



ABUNDANT ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

For most of human history, artificial lighting was expensive and labor-intensive. Obtaining 1,000 lumen-hours of light—equivalent to about an hour of illumination from one bright lightbulb—required an estimated [58 hours](#) of labor during the Stone Age. Even in 1800, it took [five hours](#) of work. People organized their lives around daylight because darkness was so costly to overcome.

Today, turning on a lamp barely registers as an expense. Families can affordably light their homes after sunset, businesses can stay open into the evening, and streets can remain safely illuminated.

Lighting is just one example of the incredible transformations in standard of living made possible by having readily available energy. When energy becomes abundant and less costly to produce and deliver, all goods and services that depend on it also become more affordable. Efficient oil drilling and refining reduces the price of gasoline, diesel, and jet fuel, which in turn reduces the cost of commuting, personal and business travel, and transporting food and other goods. More electricity production makes heating, air conditioning, refrigeration, computing, artificial intelligence, and manufacturing more affordable for households and businesses.

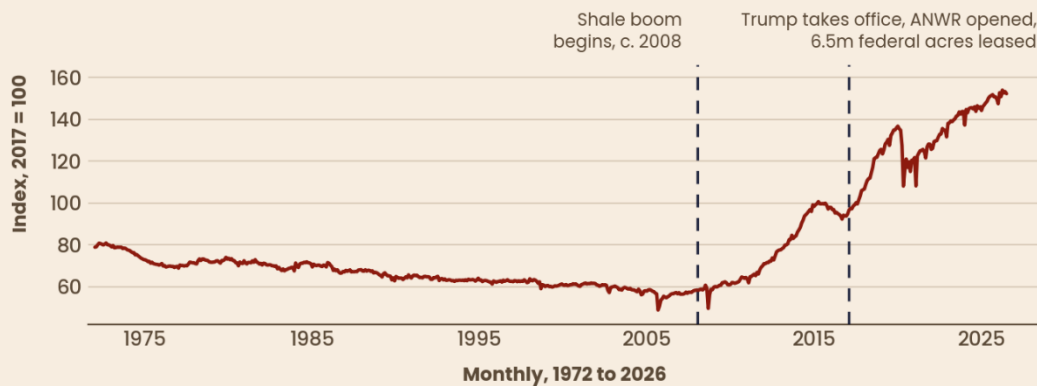
Unfortunately, government policies often hinder the energy supply chain and drive up costs. Burdensome regulations, lengthy permitting processes, and unnecessary taxes and fees are limiting the development of the energy resources America depends on. For example, regulation of nuclear power has added so much to the time and cost of building nuclear plants that the U.S. went from bringing online about [100](#) nuclear reactors between 1960 and 1990 to only building [three](#) reactors since 2000. Similarly, costly climate policies in states such as California and Washington contribute to higher fuel prices. Energy mandates, subsidies, and permitting barriers undermine America's energy mix and delay needed infrastructure projects.

It doesn't have to be this way. Lawmakers can build on recent reforms that start to roll back these costly and burdensome regulations. This chapter provides policy options that could serve as a starting point toward a more energy-abundant and affordable future.



American oil and gas output has more than doubled since the fracking revolution

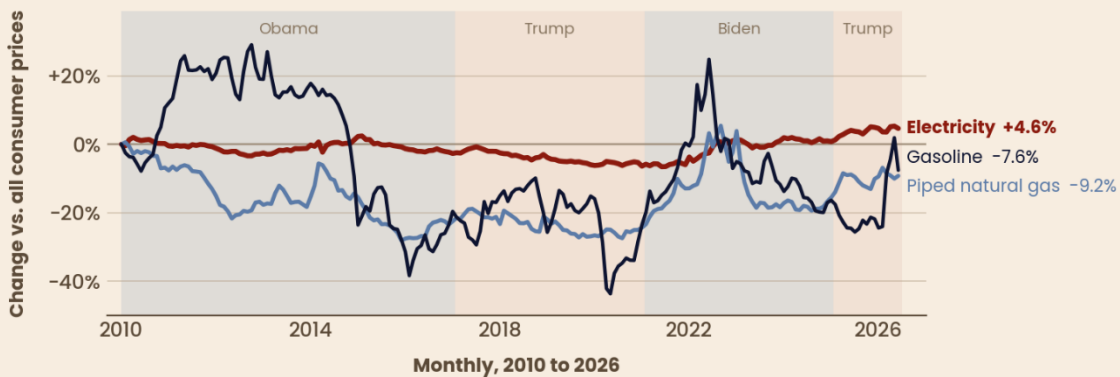
Industrial production index for oil and gas extraction, 2017 = 100



Sources: Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, Industrial Production: Mining: Oil and Gas Extraction (NAICS 211), IPG211S — via FRED. Leasing figures: Bureau of Land Management, Onshore Acres Leased, 2017–2020. The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017 opened the ANWR Coastal Plain.

Fracking and rising production kept fuel prices below inflation

Real energy price change since 2010, relative to all consumer prices



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Price Index series. Each index is deflated by headline CPI and rebased to January 2010, so the lines show the changes in price categories relative to all consumer prices. Missing months are linearly interpolated.

