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### Destruction Due to Ignorance

The cost of gasoline is steadily rising, and it will never go back down to the price our grandparents paid. To find a solution to the problem, many people have turned to natural gas as an alternative energy source. Is it really the best source? Paul S. Edwards' 2012 editorial in the Deseret News, "Drilling in Utah," makes readers re-evaluate their stance on natural gas and its harvest. His tone gives strong support to his argument, as the editor of a newspaper should. However, his logic is full of ignorance.

"Given the nation's need for clean, abundant energy, as well as the need for jobs in the Uintah Basin,... allow[ing] the Gasco natural gas project to proceed makes sense"(Deseret News). Edwards forgets that natural gas is a fossil fuel, which means that it is a limited resource. His proposal to extract more natural gas by increasing the number of wells is a quick fix to our nation's dependency on oil. What happens when all the natural gas reserves are depleted? The world needs to find a renewable energy source. Why not use solar power? Solar power is a renewable energy source that doesn't produce harmful carbon emissions. Utilizing the sun would give us a limitless supply of energy. How about wind energy? It offers a renewable energy source that doesn't contribute to air pollution. What about Hydropower? Hydropower uses water to create another source of renewable energy that doesn't pollute the planet. Shouldn't geothermal energy be considered? Using the heat from the earth is

renewable, because the “earth is in a constant state of producing heat” (Haluzan). It also is clean for the environment, because it doesn’t produce carbon emissions. All these solutions would be perfect, because they are in infinite supply.

Edwards is naïve when he states “[natural gas... [is] more friendly for the environment than oil.” MIT published a report of Robert Howarth’s, a professor from Cornell University who specializes in ecology and environmental biology, on the study of burning natural gas. He states that “using natural gas... could actually increase climate change” (Bullis). He bases this study on the amount of carbon dioxide released and the effect of natural gas leaks. Tom Wigley, a head researcher from the National Center for Atmospheric Research explains clearly why coal is better than natural gas, when he states that, “by not burning coal, you’re not having the cooling effect of sulfates and other particles” (University Corporation for Atmospheric Research). Howarth supports his argument when he suggests that natural gas is on the same level as burning coal, which is the dirtiest of fossil fuels. The MIT study ends with the idea that natural gas is not, “worth the cost or the hassle”, and that “[m]aking more efficient gasoline and diesel vehicles might work better, and be a faster way to reduce greenhouse emissions” (Bullis).

Edwards conveniently leaves out the size of land that will be affected by the drilling. About 575 drill pads will be used to drill for oil. Paul Foy of the Huffington Post reports on another area where 163,000 acres will be drilled and that roughly 8,100 acres will definitely be disturbed. The total number is large, so the percentage that will definitely be affected doesn’t seem like a lot to some people. This could be due to the fact that many people can’t picture the size. The American football field is the size of about 1.1 acres. That means the size definitely affected would equal to about 7,364 football fields. Using this type of comparison,

the area being affected to most people is huge! Edwards stated in his editorial that, “the company is prohibited from drilling beneath the rim of Nine Mile Canyon, in the 100-year floodplain or in areas critical to the habitat of endangered fish species.” He states this to seem to give reassurance to environmentalists and to anyone else who would be concerned. Since when have drilling companies done the right thing? Look at the gulf oil spill. British Petroleum’s shortcuts led to the spill. What happens if Gasco Energy Inc. decides to take shortcuts to get more oil? The lives of the fish are in danger!

What about the cost to switching to natural gas? As more natural gas is harvested, the more people will use it. The more something is in demand, the higher the price. Natural gas already heats many homes in Utah. The demand for more natural gas will cause homeowners heating bills to increase.

Edwards says that by importing oil from other countries, we are supporting terrorism. This is not completely true. Although we do import a small percentage of oil from countries that are friends of terrorism, the U.S. gets most of its oil from Canada and Mexico. These are not classified as terrorist countries or even suspected terrorist countries; they are neighbors to the U.S. (Consumer Energy Report).

Paul S. Edwards does not have a degree in science, nor has he done any previous scientific research outside of school. He is the editor of the Desert News, who just happens to have a law degree. He is an opinionated man that tries to pass himself off as an expert of this topic. Since Edwards is not a scientist, he cannot be considered an expert on the effects of natural gas (Deseret News).

Edwards made many logical mistakes while writing his editorial. He failed to research deeper into his topics, and instead stated the general misconceptions and called them facts. He has presented nothing to prove that he is a scientific expert; therefore he is not a credible source. All he did was use good structure and tone to support his opinion.

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