Impact of COVID-19 on the United States Energy Mix Through 2050: U.S. Energy Information Administration Report

Walter Wright, Jr.
wwright@mwlaw.com
(501) 688.8839

02/05/2021

The U.S. Energy Information Administration ("EIA") issued a February 3rd report titled:

EIA's AEO2021 Explores the Impact of COVID-19 on the U.S. Energy Mix Through 2050 ("Report")

The *Report* contains conclusions from projections that are found in the EIA Annual Energy Outlook 2021 ("AEO2021").

A key conclusion is the projection that the United States:

. . . will likely take years to return to 2019 levels of energy consumption and carbon dioxide emissions following the impact of COVID-19 on the U.S. economy and global energy sector . . .

The EIA projections in AEO2021 are stated to rely on a Reference case. The Reference case serves as a baseline modeled projection. It is designed to explore varying assumptions concerning:

- Technology
- Policy
- Economy

A future is examined in which:

. . . slower growth in consumption in an increasingly energy-efficient U.S. economy contrasts with increasing energy supply because of technological progress in renewable sources, oil, and natural gas.

Nevertheless, EIA states that such projections are subject to "heightened levels of uncertainty" due to the ongoing effects of COVID-19.

Additional key findings from AEO2021 are identified as:

- Returning to 2019 levels of U.S. energy consumption takes years; energy-related carbon dioxide emissions fall further before leveling off or rising.
- Renewable energy incentives and falling technology costs support robust competition with natural gas as coal and nuclear power decrease in the electricity mix.
- Ongoing record domestic energy production supports natural gas exports but does not necessarily mean growth in the U.S. trade balance in petroleum products.

A copy of the Report can be downloaded here.