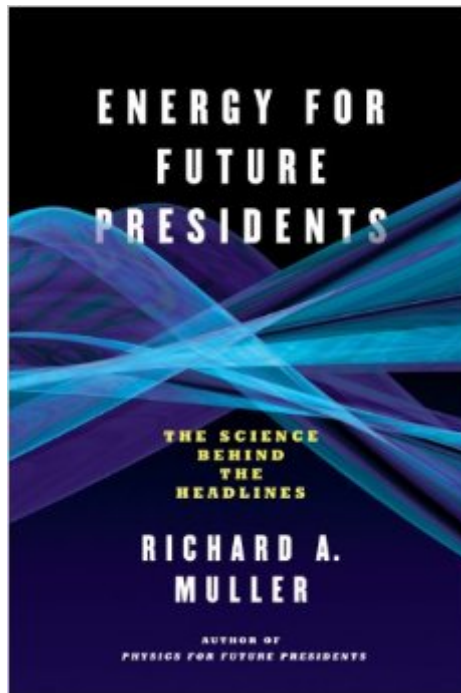


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Energy For Future Presidents: The Science Behind The Headlines



Synopsis

• Policymakers and casual readers alike can benefit . . . eye-opening . . . sheds lots of light with little wasted heat.â • Publishers Weekly The near meltdown of Fukushima, the upheavals in the Middle East, the BP oil spill, and the looming reality of global warming have reminded the president and all U.S. citizens that nothing has more impact on our lives than the supply and demand for energy. Its procurement dominates our economy and foreign policy more than any other factor. But the energy question is more confusing, contentious, and complicated than ever before. We need to know if nuclear power will ever really be safe. We need to know if solar and wind power will ever really be viable. And we desperately need to know if the natural gas deposits in Pennsylvania are a windfall of historic proportions or a false alarm that will create more problems than solutions. Richard A. Muller provides the answers in this must-read manual for our energy priorities now and in the coming years. 50 illustrations

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Energy for Future Presidents: The Science Behind the Headlines by Richard A. Muller"Energy for Future Presidents" is the educational, informative and accessible book on energy. The book covers popular topics on energy: energy disasters, energy landscape (modes of transportation), and "new" technologies. Professor of physics and author, Richard A. Muller, succeeds in providing the public a wonderful topical book that covers the most important topics on energy. The author uses a clever approach in the book; he plays the role as an energy advisor to you the future President. This

enlightening 368-page book is broken out in five parts: I. Energy Catastrophes, II. The Energy Landscape, III. Alternative Energy, IV. What Is Energy? and V. Advice for Future Presidents.

Positives:

1. Engaging, well-researched and well-written book. Accessible for the masses.
2. An important and interesting topic that is handled with integrity and fairness. Muller uses sound logic and provides compelling arguments to back his points. One of my favorite attributes of the author is the courage to be critical while remaining objective. Kudos.
3. Does a wonderful job of remaining objective. There is always an innate predisposition to head in a direction that one desires. The author cautions the readers of falling into the extreme traps of optimism and skeptical biases. "Claims based on conviction are not as valid as those based on objective analysis."
4. Effective use of charts, stats and facts that add value to the narrative of the book.
5. An interesting look at recent energy disasters: the disasters of Fukushima and the Gulf oil spill. Very unique and compelling arguments. Really does a wonderful job of keeping things in perspective. A welcomed approach.
- 6.

Full Disclosure: I'm a physicist well versed in these topics. I was looking for a quality modern overview of these important energy topics that is accessible to the layperson so I could hand it to friends and family of all backgrounds. While this book gets it right most of the time and is generally well written and accessible, it is fatally flawed in that it lacks the proper amount of research on some topics. Instead, on occasion he lazily (or worse, agenda orientated) replaces research with crude assumptions that lead him to incorrect numbers and conclusions. This is especially disappointing knowing that, as an PhD academically trained scientist, he is thoroughly trained in the merits of peer/expert review, but simply ignored such tools in favor of keeping a potentially controversial (and book selling) conclusion.

The most obvious gaffe is on the topic of plug-in vehicles. He makes wildly inaccurate and oversimplified assumptions about battery life that just are not founded in reality. Lithium ion batteries in current plug-in vehicles are high quality, thermally managed, and state-of-charge limited, which all work to dramatically improve the life of the battery. But he ignores these facts (or doesn't know them) and assumes they are equivalent to the cheapest laptop batteries you can find on the market and says all batteries will only last 500 charges. This leads him to the laughable conclusion that the Chevy Volt battery will have to be replaced after 20,000 miles. It's obvious he did ZERO research on this and did not speak to a single expert on this topic.

The name of the book is, "Energy for Future Presidents" written by Richard A Muller. I became aware of this important book while watching the Rachel Maddow show on MSNBC. Richard Muller was Rachel's guest and he was discussing his new book with her. This author had become a news

item worth reporting on the show because he had changed from being a skeptic about global warming into a convinced scientist. He stated that global warming is real and that 99% of it is due to human causes. Moreover, there is an exact correlation with the level of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. The author himself did not think he had changed his mind but had had an opportunity to thoroughly investigate the data on global warming in a scientific manner so that he could make an informed decision. Nonetheless, I think it is important that a renowned scientist has convinced himself that global warming is real. The controversy has become a political divide between Democrats and Republicans. It did not used to be that way. In fact, Republicans originally fostered the idea of "Cap and Trade". This concept had proven itself in solving the problem of acid rain due to coal fired generators. It allowed the free enterprise system to solve the problem in the most economical way. As of late however, it seems as though every Republican to a man swears that global warming is a hoax and a cap and trade is an onerous concept. The book itself is a review of what scientists know about the energy problem not only in the United States but worldwide. In Part I of the book, entitled "Energy Catastrophes", Mr. Mueller discusses two recent energy disasters using a non-emotional analysis. One of the disasters is the tsunami in Japan that damaged the nuclear reactor site as well as homes and factories and human lives.

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