

PURE GENIUS

# T. BOONE PICKENS PLANS FOR 8 MILLION TRUCKS TO RUN ON NATURAL GAS



BY MELANIE D.G. KAPLAN

POSTING IN ENERGY

THE TEXAS BILLIONAIRE SAYS BUYING OIL FROM THE ENEMIES MEANS WE'RE PROBABLY PAYING FOR BOTH SIDES OF THE WAR. 'IT'S NOT

JUST DUMB,' HE SAYS. 'IT'S DUMB-DUMB.'



(<http://i.bnet.com/blogs/pickens.png>)

Texas billionaire **T. Boone Pickens** (<http://www.boonpickens.com/>) unveiled the **Pickens Plan** (<http://www.pickensplan.com/>) in 2008 to decrease our reliance on foreign oil. He recently tweaked the plan, shifting his focus from wind energy to natural gas and from cars to 18-wheelers and buses. Pickens is a big advocate of **H.R. 1835**

(<http://www.govtrack.us/congress/bill.xpd?bill=h111-1835>), legislation introduced last April, which would offer significant tax credits for buyers of natural

gas cars and their manufacturers and which would set regulations for vehicles purchased by the federal government. (*Scroll down to see the Pickens Plan's latest ad.*)

I talked to Pickens last week as he flew to Orlando for the **National Automobile Dealers Association** (<http://www.nada.com/>) convention, where he was a keynote speaker.

**In your new commercial you say, “Go back to sleep America, the oil crisis is over.” Then you hear Middle Eastern-sounding music, and you say, “I don’t think so,” and you tell us that we’re importing as much as 70 percent of our oil, much of it from enemies. What kind of feedback are you getting on this?**

Good. It’s pretty straightforward. The Arabs don’t like it.

**You say cheap and easy oil is gone. Do most Americans understand that?**

I was in the mall yesterday going to a movie, and the couple walking in said, “We’re with you.” So they understand it. We have the resource to replace foreign oil . Let’s use it and move forward. I think we’re at a tipping point. I think you’re going to get legislation passed, and then we’ll be on our way.

**What do you expect to happen with the Natural Gas Act on Capitol Hill?**

I think you’ll get legislation passed before Memorial Day. It’s Senate bill 1408 and House bill 1835. They’re written and ready to go. How

can you be against depending on your own resources? Nobody wants to say, "I don't like your plan." They either support it or they're quiet. If they don't like it, they don't say anything. If they aren't for my plan, they're for foreign oil, and nobody wants to be for foreign oil.

Everybody sees the security issue--that is, you're buying oil from the enemies. And everyone probably agrees you're paying for both sides of the war. It's not just dumb; it's dumb-dumb.

### **Who are your biggest supporters?**

The Senate Majority Leader **Harry Reid** (<http://reid.senate.gov/>), and **Steny Hoyer** (<http://hoyer.house.gov/>) and **John Larson** (<http://www.larson.house.gov/>) in the House.

### **How many presidents have you talked to about our oil crisis?**

The first was Ronald Reagan, and everybody since then.

### **When you last met with Obama, what did he say?**

That was August '08. He said could he take notes. I said sure. He had a lot of questions. When we got through he had a pretty good understanding. When he accepted the nomination the month before, he said in 10 years we won't be importing oil from the Middle East.

### **What's the model for this natural gas plan?**

The model is 12 million vehicles in the world running on natural gas. Iran has gone to natural gas. Russians are going to it. The technology is well known. But if you want to look closer to home, go to Southern California. They had an air quality issue and said all new trash trucks

purchased have to be natural gas. They didn't make anyone get rid of anything, but they regulated the new ones. That's my plan for 18-wheelers in the future. My target is 8 million trucks, class five through eight. When I do something I want to do a model. I'm not an R&D guy. I figure 10 years for R and 10 years for D, and I'm 100 years old. It's already operating, and we can follow good models.

**Have you driven one of those 18-wheelers?**

No, have you?

**Not yet. What do the truckers think about it?**

I think truck drivers are patriotic people. Properly presented to them, I think they'd make it their mission and carry it out.

**What's so great about natural gas?**

It's not going anywhere. It's been there in the ground for millions of years. There's an over-200-year supply for us. If you convert the natural gas to the **barrel of oil equivalent**

([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barrel\\_of\\_oil\\_equivalent](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barrel_of_oil_equivalent)), or BOE, you're formidable.

You're bigger than Russia, Iran, Qatar. It's right here in North America. It's abundant, cheap, clean, and it's ours. It's a global energy game-changer.

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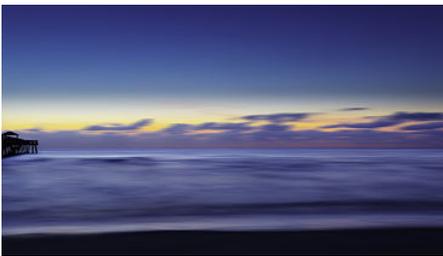
## MELANIE D.G. KAPLAN

### Contributing Editor

Melanie D.G. Kaplan is a Washington, D.C.- based journalist. She is a regular contributor to The Washington Post and National Parks Magazine. Her website is [www.melaniedgkaplan.com](http://www.melaniedgkaplan.com). Follow her on [Twitter](#). **DISCLOSURE** +

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