wealthy communities, making the surcharge an effective wealth transfer from inner city and rural communities to the wealthy. Civil rights advocates exist to make sure everyone is treated fairly, although not all have the same perspective on how best equality should be achieved.

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### *Suggestions for future study*

There is a wealth of perspectives on energy available on the Internet from the types of organizations described above. You can find some of the most objective information available from the Department of Energy's Energy Information Administration at [www.eia.gov](http://www.eia.gov).

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Citizen energy user activism works best when you approach your organization with a non-partisan, single-issue focus. If you define your organization as being affiliated with a particular political movement or organization, you will miss out on opportunities for support from people who agree with your energy policy goals but may not agree with other unrelated aspects of your philosophy. The broader coalition you can build, the more likely you are to be successful.

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However, it is worth thinking about the different functions that should be performed and what kind of individuals are best to include in your team. Over time, competent people will step forward to help and you can begin assigning people to take responsibility for different activities.

## *Good candidates for leadership*

Look for individuals who want to support the vision of your organization, are ethical, have a strong work ethic, a can-do spirit and a positive attitude. If they do not have any of these qualities, you could run into problems later.

If human beings were animals, the best to be a part of your organization's leadership would be **beavers** – beavers have a strong work ethic and can-do spirit. In the natural world, beavers are nature's construction workers, building dams. They enjoy working and are there to focus on getting the job done.

## *Organizing your team*

**The word organization is derived from the Greek word organon, which is itself derived from the better-known word ergon which means "organ" – a compartment for a particular task.**

Therefore, an organization has to have a compartmentalization of tasks. This compartmentalization is best accomplished through the use of an org board, dividing up responsibilities among individuals. Note that an individual may occupy more than one spot on the org board. This will be necessary when your group is small. As the organization grows, more positions may be created to accommodate others who will want to help.



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Because “form follows function,” the exact structure of your organization may not be exactly the same, but you will still want to address most of these functions to work effectively. Some of these areas are discussed in further detail in the chapters ahead.

Question: What if I don’t have enough individuals to place in the necessary org board departments?

Answer: The chief executive of the organization (that’s you if you’re willing to accept your mission!) has ultimate responsibility for making sure tasks are completed. Therefore, you will be responsible for filling in where necessary until someone can be placed. Rest assured, when people see the good work your organization is doing, ethical and competent individuals will step forward to help.

# Policy

Affordable and reliable energy brings productivity, clean water, sanitation, food, and industry to our society. This vision is only achieved through free markets and strong property rights.

Seize opportunities to educate members of your community on the critical nature of affordable and reliable energy, and articulate policy mechanisms that best achieve prosperity.

Monitor proposals from government entities for opportunities to act in support or opposition. Local industry groups can be a good resource for opportunities to get involved. Monitoring the activities of local Green groups also can give you an idea of what energy issues may require action from your group.

Some major issues in energy policy that you should consider opportunities to engage in activism are:

- **Cap and trade programs and carbon taxes**

*These policies are effectively energy taxes that kill good jobs, especially in energy intensive fields such as manufacturing and raise the price of gas and consumer goods. Meanwhile, the taxes collected may be designated to political pet projects or to crony capitalists, such as politically connected donors.*

- **Renewable fuel standards**

*Biofuel mandates are “food for fuel” policies that drive up the price of food and feed, exacerbate food shortages in poor countries and damage engines.*

- **Renewable portfolio standards**

*Many states have policies mandating a certain portion of consumer’s electricity be purchased from renewable sources. Definitions of “renewable” vary greatly. These policies drive up energy costs, give an unfair advantage to certain energy producers at the expense of others and harm consumer choice, all while threatening reliability.*

- **Green energy subsidies**

*Subsidies effectively reward companies that have trouble raising money due to their reliance on technologies that cannot compete effectively on a level playing field. Is it smart for taxpayers to invest in companies that can’t attract private capital? No, of course not, why are we even considering this? Furthermore, the money often goes to the politically connected such as in the case of the Solyndra debacle.*

- **Energy production**

*America is currently experiencing an energy boom due to advanced oil extraction technologies such as hydraulic fracturing, or fracking. Technology for offshore production has made more reserves accessible than ever before, and with the advent of horizontal drilling techniques, many*

*rigs which once had to be located offshore can now access energy from onshore. Meanwhile, people who are ideologically opposed to oil and gas production are trying to stop the development of these newly accessible resources by spreading hysteria with scare tactics. New energy production offers the opportunity to create jobs, lower energy costs and enhance national security.*

Fortunately, many states are now reevaluating their failed energy policies as the consequences in terms of lost jobs and rising energy prices begin to be felt. However, hucksters will continue to promote these bad policies knowing that the general public has limited understanding of energy issues allowing them to lie without being challenged.

Appoint an individual with excellent analytical skills to be your Director of Policy and to perform the following functions:

- Provide analysis regarding complex proposals originated by policymaking bodies such as your state legislature, local governments and regulatory agencies
- Communicate with energy producers and sympathetic policy institutes to find out what is needed and/or wanted from your organization
- Provide strategic guidance with respect to successful enactment of policy goals, coalition development and acquisition of financial resources

# Communications

Your communications department, also known as "public relations," has as its basic function the main objective of PR: good works made well known.

Your organization should develop relationships among local news outlets such as TV news stations, local newspapers, ethnic media and blogs. These media relationships can be a valuable resource for promoting your activities.

When you have an event, be sure your media contacts receive a press release. When issues come up that your group is concerned about, pursue opportunities to write a thoughtful op-ed on the situation at hand and have it published in your local paper.

If you have the opportunity to speak with a reporter, be positive and to the point. Talk about the good work your group does and the benefits of the policies you support.



You should choose a pleasant man or woman to be your Director of Communications. This position will be responsible for the following functions:

- Handle public relations functions including representing the organization in a positive manner to the media and the public at large
- Draft press releases and opinion articles for coverage by the media
- Achieve success in the online realm by ensuring website and social media properties are kept up to date.
- Represent the organization at public functions such as Chamber of Commerce meetings

# Promotion and Marketing

In order to maximize your impact, you are going to want to engage in activities which require financial resources. From major actions such as airing commercials, convening conferences, and holding rallies to more minor actions like hosting your website, buying matching tee shirts for your volunteers or holding a bumper sticker campaign all require an outlay of finances.

The Green Movement is a multi-billion dollar powerhouse. The Natural Resources Defense Council alone takes in well over \$100 million in revenue. If you are to effectively fight back, you need to make raising a significant amount of money a top priority.

This is not to say that you cannot be effective on a shoestring budget. However, you should not and need not settle for allowing your capabilities to be limited by finances.

There are numerous ways of bringing in financial resources to your organization and many different avenues through which you can ask for money. Following are a few ideas, some simple and some more complex:

- Set up an online donation system and feature it prominently on your website
- Send email solicitations to your supporters asking for donations. People like to donate to specific projects so be sure to say what you need the money for
- Set up a Partnership program where people make a sustained commitment to the organization, pledging a particular amount every month. You can create tiered levels to accommodate individuals who would like to participate in a greater way
- Ask small and large businesses in your area if they would be willing to help you with a donation
- Locate likeminded foundations with grant programs and apply
- Offer businesses event sponsorship opportunities. Being listed as a sponsor allows a business to receive free advertising while also making a positive difference
- Implement an incentive program among your leadership team that rewards individuals who successfully acquire donations
- End in-person meetings with an opportunity to give

You should appoint an industrious individual to be your Director of Promotion and Marketing, and this person's responsibilities should include the following functions:

- Coordinates with other members of your leadership team, supporters and members of the public to gain widespread positive recognition of the organization
- Develop new and innovative ways of increasing email and social media following and expanding number of financial supporters
- Organize fundraising events to promote the organization mission and inspire new donors

# Field

## *Outreach, volunteer coordination and activism*

Just as political campaigns, have staff who work “field,” your organization should have a field division to communicate with supporters in the area over which you have responsibility.

Supporters will lose interest if you don’t communicate with them or offer them opportunities to be involved. Just as importantly, you need your supporters to be an effective advocate for affordable energy and job creation.

Supporters are a resource for the following activities and more:

- Volunteers to help at events
- Legislative action through organizing supporters to testify at hearings and contact their representatives
- Sending letters to the editor to local newspaper
- Making donations to your organization

As discussed above, you must stay in communication with your supporters so they’re apprised of your activities and the latest developments in the issue areas with which you are concerned.

Technology has made the widespread dissemination of information far easier and cheaper than it was a generation ago. The following web-based platforms are essential to your ability to effectively communicate with your field:

- Engaging, interactive and up-to-date website
- Social media presence – Facebook is essential because it is the most widely used but you may also choose to communicate through other platforms in addition to Facebook such as Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram and Pinterest
- Mass email distribution system such as MailChimp or Constant Contact

The activities of the field division are extremely important for the greater goal of creating a citizenry which is informed on energy issues. When you build up a large email list and strong social media following, you will gain the ability to mobilize large numbers of people on behalf of smarter policy.

## OK I want to do this! What do I do next?

Awesome! Send an email to [Eric@Coalitionofenergyusers.org](mailto:Eric@Coalitionofenergyusers.org). The Coalition of Energy Users Foundation will work with you directly to help you start a successful citizen's energy advocacy organization in your community.

By becoming an advocate for citizen energy consumers, you are taking a positive step toward making energy more affordable and more reliable and therefore creating a more prosperous society for all citizens.

# Conclusions

Energy policy impacts our daily lives both individually and as a society. The cost of fuel and electricity affects how much you and your family pay for things you buy every day and helps determine whether or not good job opportunities are available.

As a rising tide lifts all ships, smart energy policy can uplift disadvantaged communities, provide resources for services such as education and public safety and enhance American energy security.

Unfortunately, counterproductive policies sometimes make it into law just because citizens lack an objective understanding of the issues at hand.

By starting a citizen's energy group in your state or community, you can be part of the solution. Your involvement will help your fellow citizens to become more informed and to gain the tools to effectively engage in the political process on behalf of access to jobs and affordable power.

And if you need any help, the Coalition of Energy Users Foundation is here to work with you! We want you and other informed consumers across the country to be successful in creating literally a brighter tomorrow!

## About the author



Eric Eisenhammer is the founder of the Coalition of Energy Users, a California-based nonprofit advocating for access to affordable energy and quality jobs and Founder of CEU Foundation, an education organization for objective discussions on energy and jobs. He has been interviewed by numerous media outlets and testified before California legislative committees speaking on behalf of energy consumers.

Eric also is a small business owner in the field of community outreach and web solutions. His clients have included statewide political campaigns, community groups, churches and other small businesses.

Eric first got involved in politics volunteering on the gubernatorial campaign of his local state representative and then served as a staff member in the State Capitol. In addition to energy policy, Eric is also knowledgeable about tax and public safety issues.

He holds a Master's in Public Policy and Administration from California State University, Sacramento and a Bachelors of Science degree in Business Administration with an emphasis in Finance from the California State University, Northridge.

You can contact Eric at [Eric@Coalitionofenergyusers.org](mailto:Eric@Coalitionofenergyusers.org).



**COALITION OF ENERGY USERS FOUNDATION**

## **How to start a citizen's energy group**

*By Eric Eisenhammer*

# **Energy Activism Manual**

COALITION OF ENERGY USERS FOUNDATION

# Energy Activism Manual

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# Introduction

**A**ccess to reliable and affordable power is critical to maintaining and expanding a prosperous American economy. In fact, energy is so critical that the effective development of coal as a power source played a principal role in spurring the Industrial Revolution in the 1880's.

The past century has brought the creation or advancement of additional sources of abundant, reliable and affordable power such as oil and gas, nuclear and large scale hydro. The glittering lights and casino palaces of Las Vegas owe their existence just as much to Hoover Dam as to Nevada's legalized gambling.

Energy advancement is the single biggest factor in giving human beings the best quality of life in history. Practically everything we see around us is fueled by energy. Factories, automobiles, televisions, smart phones and computers are all powered by energy. Innovations we use every day and that we don't necessarily associate with energy – including plastics, polyester, contact lenses and capsules holding medicine – are derived from petroleum.



In fact, a society's life expectancy and quality of life are directly related to the amount of energy its people are able to access and use.

Discredited British philosopher and economist Thomas Malthus, who predicted in the late 1700's that the world would soon face catastrophic mass starvations because of an inability to feed the growing population, has been definitively proven wrong in no small part because of energy.

Today, our resources continue to offer opportunity. Advanced oil extraction technologies have dramatically expanded the amount of energy that can be accessed safely and responsibly. In locations where in the recent past many wells may have been needed, now only one is needed – an advancement that has greatly reduced the environmental impact of energy production.

Advances in hydraulic fracturing, or "fracking" have made America an energy exporter, enhancing our national security and standing in the world., creating good jobs and lowering utility bills. Reduced energy costs resulting from natural gas produced

through fracking are creating a renaissance in American manufacturing – many factories are again humming and we are making real things.

Technology also has overcome many of the obstacles that once posed a challenge to offshore energy development. Now, offshore energy resources can sometimes be extracted using rigs onshore.

America's CO<sub>2</sub> emissions have dropped to their lowest level in 20 years fueled by new supplies of clean and affordable natural gas. President Obama has said, "After years of talking about it, we're finally poised to control our own energy future. We produce more oil at home than we have in 15 years."

Unfortunately, the general public lacks an accurate understanding of energy issues. *Scientific American* recently published the results of a poll finding most Americans are totally uninformed when it comes to energy: Most like natural gas, but don't know it comes from fracking (which they say they don't like). They also wrongly think Saudi Arabia is our biggest source of oil imports (the right answer is Canada).

With so many citizens either uninformed or misinformed when it comes to energy, the result has been misguided and counterproductive policy that harms not only our economy, but our environment. Misplaced enthusiasm over costly and unreliable wind and solar power has resulted in cronyism and wasted billions of taxpayer dollars, such as in the Solyndra debacle, and also killed thousands of birds, including endangered eagles.

That's why your activism is so important. As our Founders understood, an educated citizenry is necessary to the preservation of freedom. As an organized force, energy consumers can set the record straight when deceptive rhetoric is presented; defend jobs and economic growth and work proactively to enact smarter regulatory policies that can free our economy to rise to greater heights.

# About CEU Foundation

The Coalition of Energy Users Foundation is a California-based nonprofit educational organization that supports objective discussions on energy, jobs and the environment.

CEU Foundation was established by the Coalition of Energy Users, an advocacy-oriented organization founded in 2010 that has saved California energy consumers billions of dollars through its efforts including the defeat of Solyndra-style subsidies. CEU Foundation engages in educational efforts including holding community forums and the development of online energy education.

This manual was produced as a national outreach designed to equip citizens nationwide to speak as an effective voice for energy consumers in their state and community.

As in California, many people in your own state or community lack an objective understanding of energy issues.

I sometimes talk with citizens who are under the false impression that solar energy is free because it comes from the sun! (solar power is actually one of the most costly energy sources according to official Department of Energy data.)

By getting involved, you can be part of the solution – your involvement can help save and create jobs, improve the economy and environment and enhance consumer access to more affordable power and fuel.

# Energy basics

## *Background*

**Definition of energy: power derived from the utilization of physical or chemical resources, esp. to provide light and heat or to work machines.**

Man's first use of energy occurred in prehistoric caveman days when people began harnessing fire to light their homes and cook. Researchers believe this breakthrough occurred in Africa early in human history. When a brush fire or forest fire occurred by the strike of lightning, an innovative caveman was inspired to capture one of the embers and keep it burning continually for his society's use. Most primitive societies had a person designated "keeper of the flame," who was responsible for keeping a fire burning.

Some of the first energy innovations beyond burning wood occurred in China. In 2000 BC the Chinese began burning coal to cook and heat their homes. Around the year 1 AD, the Chinese refined petroleum as a fuel for lamps.

In 200 AD, Europeans discovered how to harness hydroelectric power, building wheels in rivers

Windmills were invented in Persia around 1000 AD. In the 1600's to 1700s Europeans further refined technology for burning and developing coal. These innovations made coal civilization's leading source of energy. Coal made abundant, reliable and affordable energy available for the first time, leading to the Industrial Revolution, which improved people's lives tremendously.

In the early 1800's, the first oil and natural gas wells were drilled in the United States, in New York and Pennsylvania.

In 1860, the first solar panel was invented in France by focusing a mirror on the sun to turn water into steam.

In 1885, Germany's Karl Benz (the namesake of Mercedes Benz cars) invented the first gasoline powered automobile. Henry Ford then introduced his first gas powered car in 1896.

The invention of nuclear power brought the first nuclear reactors to Russia and the United States in the 1950's.

Today, all of these energy sources comprise part of the modern energy supply. Researchers continuously work to make each of these technologies better. Their work results in constant improvements to the way we produce energy, making production cleaner, more affordable, safer and more reliable.

## *Where your energy comes from*

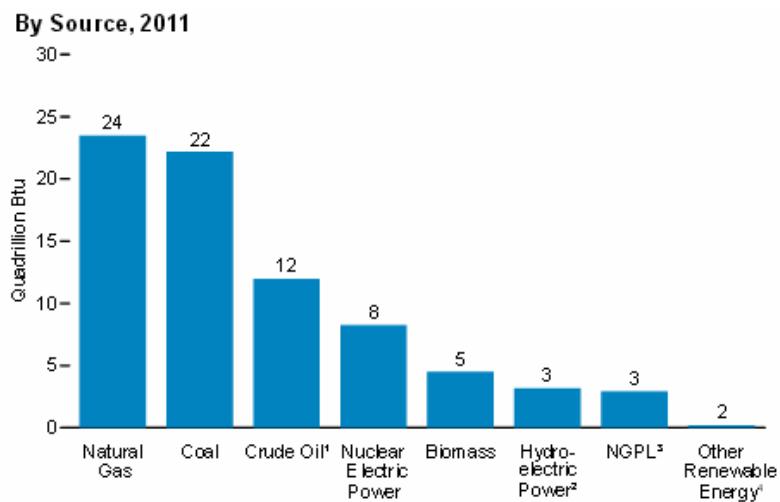
The electricity we use on a daily basis to light our homes, cook and power a multitude of electronic devices usually comes from a power plant (unless you have some type of generator of your own), where it is generated and then transmitted across power lines. Among the types of power plants your energy may come from include:

- Natural gas
- Coal
- Nuclear
- Hydroelectric
- Solar
- Wind

The gasoline you fill up with at the gas station is refined from crude oil in refineries. A national renewable fuel mandate requires refineries to mix fuel with plant-based biofuel additives such as ethanol, which is produced from corn.

Natural gas, coal and oil represent about three quarters of the energy consumed in the US. Nuclear power represents an additional 10% of American energy production. Solar and wind power comprise less than 3% of our nation's energy supply, despite enthusiastic government efforts to subsidize and mandate these power sources.

While the precise energy mix, or portfolio, varies by state, the following chart shows where energy comes from nationally:



<sup>1</sup> Includes lease condensate.

<sup>2</sup> Conventional hydroelectric power.

<sup>3</sup> Natural gas plant liquids.

Source: <http://www.eia.gov/totalenergy/data/annual/pdf/aer.pdf>

## *Types of energy*

Does it matter how our energy is produced? YES! It matters a great deal. How our energy is produced impacts the price of your utility bill, the price you pay at the pump and what job opportunities are available for you and your family. Here's a little more detail on various major energy sources.

- Natural gas

Natural gas, not to be confused with gasoline, is a naturally occurring gas composed of methane and other hydrocarbons. Natural gas is the cleanest fossil fuel, and has become available in huge new supplies due to the development of advanced extraction technologies such as hydraulic fracturing or "fracking," and horizontal drilling.

Besides being the cleanest fossil fuel, natural gas is currently also the most affordable. Production of this energy source has helped decrease American greenhouse gas emissions, create thousands of new jobs and revitalize manufacturing with a new supply of abundant and affordable power. Natural gas is currently America's leading energy source and generates power in power plants across the country.

- Coal

Coal is composed of combustible black or brown rocks, formed from carbonized plant matter. Coal is usually found underground and exists in vast supplies in the US. Coal is an affordable, abundant and reliable power source and generates almost half of our country's electricity. Continuing improvements in technology have made coal cleaner to use and safer to extract.

- Oil

Oil is a thick liquid derived from petroleum. Like natural gas, new technologies have greatly increased the amount of oil that can be safely and economically extracted. Oil is refined into gasoline in refineries, where laws often require it be mixed with biofuels. Refined fuel is then transported to gas stations, where we use it to power our cars and trucks.

- Biofuels

Biofuels are fuels derived from plant sources such as corn and sugar. These fuels are mandated by the government and their production is subsidized with

taxpayer dollars. Biofuels are intended to help the environment, but have also led to unintended consequences such as food shortages, increases in the price of livestock feed and harm to people's engines.

- Nuclear

Nuclear power is a type of energy produced through an ongoing atomic reaction taking place in a reactor. Nuclear power is affordable, reliable and can produce a lot of power. Some countries, such as France, rely on nuclear power for the bulk of their energy generation. However, despite continuous improvements in safety, nuclear power still presents the risk of catastrophe in the event of a meltdown.

- Hydroelectric

Hydroelectric power, as its name suggests, is energy derived from water. Hydroelectric power is produced through the use of turbines placed by fast moving water. Large dams can produce tremendous amounts of clean, affordable power. However, not all locations present geographical conditions that make building large dams possible – they generally require mountainous terrain and large rivers to work best. An additional benefit of the construction of hydroelectric dams is the creation of reservoirs, which store water for use by our farms and communities and provide flood control.

- Solar

Solar power is generated by harnessing the sun's rays. Solar energy is produced with large fields of panels transmitting energy to the electrical grid as well as panels installed on the roofs of individual homes and businesses. Solar power produces no emissions directly but presents numerous challenges that have not yet been effectively resolved. These challenges include high costs and intermittency due to its dependence on sunny weather. This intermittency forces other power plants to be put on standby, causing increased emissions elsewhere. Development of the solar industry has been assisted by large taxpayer-funded subsidies and mandates requiring utilities to purchase solar power.

- Wind

Wind power generates energy by harnessing wind with turbines, or windmills. Wind power, like solar, poses yet to be resolved challenges. These challenges include intermittency caused by its dependence on the weather as well as negative impacts on birds, including endangered eagles, which are killed when they fly into the spinning blades. Wind power's development has also been boosted by large scale taxpayer subsidies and mandates.

## *Politics of energy*

Because energy is such an important part of our lives, energy policy has also become one of our century's most talked about political topics. Energy policy decisions are determined based on the interaction of citizens, elected leaders and numerous organized groups, each of whom have energy policy preferences. These organized groups include the following:

- Energy producers

Producers of every major power source sponsor trade organizations. These trade groups urge the adoption of policies that help their businesses continue to operate and expand. These groups can make positive contributions to the energy conversation but can also sometimes take positions reflecting self-interest.

- Business associations

Numerous associations exist to advocate for favorable economic conditions that allow businesses to grow. Manufacturers, construction contractors, farmers, truckers and many others sponsor advocacy groups large and small in addition to chambers of commerce which represent a range of businesses in their communities.

- Consumer advocates

The Coalition of Energy Users is an example of a consumer advocacy organization because CEU represents citizen energy users. From this perspective, CEU advocates policies that produce access to affordable energy and quality jobs for everyday citizens.

- Labor unions

Labor unions exist primarily to represent workers and secure jobs with good pay and benefits. Labor unions therefore prefer policies that create opportunities in their respective industries. Energy producers employ members of unions. Union members in industries such as trucking, construction and manufacturing may not produce energy directly but they likewise have a stake in energy policy because the cost of gasoline and electrical power directly affects their opportunities or lack thereof.

- Civil rights advocates

Energy policies sometimes carry unintended consequences that harm disadvantaged communities. For example, in California, a surcharge was placed on utility bills statewide, and the money collected was used to help people install solar panels on their roofs. Unfortunately, many of those who

could afford to install solar panels lived in wealthy communities, making the surcharge an effective wealth transfer from inner city and rural communities to the wealthy. Civil rights advocates exist to make sure everyone is treated fairly, although not all have the same perspective on how best equality should be achieved.

- Green organizations

The green movement exists to advocate for the natural environment, including fish, birds, insects, animals and plants. Many green organizations advocate for increased use of solar and wind power, despite wind power's apparent negative consequences for birds. Some more extreme members of the green movement want an immediate end to the use of fossil fuels and even commit acts of terrorism to make their views known broadly. However, many other environmentalists are pragmatic people who want to balance concerns about the economy and equity with their concern for the environment.

### *Suggestions for future study*

There is a wealth of perspectives on energy available on the Internet from the types of organizations described above. You can find some of the most objective information available from the Department of Energy's Energy Information Administration at [www.eia.gov](http://www.eia.gov).

# Getting started

You can make a constructive difference in your community by organizing a group that educates fellow citizens on energy policy and advocates for smart policies that grow our economy while protecting our environment. The smartest policies for affordability and job creation are often those that emphasize limited government intervention and maximum consumer choice.

Citizen energy user activism works best when you approach your organization with a non-partisan, single-issue focus. If you define your organization as being affiliated with a particular political movement or organization, you will miss out on opportunities for support from people who agree with your energy policy goals but may not agree with other unrelated aspects of your philosophy. The broader coalition you can build, the more likely you are to be successful.

If you wish to work directly with CEU Foundation on developing and growing a successful organization, feel free to email me at [Eric@Coalitionofenergyusers.org](mailto:Eric@Coalitionofenergyusers.org).

# Legal rudiments

As you form your organization, you should give some thought to what form or forms you want your group to take legally. I am not a lawyer and cannot give legal advice, but offer the following information to help you in this process:

- A 501(c)3 can engage only in activities considered educational. While a 501(c)3 can express a point of view, it may not advocate on legislation and may not endorse candidates. A 501(c)3 can receive tax deductible donations.
- A 501(c)4 can engage in both education and political advocacy. However, contributions to a 501(c)4 are NOT tax deductible and the organization may not endorse candidates
- A political action committee or PAC can endorse candidates and engage in advocacy. Contributions to a PAC are NOT tax deductible.

There is no reason your organization cannot have more than one entity through which to operate. However, if you choose to set up more than one entity, you must take care to set up separate boards of directors and keep the activities of each organization separate and distinct.

It is helpful to consult an attorney when completing this organizing process but it is not absolutely essential. While I found the process confusing and time intensive, I was fortunate to have friends who had already completed the paperwork for their own organizations who I was able to turn to for guidance.

# Structuring your organization

Finding the right people to serve in leadership capacities of your organization is likely to take some time and won't happen overnight.

However, it is worth thinking about the different functions that should be performed and what kind of individuals are best to include in your team. Over time, competent people will step forward to help and you can begin assigning people to take responsibility for different activities.

## *Good candidates for leadership*

Look for individuals who want to support the vision of your organization, are ethical, have a strong work ethic, a can-do spirit and a positive attitude. If they do not have any of these qualities, you could run into problems later.

If human beings were animals, the best to be a part of your organization's leadership would be **beavers** – beavers have a strong work ethic and can-do spirit. In the natural world, beavers are nature's construction workers, building dams. They enjoy working and are there to focus on getting the job done.

## *Organizing your team*

**The word organization is derived from the Greek word organon, which is itself derived from the better-known word ergon which means "organ" – a compartment for a particular task.**

Therefore, an organization has to have a compartmentalization of tasks. This compartmentalization is best accomplished through the use of an org board, dividing up responsibilities among individuals. Note that an individual may occupy more than one spot on the org board. This will be necessary when your group is small. As the organization grows, more positions may be created to accommodate others who will want to help.



The Coalition of Energy Users includes the following departments:

- Policy
- Communications

- Human Resources
- Promotion and Marketing
- Finance
- Regulatory Affairs
- Leadership Development
- Certification
- Volunteer Coordination

Because “form follows function,” the exact structure of your organization may not be exactly the same, but you will still want to address most of these functions to work effectively. Some of these areas are discussed in further detail in the chapters ahead.

Question: What if I don’t have enough individuals to place in the necessary org board departments?

Answer: The chief executive of the organization (that’s you if you’re willing to accept your mission!) has ultimate responsibility for making sure tasks are completed. Therefore, you will be responsible for filling in where necessary until someone can be placed. Rest assured, when people see the good work your organization is doing, ethical and competent individuals will step forward to help.

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# Promotion and Marketing

In order to maximize your impact, you are going to want to engage in activities which require financial resources. From major actions such as airing commercials, convening conferences, and holding rallies to more minor actions like hosting your website, buying matching tee shirts for your volunteers or holding a bumper sticker campaign all require an outlay of finances.

The Green Movement is a multi-billion dollar powerhouse. The Natural Resources Defense Council alone takes in well over \$100 million in revenue. If you are to effectively fight back, you need to make raising a significant amount of money a top priority.

This is not to say that you cannot be effective on a shoestring budget. However, you should not and need not settle for allowing your capabilities to be limited by finances.

There are numerous ways of bringing in financial resources to your organization and many different avenues through which you can ask for money. Following are a few ideas, some simple and some more complex:

- Set up an online donation system and feature it prominently on your website
- Send email solicitations to your supporters asking for donations. People like to donate to specific projects so be sure to say what you need the money for
- Set up a Partnership program where people make a sustained commitment to the organization, pledging a particular amount every month. You can create tiered levels to accommodate individuals who would like to participate in a greater way
- Ask small and large businesses in your area if they would be willing to help you with a donation
- Locate likeminded foundations with grant programs and apply
- Offer businesses event sponsorship opportunities. Being listed as a sponsor allows a business to receive free advertising while also making a positive difference
- Implement an incentive program among your leadership team that rewards individuals who successfully acquire donations
- End in-person meetings with an opportunity to give

You should appoint an industrious individual to be your Director of Promotion and Marketing, and this person's responsibilities should include the following functions:

- Coordinates with other members of your leadership team, supporters and members of the public to gain widespread positive recognition of the organization
- Develop new and innovative ways of increasing email and social media following and expanding number of financial supporters
- Organize fundraising events to promote the organization mission and inspire new donors

# Field

## *Outreach, volunteer coordination and activism*

Just as political campaigns, have staff who work “field,” your organization should have a field division to communicate with supporters in the area over which you have responsibility.

Supporters will lose interest if you don’t communicate with them or offer them opportunities to be involved. Just as importantly, you need your supporters to be an effective advocate for affordable energy and job creation.

Supporters are a resource for the following activities and more:

- Volunteers to help at events
- Legislative action through organizing supporters to testify at hearings and contact their representatives
- Sending letters to the editor to local newspaper
- Making donations to your organization

As discussed above, you must stay in communication with your supporters so they’re apprised of your activities and the latest developments in the issue areas with which you are concerned.

Technology has made the widespread dissemination of information far easier and cheaper than it was a generation ago. The following web-based platforms are essential to your ability to effectively communicate with your field:

- Engaging, interactive and up-to-date website
- Social media presence – Facebook is essential because it is the most widely used but you may also choose to communicate through other platforms in addition to Facebook such as Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram and Pinterest
- Mass email distribution system such as MailChimp or Constant Contact

The activities of the field division are extremely important for the greater goal of creating a citizenry which is informed on energy issues. When you build up a large email list and strong social media following, you will gain the ability to mobilize large numbers of people on behalf of smarter policy.

## OK I want to do this! What do I do next?

Awesome! Send an email to [Eric@Coalitionofenergyusers.org](mailto:Eric@Coalitionofenergyusers.org). The Coalition of Energy Users Foundation will work with you directly to help you start a successful citizen's energy advocacy organization in your community.

By becoming an advocate for citizen energy consumers, you are taking a positive step toward making energy more affordable and more reliable and therefore creating a more prosperous society for all citizens.

# Conclusions

Energy policy impacts our daily lives both individually and as a society. The cost of fuel and electricity affects how much you and your family pay for things you buy every day and helps determine whether or not good job opportunities are available.

As a rising tide lifts all ships, smart energy policy can uplift disadvantaged communities, provide resources for services such as education and public safety and enhance American energy security.

Unfortunately, counterproductive policies sometimes make it into law just because citizens lack an objective understanding of the issues at hand.

By starting a citizen's energy group in your state or community, you can be part of the solution. Your involvement will help your fellow citizens to become more informed and to gain the tools to effectively engage in the political process on behalf of access to jobs and affordable power.

And if you need any help, the Coalition of Energy Users Foundation is here to work with you! We want you and other informed consumers across the country to be successful in creating literally a brighter tomorrow!

## About the author



Eric Eisenhammer is the founder of the Coalition of Energy Users, a California-based nonprofit advocating for access to affordable energy and quality jobs and Founder of CEU Foundation, an education organization for objective discussions on energy and jobs. He has been interviewed by numerous media outlets and testified before California legislative committees speaking on behalf of energy consumers.

Eric also is a small business owner in the field of community outreach and web solutions. His clients have included statewide political campaigns, community groups, churches and other small businesses.

Eric first got involved in politics volunteering on the gubernatorial campaign of his local state representative and then served as a staff member in the State Capitol. In addition to energy policy, Eric is also knowledgeable about tax and public safety issues.

He holds a Master's in Public Policy and Administration from California State University, Sacramento and a Bachelors of Science degree in Business Administration with an emphasis in Finance from the California State University, Northridge.

You can contact Eric at [Eric@Coalitionofenergyusers.org](mailto:Eric@Coalitionofenergyusers.org).



**COALITION OF ENERGY USERS FOUNDATION**

## **How to start a citizen's energy group**

*By Eric Eisenhammer*

# **Energy Activism Manual**

COALITION OF ENERGY USERS FOUNDATION

# Energy Activism Manual

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# Introduction

**A**ccess to reliable and affordable power is critical to maintaining and expanding a prosperous American economy. In fact, energy is so critical that the effective development of coal as a power source played a principal role in spurring the Industrial Revolution in the 1880's.

The past century has brought the creation or advancement of additional sources of abundant, reliable and affordable power such as oil and gas, nuclear and large scale hydro. The glittering lights and casino palaces of Las Vegas owe their existence just as much to Hoover Dam as to Nevada's legalized gambling.

Energy advancement is the single biggest factor in giving human beings the best quality of life in history. Practically everything we see around us is fueled by energy. Factories, automobiles, televisions, smart phones and computers are all powered by energy. Innovations we use every day and that we don't necessarily associate with energy – including plastics, polyester, contact lenses and capsules holding medicine – are derived from petroleum.



In fact, a society's life expectancy and quality of life are directly related to the amount of energy its people are able to access and use.

Discredited British philosopher and economist Thomas Malthus, who predicted in the late 1700's that the world would soon face catastrophic mass starvations because of an inability to feed the growing population, has been definitively proven wrong in no small part because of energy.

Today, our resources continue to offer opportunity. Advanced oil extraction technologies have dramatically expanded the amount of energy that can be accessed safely and responsibly. In locations where in the recent past many wells may have been needed, now only one is needed – an advancement that has greatly reduced the environmental impact of energy production.

Advances in hydraulic fracturing, or "fracking" have made America an energy exporter, enhancing our national security and standing in the world., creating good jobs and lowering utility bills. Reduced energy costs resulting from natural gas produced

through fracking are creating a renaissance in American manufacturing – many factories are again humming and we are making real things.

Technology also has overcome many of the obstacles that once posed a challenge to offshore energy development. Now, offshore energy resources can sometimes be extracted using rigs onshore.

America's CO<sub>2</sub> emissions have dropped to their lowest level in 20 years fueled by new supplies of clean and affordable natural gas. President Obama has said, "After years of talking about it, we're finally poised to control our own energy future. We produce more oil at home than we have in 15 years."

Unfortunately, the general public lacks an accurate understanding of energy issues. *Scientific American* recently published the results of a poll finding most Americans are totally uninformed when it comes to energy: Most like natural gas, but don't know it comes from fracking (which they say they don't like). They also wrongly think Saudi Arabia is our biggest source of oil imports (the right answer is Canada).

With so many citizens either uninformed or misinformed when it comes to energy, the result has been misguided and counterproductive policy that harms not only our economy, but our environment. Misplaced enthusiasm over costly and unreliable wind and solar power has resulted in cronyism and wasted billions of taxpayer dollars, such as in the Solyndra debacle, and also killed thousands of birds, including endangered eagles.

That's why your activism is so important. As our Founders understood, an educated citizenry is necessary to the preservation of freedom. As an organized force, energy consumers can set the record straight when deceptive rhetoric is presented; defend jobs and economic growth and work proactively to enact smarter regulatory policies that can free our economy to rise to greater heights.

# About CEU Foundation

The Coalition of Energy Users Foundation is a California-based nonprofit educational organization that supports objective discussions on energy, jobs and the environment.

CEU Foundation was established by the Coalition of Energy Users, an advocacy-oriented organization founded in 2010 that has saved California energy consumers billions of dollars through its efforts including the defeat of Solyndra-style subsidies. CEU Foundation engages in educational efforts including holding community forums and the development of online energy education.

This manual was produced as a national outreach designed to equip citizens nationwide to speak as an effective voice for energy consumers in their state and community.

As in California, many people in your own state or community lack an objective understanding of energy issues.

I sometimes talk with citizens who are under the false impression that solar energy is free because it comes from the sun! (solar power is actually one of the most costly energy sources according to official Department of Energy data.)

By getting involved, you can be part of the solution – your involvement can help save and create jobs, improve the economy and environment and enhance consumer access to more affordable power and fuel.

# Energy basics

## *Background*

**Definition of energy: power derived from the utilization of physical or chemical resources, esp. to provide light and heat or to work machines.**

Man's first use of energy occurred in prehistoric caveman days when people began harnessing fire to light their homes and cook. Researchers believe this breakthrough occurred in Africa early in human history. When a brush fire or forest fire occurred by the strike of lightning, an innovative caveman was inspired to capture one of the embers and keep it burning continually for his society's use. Most primitive societies had a person designated "keeper of the flame," who was responsible for keeping a fire burning.

Some of the first energy innovations beyond burning wood occurred in China. In 2000 BC the Chinese began burning coal to cook and heat their homes. Around the year 1 AD, the Chinese refined petroleum as a fuel for lamps.

In 200 AD, Europeans discovered how to harness hydroelectric power, building wheels in rivers

Windmills were invented in Persia around 1000 AD. In the 1600's to 1700s Europeans further refined technology for burning and developing coal. These innovations made coal civilization's leading source of energy. Coal made abundant, reliable and affordable energy available for the first time, leading to the Industrial Revolution, which improved people's lives tremendously.

In the early 1800's, the first oil and natural gas wells were drilled in the United States, in New York and Pennsylvania.

In 1860, the first solar panel was invented in France by focusing a mirror on the sun to turn water into steam.

In 1885, Germany's Karl Benz (the namesake of Mercedes Benz cars) invented the first gasoline powered automobile. Henry Ford then introduced his first gas powered car in 1896.

The invention of nuclear power brought the first nuclear reactors to Russia and the United States in the 1950's.

Today, all of these energy sources comprise part of the modern energy supply. Researchers continuously work to make each of these technologies better. Their work results in constant improvements to the way we produce energy, making production cleaner, more affordable, safer and more reliable.

## *Where your energy comes from*

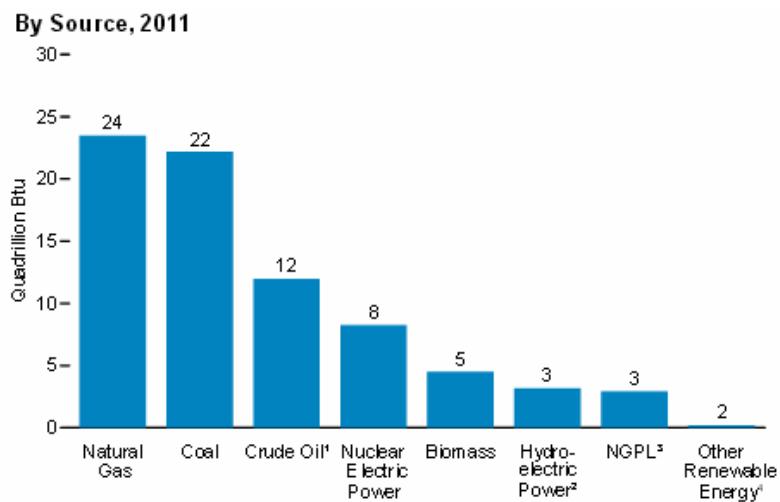
The electricity we use on a daily basis to light our homes, cook and power a multitude of electronic devices usually comes from a power plant (unless you have some type of generator of your own), where it is generated and then transmitted across power lines. Among the types of power plants your energy may come from include:

- Natural gas
- Coal
- Nuclear
- Hydroelectric
- Solar
- Wind

The gasoline you fill up with at the gas station is refined from crude oil in refineries. A national renewable fuel mandate requires refineries to mix fuel with plant-based biofuel additives such as ethanol, which is produced from corn.

Natural gas, coal and oil represent about three quarters of the energy consumed in the US. Nuclear power represents an additional 10% of American energy production. Solar and wind power comprise less than 3% of our nation's energy supply, despite enthusiastic government efforts to subsidize and mandate these power sources.

While the precise energy mix, or portfolio, varies by state, the following chart shows where energy comes from nationally:



<sup>1</sup> Includes lease condensate.

<sup>2</sup> Conventional hydroelectric power.

<sup>3</sup> Natural gas plant liquids.

Source: <http://www.eia.gov/totalenergy/data/annual/pdf/aer.pdf>

## *Types of energy*

Does it matter how our energy is produced? YES! It matters a great deal. How our energy is produced impacts the price of your utility bill, the price you pay at the pump and what job opportunities are available for you and your family. Here's a little more detail on various major energy sources.

- Natural gas

Natural gas, not to be confused with gasoline, is a naturally occurring gas composed of methane and other hydrocarbons. Natural gas is the cleanest fossil fuel, and has become available in huge new supplies due to the development of advanced extraction technologies such as hydraulic fracturing or "fracking," and horizontal drilling.

Besides being the cleanest fossil fuel, natural gas is currently also the most affordable. Production of this energy source has helped decrease American greenhouse gas emissions, create thousands of new jobs and revitalize manufacturing with a new supply of abundant and affordable power. Natural gas is currently America's leading energy source and generates power in power plants across the country.

- Coal

Coal is composed of combustible black or brown rocks, formed from carbonized plant matter. Coal is usually found underground and exists in vast supplies in the US. Coal is an affordable, abundant and reliable power source and generates almost half of our country's electricity. Continuing improvements in technology have made coal cleaner to use and safer to extract.

- Oil

Oil is a thick liquid derived from petroleum. Like natural gas, new technologies have greatly increased the amount of oil that can be safely and economically extracted. Oil is refined into gasoline in refineries, where laws often require it be mixed with biofuels. Refined fuel is then transported to gas stations, where we use it to power our cars and trucks.

- Biofuels

Biofuels are fuels derived from plant sources such as corn and sugar. These fuels are mandated by the government and their production is subsidized with

taxpayer dollars. Biofuels are intended to help the environment, but have also led to unintended consequences such as food shortages, increases in the price of livestock feed and harm to people's engines.

- Nuclear

Nuclear power is a type of energy produced through an ongoing atomic reaction taking place in a reactor. Nuclear power is affordable, reliable and can produce a lot of power. Some countries, such as France, rely on nuclear power for the bulk of their energy generation. However, despite continuous improvements in safety, nuclear power still presents the risk of catastrophe in the event of a meltdown.

- Hydroelectric

Hydroelectric power, as its name suggests, is energy derived from water. Hydroelectric power is produced through the use of turbines placed by fast moving water. Large dams can produce tremendous amounts of clean, affordable power. However, not all locations present geographical conditions that make building large dams possible – they generally require mountainous terrain and large rivers to work best. An additional benefit of the construction of hydroelectric dams is the creation of reservoirs, which store water for use by our farms and communities and provide flood control.

- Solar

Solar power is generated by harnessing the sun's rays. Solar energy is produced with large fields of panels transmitting energy to the electrical grid as well as panels installed on the roofs of individual homes and businesses. Solar power produces no emissions directly but presents numerous challenges that have not yet been effectively resolved. These challenges include high costs and intermittency due to its dependence on sunny weather. This intermittency forces other power plants to be put on standby, causing increased emissions elsewhere. Development of the solar industry has been assisted by large taxpayer-funded subsidies and mandates requiring utilities to purchase solar power.

- Wind

Wind power generates energy by harnessing wind with turbines, or windmills. Wind power, like solar, poses yet to be resolved challenges. These challenges include intermittency caused by its dependence on the weather as well as negative impacts on birds, including endangered eagles, which are killed when they fly into the spinning blades. Wind power's development has also been boosted by large scale taxpayer subsidies and mandates.

## *Politics of energy*

Because energy is such an important part of our lives, energy policy has also become one of our century's most talked about political topics. Energy policy decisions are determined based on the interaction of citizens, elected leaders and numerous organized groups, each of whom have energy policy preferences. These organized groups include the following:

- Energy producers

Producers of every major power source sponsor trade organizations. These trade groups urge the adoption of policies that help their businesses continue to operate and expand. These groups can make positive contributions to the energy conversation but can also sometimes take positions reflecting self-interest.

- Business associations

Numerous associations exist to advocate for favorable economic conditions that allow businesses to grow. Manufacturers, construction contractors, farmers, truckers and many others sponsor advocacy groups large and small in addition to chambers of commerce which represent a range of businesses in their communities.

- Consumer advocates

The Coalition of Energy Users is an example of a consumer advocacy organization because CEU represents citizen energy users. From this perspective, CEU advocates policies that produce access to affordable energy and quality jobs for everyday citizens.

- Labor unions

Labor unions exist primarily to represent workers and secure jobs with good pay and benefits. Labor unions therefore prefer policies that create opportunities in their respective industries. Energy producers employ members of unions. Union members in industries such as trucking, construction and manufacturing may not produce energy directly but they likewise have a stake in energy policy because the cost of gasoline and electrical power directly affects their opportunities or lack thereof.

- Civil rights advocates

Energy policies sometimes carry unintended consequences that harm disadvantaged communities. For example, in California, a surcharge was placed on utility bills statewide, and the money collected was used to help people install solar panels on their roofs. Unfortunately, many of those who

could afford to install solar panels lived in wealthy communities, making the surcharge an effective wealth transfer from inner city and rural communities to the wealthy. Civil rights advocates exist to make sure everyone is treated fairly, although not all have the same perspective on how best equality should be achieved.

- Green organizations

The green movement exists to advocate for the natural environment, including fish, birds, insects, animals and plants. Many green organizations advocate for increased use of solar and wind power, despite wind power's apparent negative consequences for birds. Some more extreme members of the green movement want an immediate end to the use of fossil fuels and even commit acts of terrorism to make their views known broadly. However, many other environmentalists are pragmatic people who want to balance concerns about the economy and equity with their concern for the environment.

### *Suggestions for future study*

There is a wealth of perspectives on energy available on the Internet from the types of organizations described above. You can find some of the most objective information available from the Department of Energy's Energy Information Administration at [www.eia.gov](http://www.eia.gov).

# Getting started

You can make a constructive difference in your community by organizing a group that educates fellow citizens on energy policy and advocates for smart policies that grow our economy while protecting our environment. The smartest policies for affordability and job creation are often those that emphasize limited government intervention and maximum consumer choice.

Citizen energy user activism works best when you approach your organization with a non-partisan, single-issue focus. If you define your organization as being affiliated with a particular political movement or organization, you will miss out on opportunities for support from people who agree with your energy policy goals but may not agree with other unrelated aspects of your philosophy. The broader coalition you can build, the more likely you are to be successful.

If you wish to work directly with CEU Foundation on developing and growing a successful organization, feel free to email me at [Eric@Coalitionofenergyusers.org](mailto:Eric@Coalitionofenergyusers.org).

# Legal rudiments

As you form your organization, you should give some thought to what form or forms you want your group to take legally. I am not a lawyer and cannot give legal advice, but offer the following information to help you in this process:

- A 501(c)3 can engage only in activities considered educational. While a 501(c)3 can express a point of view, it may not advocate on legislation and may not endorse candidates. A 501(c)3 can receive tax deductible donations.
- A 501(c)4 can engage in both education and political advocacy. However, contributions to a 501(c)4 are NOT tax deductible and the organization may not endorse candidates
- A political action committee or PAC can endorse candidates and engage in advocacy. Contributions to a PAC are NOT tax deductible.

There is no reason your organization cannot have more than one entity through which to operate. However, if you choose to set up more than one entity, you must take care to set up separate boards of directors and keep the activities of each organization separate and distinct.

It is helpful to consult an attorney when completing this organizing process but it is not absolutely essential. While I found the process confusing and time intensive, I was fortunate to have friends who had already completed the paperwork for their own organizations who I was able to turn to for guidance.

# Structuring your organization

Finding the right people to serve in leadership capacities of your organization is likely to take some time and won't happen overnight.

However, it is worth thinking about the different functions that should be performed and what kind of individuals are best to include in your team. Over time, competent people will step forward to help and you can begin assigning people to take responsibility for different activities.

## *Good candidates for leadership*

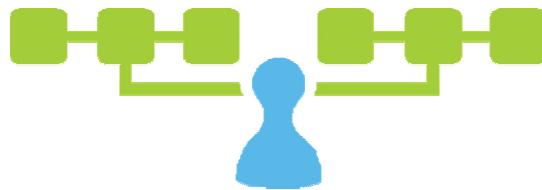
Look for individuals who want to support the vision of your organization, are ethical, have a strong work ethic, a can-do spirit and a positive attitude. If they do not have any of these qualities, you could run into problems later.

If human beings were animals, the best to be a part of your organization's leadership would be **beavers** – beavers have a strong work ethic and can-do spirit. In the natural world, beavers are nature's construction workers, building dams. They enjoy working and are there to focus on getting the job done.

## *Organizing your team*

**The word organization is derived from the Greek word organon, which is itself derived from the better-known word ergon which means "organ" – a compartment for a particular task.**

Therefore, an organization has to have a compartmentalization of tasks. This compartmentalization is best accomplished through the use of an org board, dividing up responsibilities among individuals. Note that an individual may occupy more than one spot on the org board. This will be necessary when your group is small. As the organization grows, more positions may be created to accommodate others who will want to help.



The Coalition of Energy Users includes the following departments:

- Policy
- Communications

- Human Resources
- Promotion and Marketing
- Finance
- Regulatory Affairs
- Leadership Development
- Certification
- Volunteer Coordination

Because “form follows function,” the exact structure of your organization may not be exactly the same, but you will still want to address most of these functions to work effectively. Some of these areas are discussed in further detail in the chapters ahead.

Question: What if I don’t have enough individuals to place in the necessary org board departments?

Answer: The chief executive of the organization (that’s you if you’re willing to accept your mission!) has ultimate responsibility for making sure tasks are completed. Therefore, you will be responsible for filling in where necessary until someone can be placed. Rest assured, when people see the good work your organization is doing, ethical and competent individuals will step forward to help.

# Policy

Affordable and reliable energy brings productivity, clean water, sanitation, food, and industry to our society. This vision is only achieved through free markets and strong property rights.

Seize opportunities to educate members of your community on the critical nature of affordable and reliable energy, and articulate policy mechanisms that best achieve prosperity.

Monitor proposals from government entities for opportunities to act in support or opposition. Local industry groups can be a good resource for opportunities to get involved. Monitoring the activities of local Green groups also can give you an idea of what energy issues may require action from your group.

Some major issues in energy policy that you should consider opportunities to engage in activism are:

- **Cap and trade programs and carbon taxes**

*These policies are effectively energy taxes that kill good jobs, especially in energy intensive fields such as manufacturing and raise the price of gas and consumer goods. Meanwhile, the taxes collected may be designated to political pet projects or to crony capitalists, such as politically connected donors.*

- **Renewable fuel standards**

*Biofuel mandates are “food for fuel” policies that drive up the price of food and feed, exacerbate food shortages in poor countries and damage engines.*

- **Renewable portfolio standards**

*Many states have policies mandating a certain portion of consumer’s electricity be purchased from renewable sources. Definitions of “renewable” vary greatly. These policies drive up energy costs, give an unfair advantage to certain energy producers at the expense of others and harm consumer choice, all while threatening reliability.*

- **Green energy subsidies**

*Subsidies effectively reward companies that have trouble raising money due to their reliance on technologies that cannot compete effectively on a level playing field. Is it smart for taxpayers to invest in companies that can’t attract private capital? No, of course not, why are we even considering this? Furthermore, the money often goes to the politically connected such as in the case of the Solyndra debacle.*

- **Energy production**

*America is currently experiencing an energy boom due to advanced oil extraction technologies such as hydraulic fracturing, or fracking. Technology for offshore production has made more reserves accessible than ever before, and with the advent of horizontal drilling techniques, many*

*rigs which once had to be located offshore can now access energy from onshore. Meanwhile, people who are ideologically opposed to oil and gas production are trying to stop the development of these newly accessible resources by spreading hysteria with scare tactics. New energy production offers the opportunity to create jobs, lower energy costs and enhance national security.*

Fortunately, many states are now reevaluating their failed energy policies as the consequences in terms of lost jobs and rising energy prices begin to be felt. However, hucksters will continue to promote these bad policies knowing that the general public has limited understanding of energy issues allowing them to lie without being challenged.

Appoint an individual with excellent analytical skills to be your Director of Policy and to perform the following functions:

- Provide analysis regarding complex proposals originated by policymaking bodies such as your state legislature, local governments and regulatory agencies
- Communicate with energy producers and sympathetic policy institutes to find out what is needed and/or wanted from your organization
- Provide strategic guidance with respect to successful enactment of policy goals, coalition development and acquisition of financial resources

# Communications

Your communications department, also known as "public relations," has as its basic function the main objective of PR: good works made well known.

Your organization should develop relationships among local news outlets such as TV news stations, local newspapers, ethnic media and blogs. These media relationships can be a valuable resource for promoting your activities.

When you have an event, be sure your media contacts receive a press release. When issues come up that your group is concerned about, pursue opportunities to write a thoughtful op-ed on the situation at hand and have it published in your local paper.

If you have the opportunity to speak with a reporter, be positive and to the point. Talk about the good work your group does and the benefits of the policies you support.



You should choose a pleasant man or woman to be your Director of Communications. This position will be responsible for the following functions:

- Handle public relations functions including representing the organization in a positive manner to the media and the public at large
- Draft press releases and opinion articles for coverage by the media
- Achieve success in the online realm by ensuring website and social media properties are kept up to date.
- Represent the organization at public functions such as Chamber of Commerce meetings

# Promotion and Marketing

In order to maximize your impact, you are going to want to engage in activities which require financial resources. From major actions such as airing commercials, convening conferences, and holding rallies to more minor actions like hosting your website, buying matching tee shirts for your volunteers or holding a bumper sticker campaign all require an outlay of finances.

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This is not to say that you cannot be effective on a shoestring budget. However, you should not and need not settle for allowing your capabilities to be limited by finances.

There are numerous ways of bringing in financial resources to your organization and many different avenues through which you can ask for money. Following are a few ideas, some simple and some more complex:

- Set up an online donation system and feature it prominently on your website
- Send email solicitations to your supporters asking for donations. People like to donate to specific projects so be sure to say what you need the money for
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Just as political campaigns, have staff who work “field,” your organization should have a field division to communicate with supporters in the area over which you have responsibility.

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Supporters are a resource for the following activities and more:

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As discussed above, you must stay in communication with your supporters so they’re apprised of your activities and the latest developments in the issue areas with which you are concerned.

Technology has made the widespread dissemination of information far easier and cheaper than it was a generation ago. The following web-based platforms are essential to your ability to effectively communicate with your field:

- Engaging, interactive and up-to-date website
- Social media presence – Facebook is essential because it is the most widely used but you may also choose to communicate through other platforms in addition to Facebook such as Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram and Pinterest
- Mass email distribution system such as MailChimp or Constant Contact

The activities of the field division are extremely important for the greater goal of creating a citizenry which is informed on energy issues. When you build up a large email list and strong social media following, you will gain the ability to mobilize large numbers of people on behalf of smarter policy.

## OK I want to do this! What do I do next?

Awesome! Send an email to [Eric@Coalitionofenergyusers.org](mailto:Eric@Coalitionofenergyusers.org). The Coalition of Energy Users Foundation will work with you directly to help you start a successful citizen's energy advocacy organization in your community.

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# Conclusions

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As a rising tide lifts all ships, smart energy policy can uplift disadvantaged communities, provide resources for services such as education and public safety and enhance American energy security.

Unfortunately, counterproductive policies sometimes make it into law just because citizens lack an objective understanding of the issues at hand.

By starting a citizen's energy group in your state or community, you can be part of the solution. Your involvement will help your fellow citizens to become more informed and to gain the tools to effectively engage in the political process on behalf of access to jobs and affordable power.

And if you need any help, the Coalition of Energy Users Foundation is here to work with you! We want you and other informed consumers across the country to be successful in creating literally a brighter tomorrow!

## About the author



Eric Eisenhammer is the founder of the Coalition of Energy Users, a California-based nonprofit advocating for access to affordable energy and quality jobs and Founder of CEU Foundation, an education organization for objective discussions on energy and jobs. He has been interviewed by numerous media outlets and testified before California legislative committees speaking on behalf of energy consumers.

Eric also is a small business owner in the field of community outreach and web solutions. His clients have included statewide political campaigns, community groups, churches and other small businesses.

Eric first got involved in politics volunteering on the gubernatorial campaign of his local state representative and then served as a staff member in the State Capitol. In addition to energy policy, Eric is also knowledgeable about tax and public safety issues.

He holds a Master's in Public Policy and Administration from California State University, Sacramento and a Bachelors of Science degree in Business Administration with an emphasis in Finance from the California State University, Northridge.

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