THE INHERENT RISKS IN PRESIDENT BIDEN'S ENERGY PLAN *

You may count me among those who want to see society move beyond fossil fuels. We all know there are negative consequences associated with fossil fuel usage, such as the emission of carbon dioxide and various other pollutants.

However, fossil fuel replacements come with their own risks and trade-offs, and it is important to understand and weigh these trade-offs as we transition from fossil fuels.

Two key issues are scale and reliability. Most people drastically underestimate our ongoing dependence on fossil fuels. According to the latest BP Statistical Review — which is the "bible" of energy statistics — in 2019 fossil fuels supplied 83.3% of our energy in the U.S.; nuclear power supplied another 8.0%. Renewables, including hydropower, just 8.7%.

The U.S. has seen a drastic decline in coal consumption over the past decade (but global coal consumption has risen) as it has been displaced in the power sector by natural gas primarily, as well as renewables. As a result, natural gas consumption has increased by nearly 40% over the past decade in the U.S.

Despite California being the fastest-growing market for electric vehicles in the U.S., its oil consumption (pre-pandemic) is nearly as high as it has ever been, and it has steadily grown in recent years. Further, California's dependence on foreign oil imports has tripled in the past 20 years. California now relies on OPEC for more than half of its oil needs. This is in stark contrast to most U.S. states, which have seen crude oil imports plunge over the past decade.

If we prematurely discourage investment in fossil fuels — and then our dependence doesn't decline as rapidly as the Biden Administration envisions — that is a recipe for shortages, higher prices, and greater dependence on foreign nations for our energy.

* "The Inherent Risks In President Biden's Energy Plan", *Forbes*