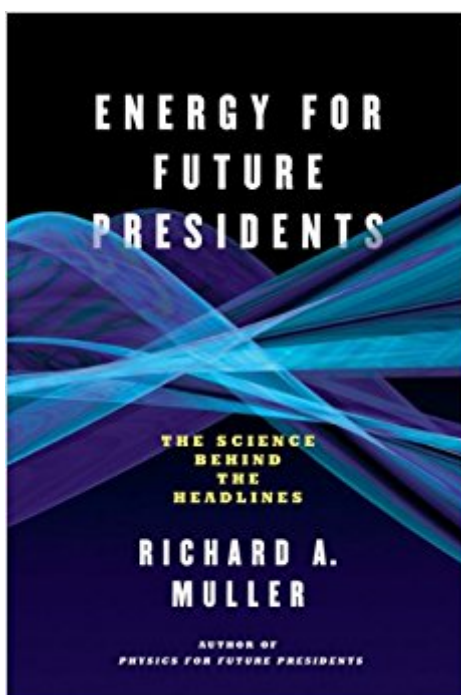


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# Energy For Future Presidents: The Science Behind The Headlines



## Synopsis

“Policymakers and casual readers alike can benefit . . . eye-opening . . . sheds lots of light with little wasted heat.” Publishers Weekly The near meltdown of Fukushima, the upheavals in the Middle East, the BP oil spill, and the looming reality of global warming have reminded the president and all U.S. citizens that nothing has more impact on our lives than the supply and demand for energy. Its procurement dominates our economy and foreign policy more than any other factor. But the “energy question” is more confusing, contentious, and complicated than ever before. We need to know if nuclear power will ever really be safe. We need to know if solar and wind power will ever really be viable. And we desperately need to know if the natural gas deposits in Pennsylvania are a windfall of historic proportions or a false alarm that will create more problems than solutions. Richard A. Muller provides the answers in this must-read manual for our energy priorities now and in the coming years. 50 illustrations

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"An informative, comprehensive discussion of important economic and environmental issues."

---Kirkus --This text refers to the Preloaded Digital Audio Player edition.

Richard A. Muller is professor of physics at the University of California, Berkeley, and the best-selling author of *Physics for Future Presidents*. For his outstanding work in experimental cosmology, he was awarded a 1982 MacArthur “Genius” Fellowship, and also a

share of the 2015 Breakthrough Prize in Fundamental Physics for the discovery of dark energy.

This is an update/continuation of his previously published "Physics for Future Presidents." Both are superlative. I have recommended both to essentially everyone in my social circle. The high point of "Energy" details the research and analysis of hundreds of years (data was sparse hundreds of years ago, more readily available in the last hundred or so years---their team considered everything available) of nearly 40,000 weather keeping sites to conclude global warming is real. Dr. Muller fairly and accurately notes this provides no actual prediction of climate change, or what climate change can be predicted, since computer models are limited because of the difficulty of modelling clouds, among other factors. The global warming discussion was the high point for me. There is much, much more. Reactor flooding after the Tsunami in Japan, natural gas and oil, practical considerations (such as cost) in their mining, carbon sequestration, nuclear reactor construction and use, energy implications in terrorism, solar energy and its future, etc., etc., etc. This is very readable. It is dramatically informative. I feel that I am a better citizen of the United States and the world community having read it.

Muller is a physicist that applies his scientific and pragmatic mind to the energy sector. The book discusses every form of potential large-scale energy production and goes through pros/cons. His presentation is pretty apolitical although he has obvious favorites as far as energy is concerned (nuclear, natural gas). His favorites are based on what he feels (and demonstrates) are the most likely to best reduce CO2 emissions while being realistic about consumption and the dramatic increase of energy demand in the developing world. He's tough on electric vehicles, wind, and hydrogen but he provides good arguments for his stances. If you read one book about energy, this is the one I recommend. It's similar to Mackay's Sustainable Energy (Without the Hot Air) Sustainable Energy - Without the Hot Air but I think it's an improvement and more current.

I had Professor Muller as a student in college in the early 2000s and he was probably one of the best teachers that I had, breaking down concepts into digestible "plain English". This is a fantastic book and offers a pretty good survey into the world of energy in this era of thinking green amid the threat of global warming. It's quite an easy read, and entertaining at the same time. Disclaimer: I was an engineering student so I do have some bias. I still maintain that this is a pretty easy read for non-technical people.

Muller is a Physics professor at UC Berkeley. I got interested in him when he spoke at the Commonwealth Club on his theory of ice ages. So I tried this book, figuring how difficult can it be if it's for presidents. He has an unusual take on many issues, and has opened up my thinking. I recommend it. It is interesting and somewhat iconoclastic.

I'm glad I read this book. I'm thinking everyone should read this. It's not just future presidents! This is the book to read to understand the issues of today in regard to energy. It's got it all: oil, nuclear, climate change, alternative energy, natural gas, everything. Though there are several science-y things in here that I don't really understand, it is mostly intelligible to me. It is the most reasonable and transparent view of these issues that I have ever read. It really tries to teach rather than pontificate. So refreshing.

Great book. I have the same reservations as some others when it comes to the analysis of the electric vehicles. Also, his solar analysis is wrong - solar prices have fallen so much that kWh for kWh, it's a much better deal than wind nowadays. But the book outlines the impact of major disasters and whether or not they should influence national energy policy. It also covers the most comprehensive (by far) study on global warming and greenhouse emissions, a study that was funded by several extremely conservative groups, among others. Good read.

This is the best balanced book I have read about the energy situation in the US. It clearly lays out, and uses facts and figures to back up statements. The major sections address the meltdown at the Fukushima plant, the Gulf oil spill, global warming, natural gas, oil, economics, and alternative energies (solar, wind, energy storage, advanced nuclear and fusion). The book is easy to understand, but saying that, I need to identify myself as a former energy researcher. People without a technical background could have a different opinion. Ultimately, it is the economics that will determine the energy mix, and right now the low cost of natural gas will determine how we use energy in the short-term. The technology of fracking has reduced the cost of natural gas to a level where other energy sources have a hard time competing, so for the next few decades natural gas will tend to dominate energy use. In time, alternative energy sources will take over, but development is necessary so they will be ready when needed.

This book made me rethink some areas of energy policy where I had previously been perhaps

naively optimistic about some possible future energy sources. I found his opinion on nuclear energy very interesting and he may have nudged me to a more accepting attitude toward that technology. Where I continue to differ from the author is that while he is merely concerned about global warming, I am frankly frightened of what the next 50 years may hold for us. I was convinced by his argument that we must invest heavily in helping developing nations like China and India to move toward natural gas and away from coal if we are to have any chance of avoiding the worst of global warming. I most appreciated his efforts to be fair, balanced, and objective in his analysis of our future energy challenges. I can strongly recommend this book.

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