Wednesday, August 10, 1994

## ttsburg

## Administration's Promises to Promote Natural Gas Development Fall Short

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Natural gas is the key in our transition to an energy-efficient future in which we rely on environmentally safe renewable energy sources. Natural gas is abundant in the United States, inexpensive and versatile. Because it burns three or four times cleaner than gasoline and diesel fuel, environmentalists strongly support its use in place of these other energy sources. And since it is available in the U.S., greater reliance on natural gas will put Americans back to

> · from the Clinton-Gore Campaign's National Energy Policy (1992)

During his campaign, President Clinton's economic platform prominently featured natural gas development. There is, he emphasized, an 18-year domestic supply of producible natural gas. It is a clean-burning fuel with advantages over other fossil fuels. Natural gas combusts without the soot or sulphur dioxide emissions of coal; its extraction and Raised Expectations transportation does not generate the environmental concerns associated with crude oil. Natural gas, he went on, does not cause the waste disposal problems of nuclear en-

Against this backdrop, the Clinton-Gore campaign proposed the use of natural gas as a replacement for foreign oil by cutting imports by 1.75 million barrels of oil per day by the year 2000. The plan would reduce the U.S. trade deficit by \$12.5 billion annually (based on a \$20 per barrel price for imported oil). To accomplish this "aggressive natural gas substitution policy," a Clinton Administration would:

- Expand markets for natural gas through incentives in "every sector" including households, business, industry, electrical generation and transportation;
- "Speed" development of new natural gas pipelines to get natural gas to the market (particularly in under-served areas);
- Convert the federal fleet to natural gas;
- Provide research and development dollars for new natural gas "applications"; and
- · Remove environmental and other regulatory impediments to production and distribution.

Despite the fact that such proposals were made in a political campaign, many oil and gas industry representatives-producers, transporters and distributors of gas in regions such as western Pennsylvania—took these gestures seriously. The campaign was clear and emphatic about natural gas in the "energy mix." Mr. Clinton, who comes from a gas-producing state, surrounded himself with advisors with strong oil and gas backgrounds during his campaign and in the first year of his administration. Vice-President Gore had strong environmental credentials as a U.S. Senator.

There were other reasons for optimism. In the fall of

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