

# Abiotic theory of the origin of oil versus peak oil ideas

by Randy Bright <http://www.tulsabeacon.com/?p=5998>

When I was a teenager, my father contemplated buying a particular piece of land with the intention of drilling for oil. Since he had worked in the oil business for many years, he knew that he could either become very wealthy or go broke, depending on whether he struck oil or not. In the end, he decided not to take the chance, and not long after someone else bought the property and sunk a well. It was a gusher.

I find the environmental movement to be something of an enigma. On one hand, I believe that the majority of believers in global warming and smart growth are people who sincerely care about the environment, but on the other hand I'm convinced that the environmental movement has far more to do with money and politics than with the environment. Nothing represents that dichotomy of thought quite as much as the theory of peak oil.

According to the Wikipedia, peak oil is defined as “the point in time when the maximum rate of global petroleum extraction is reached, after which the rate of production enters terminal decline.”

Peak oil does not mean depletion of oil, but the time at which the amount of oil extraction begins to fall, which theoretically leads to depletion. Since the world population is growing, and with it, the demand for more and more oil, peak oil is seen as a threat to civilization itself.

Some experts say that global peak oil will begin around the year 2020, but the International Energy Agency says that it began in 2006.

The problem with the theory is that we keep finding more gas and oil, and the reserves that we thought were not recoverable are becoming so with new and better methods for extraction. Two years ago a Reuters article claimed that oil and gas reserves had increased at record rates over the previous year. The proven reserves of gas had increased 11 percent, bringing the total gas reserves in the US to 284 trillion cubic feet. Oil reserves rose 9 percent to 22.3 billion barrels. Reserves in Texas and North Dakota alone rose by 529 million barrels and 481 million barrels, respectively.

There are abundant reserves of gas and oil in Oklahoma, Arkansas, Louisiana, Pennsylvania, and Alaska, as well as many other states like Colorado and North and South Dakota's Bakken 4.3 billion barrel oil fields.

The theory of peak oil assumes that oil is a finite resource, because it is a product of decaying plant and animal materials. However, some scientists believe that it is actually a naturally generated product from deep within the earth, and that oil fields that were previously assumed to be empty could eventually be replenished. This theory is called the “abiotic theory of the origin of oil”.

Peak oil also assumes that we are not capable of extracting all of the oil because of its location and the lack of technology for extracting it from subterranean formations. But again, oil companies continue to develop new methods and technologies that can pull out gas and oil from depths and formations that were previously thought to be impossible to achieve, including the now much maligned “fracking” technique.

There is nothing new about fracking. My father worked in the oil fields back in the 60’s, and he was doing “frack jobs” at that time without causing any environmental problems or earthquakes. The abundance of gas and oil in the United States and its allies mean that the time when peak oil might occur is probably much further away than proponents of the peak oil theory would like to admit. And if oil is abiotic in origin, which it likely is, it probably means that there will be enough oil and gas to supply us until a new and better source of energy is developed.

The problem, of course, is that environmentalists and politicians want oil and gas shortages to drive prices up so as to reduce the use of automobiles. But there are millions of Americans like myself that don’t believe in peak oil or global warming, and find it perplexing when other countries are allowed near our shores to pump oil and gas, when at the same time our government doesn’t permit American companies access to the same areas.

That doesn’t mean that we should continue to burn oil and gas forever. Private industries should be developing alternate energy sources that are safe, abundant, and inexpensive to use, without government funding or intervention. It is that kind of energy that should be available to all people, not just Americans, so that the freedom of individual mobility can help us all achieve our potentials.

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