

ECOLOGY PROBLEMS

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For thousands of years people lived in harmony with the environment, and it seemed that natural resources were boundless and unlimited. With the development of civilization man's interference in our nature began to increase. In the last century with the rapid growth of science and technology human achievements in conquering nature became so great that it affected negatively the biosphere. Actually, the range of ecology problems is wide, i.e. air and water pollution, acid rain, global warming, ozone reduction, species loss, etc. Nowadays, pollution is certain to be one of the most burning problems. Millions of cars, buses, trucks all over the world exhaust fumes and harmful substances into the atmosphere. These poisoned substances pollute air, land, water, birds, animals and people. Everything there is covered with soot and dirt. A lot of industrial enterprises send gases and chemicals into the air. All these mix with water in the clouds and are carried away by wind for hundreds of miles. Finally, they fall back to the earth with rains and snow killing fish, trees and animals. In fact, people all over the world have proved to be unfriendly to the environment, and a lot of dead lands and lifeless areas have appeared. Meliorating swamps has had a harmful impact on the climate. At present we know that the swamp is a natural recycler and protector of our planet. It helps control global warming as it absorbs CO₂. Therefore, protecting all the swamps is the key to our survival. In Belarus melioration was extensively used for drying swamps in order to produce cheap peat fuel. However, the Belarusian government has estimated the risks of animals, birds and plants species disappearing. Our people are currently working on the protection and re-wetting of peat lands, and ultimately, many of European countries are sure to benefit from these projects.

“Global warming” has been introduced by the scientific community and the media as the term that encompasses all potential changes in climate that result from higher average global temperatures. For a long time people didn't think a lot about greenhouse gases. The situation changed when people started using more and more energy in the form of fossil

fuels. It is well known that when fossil fuels are burnt, they let CO₂ into the atmosphere. Nevertheless, harnessing renewable energy sources is considered to prevent global warming and stabilize the climate. Environmental benefits of alternative energy are clear, and our government feels strongly about building more than thirty power plants using alternative energy technologies in 2013. Indeed, we have to realize that the Earth has enough for every man's need, but not for man's greed.

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**ECONOMIC & ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS
OF ALTERNATIVE ENERGY**

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Alternative energy sources provide many benefits. Renewable energy can create new jobs and promote economic development. If used to diversify utility energy sources, alternative energy technologies can provide a hedge against rising fuel prices and can be valuable risk management tools. While some renewable energy resources are not always available (the wind doesn't blow or the sun doesn't always shine), the technologies perform reliably when the "source" is available. Where they come from, solar and wind technologies are emissions-free. This makes them attractive from an environmental standpoint. Finally, selected applications of energy efficiency and renewable energy technologies can enhance the disaster resiliency of communities and individual structures. In fact, countries that import electricity, or utilities that import fuel for power plants from other countries, lose their vital financial resources because those payments leave the state and local economies. Renewable energy and energy efficiency can help revitalize rural communities. Farmers on windy lands can lease space to wind developers, earning thousands of US dollars for each turbine every year. Renewable energy technologies can be an economical addition to an energy supplier's resources. Even though wind is an intermittent resource, it's predictable and can be planned by utilities as part of their generating portfolios.

The benefits of alternative energy are clear and the fact that the public and the government feel strongly about moving to a greener economy only makes them that much more compelling. Solar and wind technolo-