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Petroleum and the Environment

ALEXANDRIA, VA – With the price of oil over \$50 a barrel and possibly increasing, the importance of energy in our daily lives has once again become evident. The recent run-up in oil prices combined with continued global instability in major oil-producing areas has highlighted America's dependency on oil. Much of the public takes this natural resource for granted; we expect gasoline for our cars and a home or office that is just the right temperature. And petroleum supplies medicines and plastic products that we use. Petroleum is literally the foundation of our economy and high standard of living.

But petroleum brings with it many complex issues, especially for Americans, who import over half of the petroleum we use. As the nation evaluates its energy portfolio, the issues of future development and continued production of petroleum in the United States has entered the public discourse. The American Geological Institute (AGI) has produced a guide, *Petroleum and the Environment*, that helps the public, educators and policy makers understand petroleum from its formation to its consumption, including the many environmental issues that develop along the way.

Petroleum and the Environment explains the environmental issues associated with petroleum exploration, production, transportation and consumption. The publication provides easy-to-understand and relevant information, about what petroleum is, how it is found, and the environmental solutions needed for its safe production and consumption. Petroleum is a finite resource that requires responsible stewardship. *Petroleum and the Environment* explains how we can recycle and reuse petroleum, how areas are restored after drilling, how petroleum operations can be conducted safely offshore and in the Arctic, and what we can do to conserve petroleum resources and balance our energy use.

Petroleum and the Environment, produced with the cooperation of the American Association of Petroleum Geologists, the Bureau of Land Management, Minerals Management Service, USDA Forest Service, the U.S. Department of Energy and the U.S. Geological Survey, is a practical guide to understanding petroleum resources.

The American Geological Institute is a nonprofit federation of 42 scientific and professional associations that represent more than 120,000 geologists, geophysicists, and other earth scientists. Founded in 1948, AGI provides information services to geoscientists, serves as a voice of shared interests in our profession, plays a major role in strengthening geoscience education, and strives to increase public awareness of the vital role the geosciences play in society's use of resources and interaction with the environment. More information about AGI can be found at <http://www.agiweb.org>.

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