



The Quick and Dirty Facts on Peak Oil

Peak oil refers to the instance at which oil reaches its highest level of extraction and begins to decline. From this point on, the price of oil will continually increase as this 'precious' commodity becomes scarcer and more valuable over time.

When we finally agree on the date of peak oil, it will already be upon us or will have already passed:

- Global oil *discovery* peaked in 1964.
- Leading experts predict that global oil *extraction* will peak within this decade.
- Natural Gas is predicted to peak around 2020, compounding the peak oil issue.

The gap between oil consumption and oil discovery is growing:

- Since 1981, the world has consumed more oil than it has discovered.
- Today, we consume 4 barrels of oil for every 1 barrel that is discovered.

Our economies are dangerously oil dependent:

- Oil and gas currently accounts for 65% of global energy consumption.
- Oil accounts for 95% of global energy used for transportation.
- In Canada, the average piece of food is transported 5,000 miles from where it is produced to where it is consumed.
- We rely upon hundreds of petroleum-based products in our daily lives, such as plastic goods, clothing, medicines, diapers, kitchen appliances, shoes, toys, computers, cars and building materials.
- Chinese oil consumption has doubled in the last decade, demonstrating that oil dependency is not only a developed world issue.

We must address the issues of peak oil now:

- Energy sources, such as coal, degrade local air quality and contribute to global warming.
- Preparation for the energy crisis *is* possible. Communities can develop small scale local strategies that focus on investing in alternative energy infrastructures.

