

Call to Action

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Stop Driving!

With global demand for oil and oil products declining the price of oil and refined products, like gas and jet fuel, should also be going down.

When oil hit \$145 a barrel speculation was at its ugliest. Speculators were keeping the price of oil inflated citing many causes and concerns such as war, and strikes, and refinery fires and shut downs. Some real and some machinations to perpetuate their greedy folly.

Then came the global downturn. Due to the changing economy demand dropped, inventories rose and speculators were driven out of the market. The results were dramatic with prices of oil declining over \$100 per barrel to a low of nearly thirty-five dollars. With the decline the price of gas became more reasonable.

But the price of oil has rebounded, climbing to sixty-two dollars despite inventories reaching 19 year highs. As the price of a barrel of oil rises, so do gas prices.

So, even though supply is rising and demand is falling we're being charged more to drive?

The answer is yes. We, as Americans, need to stop a lot of things, change our generally selfish habits. Stop using oil. Stop using energy.

Stop Driving!

If all Americans reduced their gas consumption by a mere 5% it would have a resounding affect on the price of oil and the price of gas at the pump.

In an effort to falsely inflate the price of gasoline, oil companies lower their refining capacity which was at a near all-time low of 81.7% last week. They've been using this method to control gas prices for a long time. Aren't you tired of it?

Now it is our time. Our chance to fight back. If oil companies want to reduce their capacity then we must give them a reason. It is past time to cut back and force these mega companies to become good corporate citizens instead of the greedy entities that they have become.

It is actually very easy to cut back our gas consumption. With only a few minor changes in our driving habits we could easily lower our gas requirements by five and maybe even ten percent.

To put it in perspective, if you drove 100 miles each week, a 5% drop would be just five miles. A 10% reduction would therefore be just 10 miles less each week. That's just one trip to the store, and one trip to gymnastics or

soccer practice if you're inclined to go for the 10%.

This would obviously mean a slight adjustment in your habits. It would mean a few sacrifices, or better planning, or, god forbid, a little more exercise. But the payoff could be tremendous in the long run.

Here are a few of the most obvious ways to reduce consumption and make a difference:

1. Combine Trips - this would require a little more planning. Organize errands to take care of them at the same time instead of driving to the same area in two separate trips.
2. Car Pool - Work with a neighbor or friends to car pool to school, practices, lessons, sporting events, lunch, shopping, movies, park, etc.
3. Peddle or Walk - Leave the car in the garage or driveway and walk or ride your bike on short trips to the store, the park, to neighbors, or to have coffee with friends.
4. Consider Your Vehicle - Leave the gas guzzler at home sometimes and take the family car that gets better mileage. If you're purchasing a new car, consider a hybrid or flex fuel vehicle or a car that gets better mileage. The savings in gas could be tremendous!

I can almost guarantee that if only 20% of Patriotic Americans reduce their driving by five to ten percent the results will be dramatic; speculators will again be forced out of the trading pits, tankers from the middle-east will begin to stack up unable to dump their over-priced cargo, and the price of gas may come down below \$1.50 average per gallon by the end of September. The rest of the nation can thank us later.

But our dependency on oil and oil products is not confined only to driving. With that in mind we can extend our reductions in other aspects of our lives as well.

Reducing all energy consumption will reduce our dependency on oil.

That would require an awareness of what things around us are made of, or require petroleum products in the process of manufacturing or delivering that product.

Of course, a reduction in driving will also extend the life of your tires, a large user of petroleum in the manufacture of synthetic rubber, and increase the time between oil changes. But there are other things we, as good Americans, can do to lower our dependence and increase our independence:

1. Our Homes - the energy in our home is a big user of oil and oil products. This summer we could make a huge impact in reducing the price of oil. Simply lower your usage of air conditioning, the major requirement of energy during the summer months.
2. Reusable Bags - a lot has been circulating about the usage of plastic bags versus adapting by using cloth or canvas bags to do our shopping. A reduction in the use of plastic bags and other plastic products will help us lower our need for oil.
3. Carry Out - decline the plastic bag for smaller items that do not require a bag. Not only will you reduce the production of plastic bags, but reduce the tonnage going into our landfills which will, ultimately, help the environment.

These are just some of the things we can do to lower the gas prices at the pump, make America less dependent on foreign oil and, at the same, time more safe.

This first "Call to Action," does not demand anything from anyone. We can continue down the same path, and the same Americans will complain about everything that happens in this country. We have become a nation of

finger pointers; a nation of blaming all of our troubles on everyone else.

It is now the time to be introspective, which is very hard for the selfish American citizen to do. We, quite frankly, have become the sloths of this planet; the arrogant consumers of everything we can possibly consume. There are limited commodities on this planet and the time is now to find sustainable alternatives.

It is time to take back our independence, to show the world that we are stewards of the globe, and that our innovative leadership is alive and well.

If we can ween ourselves from oil without being pompous or arrogant, with a humility that can be admired, we can again command the respect of the world, not with swords, but by leadership.

The choice is ours. It's time for action before we are left behind in an unbalanced world, in a unique and unprecedented time.