

Real-World Science: Debate Energy Sources

Learning goals

After completing this activity, you will be able to ...

- Identify energy sources available in your community.
- Evaluate the pros and cons of using different energy sources to produce electricity.

Energy crisis

Suppose the state is running short on energy, and the state legislature has allocated \$50 million for subsidizing the development of increased energy supply. A hearing before the energy committee is scheduled to decide how to spend the money. Nine lobbyists will testify before the committee.

Committee and Lobbyists

Organize your class into groups. Nine pairs of students should represent lobbyists for each of the main nine energy sources used in the United States. All other students should represent committee members.

Allow time to prepare. Each group should research the benefits and costs of their energy source as well as the other energy sources. Both economic and environmental arguments should be considered. In addition, students may wish to research the following:

- The current electricity requirements of your community
- How your community currently meets its electricity requirements
- The projected future electricity requirements of your community
- The feasibility of various energy sources given the geography of your community and region

Hold a City Council Meeting

Each lobbyist group has 5 minutes to present their case to the committee. Committee members can ask follow-up questions.

Committee members write short reports detailing how they would spend the money and why. You could follow this up with a poll of all students on which energy source they think would be the best choice for the community to develop.

