

The Hydrogen Economy

By Jeremy Rifkin

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The message of *The Hydrogen Economy* is resoundingly simple: The earth is depleting its oil reserves and even the most generous estimates show oil reserves peaking in about forty years. The specter of global warming and the rise of Islamic fundamentalism in the oil-rich regions of the earth worsen the problem considerably. The answer, asserts Rifkin, is to embrace a new energy source that is just now gaining public attention: hydrogen.

This abundant element, found everywhere on earth including in air and water, can be transformed, using sustainable methods, into a potentially limitless form of clean-burning fuel. But this potential will founder unless we act now to create the necessary global infrastructure before the factors above overtake us. If we embrace this momentous opportunity, Rifkin says, we will also be able to reinvent the global economy as one in which an inexpensive energy grid provides affordable, efficient fuel for virtually everyone on earth. If we fail, our current economic regime-built exclusively on fossil fuels-will collapse. As the concept of a hydrogen-based future grows in the news, *The Hydrogen Economy* will lead the way.

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Editorial Review

From Library Journal

Rifkin, president of the Foundation on Economic Trends and the author of a number of thought-provoking books, including *The Biotech Century* and *The End of Work*, explains that the next great economic era will be powered by hydrogen. Drawing on a variety of well-balanced research studies, his basic premise is that the world must switch from a fossil-fuel economy to a hydrogen economy. This must happen soon for three reasons: the imminent peak of global oil production, the increased concentration of remaining oil reserves in the Middle East one of the most politically and socially unstable regions of the world and the steady heating up of the world's atmosphere from fossil-fuel dependency. Detailing the shortcomings of traditional energy sources in light of possible terrorist attacks, Rifkin then covers the merits of hydrogen as a "forever fuel" and offers his own vision of a social revolution that he calls worldwide hydrogen energy web (HEW), much like today's World Wide Web. This revolution will make energy available to everyone, not just the wealthiest nations, and would be the first democratic energy regime in history. A fine companion to Peter Hoffman's *Tomorrow's Energy: Hydrogen, Fuel Cells and the Prospects for a Cleaner Planet*, this will be a welcome addition to most academic and larger public library collections. Eva Lautemann, Georgia Perimeter Coll., Clarkston

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About the Author

An internationally acclaimed social critic, Jeremy Rifkin is the bestselling author of *The End of Work*, *The Age of Access*, and *The Biotech Century*, which was translated into sixteen languages.

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