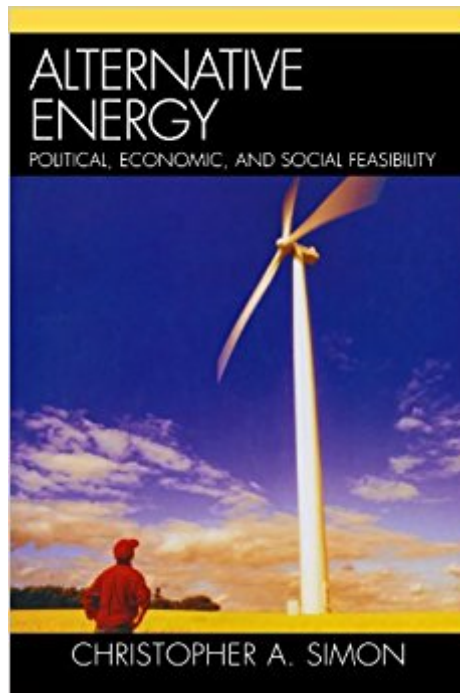




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# Alternative Energy: Political, Economic, And Social Feasibility



## Synopsis

As we experience a significant increase in the price of petroleum, energy experts caution us to the coming of a time when easily accessed petroleum will begin to decline. The United States is confronted with the challenge of meeting current energy demands in the face of a declining and unstable energy supply. *Alternative Energy* systematically explores the most viable alternative sources of energy, discussing the technical, political, economic, and social feasibility of each technology in understandable terms. In addition, the book discusses the history of energy policy, as well as current policy. Intended for courses in energy and public policy, as well as for those interested in developing energy-efficient plans for sustainable communities, *Alternative Energy* will help laypersons become active participants in making future energy choices for their communities. Includes an interactive model of alternative energy mixes and estimated prices.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

A comprehensive introduction to alternative energy sources and their political, economic, and social feasibility. The topic is important, and there is much of value in Simon's evenhanded presentation of the vulnerabilities and advantages of each source (e.g., geothermal, solar, wind). Simon has produced an accessible, accurate description of how alternative energy sources work and the obstacles to their broader adoption. His book is a significant contribution to the literature. Highly recommended. General readers; students, lower-division undergraduate and up; researchers and practitioners. (CHOICE) This book is packed with information on most of the major alternative energy

sources. Especially useful will be the end-of-chapter summaries and the references. Controversial subjects are treated with an even hand. (John Reynolds, University of Oregon) Americans face a major challenge in the coming decades of reformulating their public policies to reflect a world in which fossil fuels are no longer plentiful, easily accessible and relatively inexpensive to prepare for market and ultimate consumption. The economics, the basic science, and the cultural and political dynamics associated with public policy reformulation in the area of alternative energy sources are indeed complex and the challenge is appropriately framed as a 'wicked problem' by Christopher Simon in this excellent monograph. Simon should be commended for his artful framing of this issue, and for his fair and even-handed assessment of the public policy options facing citizens and policymakers alike as we struggle to assure future generations of a quality of life at least as good as that we have enjoyed during our period of stewardship over the planet's resources. I can recommend this well-informed overview of the alternative energy challenges which lie ahead for our country without reservation, and in confidence that the readers of this volume will find it at once informative and insightful. (Nicholas P. Lovrich, Jr., Claudius O. and Mary W. Johnson Distinguished Professor of Political Science, and director, Division of Governmental Studies and) This book takes a persuasive, broad view of the coming paradigmatic shift towards a sustainable energy future. Dr. Simon views this transition as the outcome of interactions among market forces of stakeholder dynamics, values evolution and institutional redesign. (T. R. Lakshmanan, director, Center for Transportation Studies; Professor, Department of Geography and Environment; Executive Director, Center for)

Christopher A. Simon is associate professor of political science at the University of Nevada, Reno. He is the author of *Public Policy: Preferences and Outcomes*.

Professor Simon has written a concise and informative book regarding the political economic and social feasibility of alternative energy. This book is a great introduction to anyone interested in the subject (professional or student). The illustrations are also very useful. As someone who personally has seen declines in business dealing with the offshore oil industry this book was helpful to me in better understanding the offshore wind energy industry which I am trying to make inroads, as this is a growing industry. I am looking forward to the next edition of this book as this one was written in 2007 and I am sure there are and will be changes in such places as the US considering the new administration, etc. Chapters in this book include: 1. Why Alternative Energy and Fuels? 2. Studying Public Policy and Alternative Energy/Fuels 3. Overview of Alternative Energy and Fuels and Their

Uses4. Alternative Energy/Fuels as a Public Policy Innovation5. Solar Energy6. Wind Energy7. Geothermal Energy8. New Century Fuels and Their Uses9. Historical Precedents: Alternative Energy/Fuels and Legitimacy Issues10. Public Policy, Institutional Developments and Policy Interests11. Practical Demonstrations of the Economics of Alternative Energy

I had high hopes for this book. For all the fluff about alternative energy, there are hardly any works which make a comprehensive feasibility analysis of alternative energy sources. Even David MacKay's outstanding book "Sustainable Energy without the Hot Air" (available for free at <http://www.withouthotair.com>) skips the cost-benefit analysis for the most part, with MacKay admitting that it would be beyond the scope of his book. Christopher Simon's book presents a good overview of alternative energy -- solar, wind, geothermal, but also nuclear. However it provides only few numbers and no "back-of-the-envelope" calculations as are ubiquitous in MacKay's book. It only quotes and summarizes other works when it comes to the feasibility analysis. These works stem from the early 2000's, meaning the state of knowledge is roughly ten years old. Much has happened in the field since. For example, Simon mentions in passing that storage systems are needed to store energy (e.g. from wind farms) when it is available. For Simon these storage systems are essentially batteries (and lead-acid ones at that). MacKay, on the other hand, devotes an entire chapter (albeit without a feasibility study) to storage systems, including reversible hydroelectric, and using electric cars as a storage medium. The social and political discussion is welcome, with interesting overview of "Wind Power America" (WPA). But it would be more welcome to have a projection (even with limited accuracy) of how developments like WPA might scale in the future. Overall a good book, but definitely not the definitive analysis of the feasibility of alternative energy.

This is an excellent introductory text on alternative energy for non-engineers with much to recommend it. Hopefully, the author will update this edition soon as there are a great many additional issues that have emerged over the past 8 years that would benefit from the authors' insightful analysis. The information is very accessible to novices and experienced practitioners alike.

I took Professor Simon's alternative energy class my senior year at the U of U and this was part of our required reading. While the book was a bit dry and not what I'd consider a "fun read" the information is rock solid, thorough and presented in a clear and useful fashion. This is a great read for anyone who really wants to understand alternative energy.

"Alternative Energy: Political, Economic, & Social Feasibility" provided me with a great resource for me as a beginning renewable resource student. Reading the text prepared me thoroughly for my professors' lectures.

This book was very interesting. It outlines the environments in which laws and energy-governing bodies are made and how they are changed, created, etc. The book shows the different kinds of policies which exist, the history of energy policy in the U.S., difference between bottom-up and top-down policy, and more. It also has separate chapters on each of the different major kinds of renewable alternative energy: solar, wind, geothermal. The author(s) obviously know tons about all of these subjects and related subjects. The book is FULL of citations (which shows they did research and it's not all just conjecture) and refers to related books for further reading. In-line website address citations can be annoying in the text, but still could never detract from the wealth of information in this book. I will strongly suggest anyone to read this book. Now I don't have to say "there should be a law about this" or "why doesn't the government do something about this" because now I know why! In addition, the book was written within the last few years, so it is fairly up-to-date (this review written Jan 5th 2009). When I rented this book, I set out to learn about wind and solar, but ended up learning about wind, solar, energy policy, social concerns, risk assessment, and tons more.

The book emphasized on rules, policies, and politics that made the world rethink about our current energy sources. It talked about alternatives energy in a way that other alternative energy book would not discuss such as politics and the policies that effect our current energy sources. The author's main alternative energy sources are wind, geothermal and solar energy. There were many subjects that the author evaluates thoroughly, such as the benefits and detrimental effects of staying with our current energy sources. Overall, I would recommend this book to anyone that is interested in this subject.

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