

BEYOND THE CROSSROADS

Merilee Kern cites the US' energy mix and need for reform as the world yearns for solutions

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Merilee Kern (MBA) is an internationally regarded brand strategist and analyst. She is also the creator and host of the Savvy Ventures business TV show that airs on FOX Business TV and Bloomberg TV (she can be contacted at www.TheLuxeList.com and www.SavvyVentures.tv).



Viable energy solutions don't need subsidies; they need assurance from the capital markets that projects are viable and won't be delayed or revisited

As the need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions gains momentum, the undercurrent of seismic cultural shifts is creating a challenging business landscape for energy companies.

Indeed, varied energy specific concerns continue to dominate the news cycle – there are intra-industry issues related to technology modernisation, scalability, adaptability, generational recruitment and more; as well as environmental, societal and cultural issues of consumer resonance.

With energy companies at the crossroads, President and CEO of Southern Gas Association Suzanne Ogle weighs in with some interesting insights: “I have a unique perspective on the importance of our nation's energy mix and why it matters now more than ever. There are 10 key reasons why a comprehensive energy mix is crucial to sustain America's energy security, innovation, geopolitical stability and climate goals.”

Here are Ogle's 10 reasons why the US' energy mix matters now more than ever.

PRODUCTION The world is facing an energy supply and demand imbalance that's causing global bottlenecks and price spikes. Demand will only increase over the next 30 years as the middle class expands and the US can't ignore this growing trend or its reliance on foreign powers.

The energy mix plays a crucial role in addressing the country's long-term needs, ensuring that it can produce the energy the world needs while lowering emissions and carbon intensity.

LOW EMISSIONS It's possible to create smarter, better energy that meets the country's growing needs while reducing emissions when working together. Modernising America's energy infrastructure will enable it to produce reliable and affordable energy with the lowest emissions possible.

The mix is a crucial tool in solving its energy and climate needs, and ensuring a sustainable future for generations to come.

ENERGY SECURITY This is a critical con-

cern for the US – and the world. Ensuring secure and affordable energy supplies, as well as system flexibility, is vital to protecting the resilience of its electricity.

The energy mix is a crucial component of the country's energy security strategy; it provides a reliable source of energy and reduces its dependence on foreign powers.

GEOPOLITICS In today's global community, the world looks to the United States for energy supplies and assistance. The energy mix plays an important role in meeting the nation's energy needs and supplying its foreign allies. This reduces their dependence on unreliable suppliers and helps promote geopolitical stability.

Recent events in Europe serve as a reminder that energy security is a national security issue.

CYBER THREATS The increasing use of renewable energy sources such as solar and wind power has raised concerns about the security of the US' energy infrastructure. And the diffused and decentralised nature of renewable generation makes it more vulnerable to cyberattacks.

The energy mix helps mitigate these risks by providing a diverse and resilient energy supply.

CAPITAL MARKETS Viable energy solutions don't need subsidies; they need assurance from the capital markets that projects are viable and won't be delayed or revisited.

It takes the government years to approve permits and the US Congress must come together to reform policy for modern infrastructure.

The energy mix provides the assurance needed for private capital markets to invest in solutions that will meet future domestic needs.

ENERGY JUSTICE Lowering emissions in the US and raising them abroad isn't justice. Producing and exporting more energy helps to lower emissions globally and create a more sustainable future for all. The mix provides a path to energy justice by reducing emissions while meeting energy needs.

INNOVATION America is leading the way in energy innovation, investing in

and developing new technologies that deliver reliable energy while reducing emissions.

The energy mix is a crucial component of this innovation. It involves carbon capture and utilisation, renewable natural gas and addressing the production process including flare management.

ENERGY POLICY Reversing rhetoric and seeking bipartisan problem solving is crucial to building consensus around meaningful energy reform. Policies that enhance the US' energy supply chain and encourage investment will provide the foundation for a cohesive policy that meets its energy needs while reducing emissions.

The mix is a crucial component of this policy as it provides a diverse and resilient energy supply.

ENERGY ADVANTAGE The US can step up and help the world meet demand. Its infrastructure, innovation and strength can provide energy security for domestic and overseas markets as well. This will be imperative in maintaining America's

place in the world and serve as an example of how it leads.

The power generation mix refers only to the generation of electricity while the energy mix applies to all direct uses of energy such as transportation and housing.

In 2022, natural gas fuelled 38 percent of electricity generation in the US – up from 37 percent in the previous year – while coal-fired systems generated 20 percent. A viable energy mix is key to the nation's energy security as it helps thwart system and supply disruptions.

Reports continue to underscore how diversifying America's energy mix to include an array of low carbon resources – renewable and others – will help build political independence, economic growth and environmental protection for all.

With this diversification deemed mission critical, it's more important now than ever before to empower innovation, and incorporate new technology and solutions to meet the energy needs of today, tomorrow and beyond. ■