

DRAFT PROPOSITION

Resolution for the Parliament of the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg

Hamburg confronts the challenge of “Peak Oil” in a consistent and exemplary way

DETERMINED to understand and to master the challenges and dangers we are facing in connection with the impending peak of global oil production (“Peak Oil”), and imbued with the strong intention of devising a plan for minimizing the great risks associated with the arrival of Peak Oil for the stability of the economy and society and especially the security of supply for Hamburg; and

WHEREAS, global oil reserves are finite and no known alternative exists with the same degree of transportability, energy density and energy gain; **WHEREAS**, world oil production is rapidly nearing its geologically-induced point of maximum production or has already reached this point and will soon enter a prolonged period of irreversible decline leading to ever-increasing prices;

WHEREAS, a growing number of renowned scientists¹, international institutions² and both national and international government agencies³, as well as representatives of oil and automobile corporations⁴ estimate that the peak of world oil production has already occurred or is imminent, or at least warn of a growing gap between shrinking supplies and soaring world demand;

¹ In Germany, oil geologist Wolfgang Blendinger of the Technical University of Clausthal, and resource expert Werner Zittel of Ludwig-Bölkow-Systemtechnik; in the U.S.A., Princeton geologist Kenneth S. Deffeyes and physicist Robert Hirsch; in Ireland, oil geologist Colin Campbell, and many more.

² cf. e.g., IEA chief economist Fatih Birol’s warning: “I am sorry to say this, but we are headed toward really bad days,” issued in November 2007.

³ Four U.S. government studies reach the conclusion that Peak Oil will lead to enormous problems: the “Hirsch- Report” (DoE), a study by the Government Accountability Office (GAO), a study by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and a study by the National Petroleum Council (NPC). In Australia, the government of Queensland has undertaken steps to set up a Peak Oil Plan. In the U.K. and the U.S.A., members of the national governments have formed all-party work groups for the study of Peak Oil. In Germany, the Federal Institute for Geosciences and Natural Resources (BGR) in Hanover expects that Peak Oil will occur by 2020 at the latest.

⁴ e.g., In November 2007, former Saudi Aramco executive Sadad al-Huseini issued the warning, “Oil has peaked, prices to soar,” or recently, in January 2008, Shell Oil boss J. van der Veer issued a similar warning, as did General Motors boss Rick Wagoner (“There is no doubt demand for oil is outpacing supply at a rapid pace, and has been for some time now.”).

WHEREAS, the availability of affordable petroleum is critical to the functioning of our land-, water- and air-based transportation systems, 90% of which run on oil, the production of our food and of petrochemical-based consumer goods, the maintenance of our whole production system and of large parts of the economy and private household requirements;

WHEREAS, the utilization of coal and alternative fossil fuels (e.g., tar sands in Canada) has a low energy gain and will increase global carbon dioxide emissions, while fuels derived from biomass put an increasing strain on scarce agricultural land and lead to lower food supply;

WHEREAS, the decline in global oil supply, in the short and medium term, will lead to growing geopolitical instability, food crises, the collapse of entire industries, impoverishment and, as a consequence of all this, social tensions, resource nationalism and a crisis in trade relations for the European nations;

WHEREAS, Hamburg's economy, the city's public services and its private households—the same applies to every other community—could be entirely paralyzed by disruptions in foreign oil production facilities or oil supply lines including oil refineries, whether caused by war, weather conditions, or terrorism;

WHEREAS, price signals of petroleum scarcity (which is mainly caused by geological reasons) are likely to come too late to trigger effective mitigation efforts in the private sector, and governmental intervention at the federal, state, and communal level will be required to avert social and economic chaos;

WHEREAS, experts and studies like the U.S. Department of Energy-sponsored "Hirsch Report" point out that measures for the mitigation of Peak Oil will have to be initiated 15 or 20 years in advance of the actual occurrence of the peak to prevent grave and possibly catastrophic consequences for the economy and society; and finally

WHEREAS, Hamburg is positioned as a global leader for innovative products and technologies designed to preserve environmental quality and enable the sustainable generation of energy, whereby the city, its inhabitants, and the businesses based in it are well prepared to creatively meet the coming challenges that will arise from the impending peak of world oil and natural gas production;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the state parliament (Bürgerschaft) of the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg expressly acknowledges the historical challenge raised by the peak of world oil production as being equal to that raised by global warming, and that the city must prepare itself and its citizens for the inescapable consequences of Peak Oil with consistency and determination;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a package of concerted measures and decisions shall be speedily passed, consisting of:

1. Instituting and adequate financial endowment of an Inquiry Commission similar to the “Inquiry Commission on The Effects of Long-Term Rises in the Price of Oil and Gas Imports” set up by the State Parliament of North Rhine-Westphalia in 2005, with the following specific objectives:

a. *Ascertaining the evident nature of the peak of oil global production and its effects* for Germany in general and Hamburg and its surrounding region in particular, while at the same time laying out the framework for evaluating and estimating the impending production peaks of natural gas (“Peak Gas”) and coal (“Peak Coal”);

b. *Identifying the city-wide potential for substituting and reducing the use of crude oil and natural gas*, compiling a list of recommendations for the drastic reduction of oil and natural gas consumption in Hamburg, including the traffic and transport sectors, and outlining which measures can be implemented as precautions for the possibility of drastic oil and natural gas price rises;

c. Identifying which crucial weaknesses, in the event of substantially higher prices for oil and natural gas, could seriously *endanger public and private supply of goods and services, also for the economy in general*, and which appropriate counter-measures can be undertaken, especially for the traffic and transport sectors, to secure the continuous supply of the public with food and water and medical care; d. Proposing precautionary measures and strategies for helping supply the public with food and basic services with local and regional means in the event of a serious fuel crisis;

2. Instituting and adequate financial endowment of an independent **Peak Oil Study Group** with the objective of assisting the State Parliament (Bürgerschaft) and the Inquiry Commission by studying and reporting on procedures and suggestions already developed by peak-oil-aware cities and communities in the U.S.A. and other European countries to mitigate the effects of the global peak of oil production. The Study Group’s work will focus on the U.S. cities of Portland, Oregon and San Francisco, California⁵, and on the “Transition Town” movement in the U.K. (e.g., Bristol and Totnes)⁶. The study group should not comprise of more than 10 members, and it should be composed of expert scientists and such citizens whose known professional and technical expertise is expected to be sufficient to make a substantial contribution to the Group’s aims. The Study Group shall, above all, investigate the effects of drastic price rises of oil and natural gas on all sectors of public, private and economic life with the help of various price and price shock scenarios, and, in cooperation

⁵ Both cities passed Peak Oil resolutions in their respective local governments in 2007.

⁶ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/transition_towns

with relevant advocacy groups (e.g. BDI, VDR, VDA)⁷, it shall develop suggestions for the mitigation of risks and authoritative guidelines for a reduction of consumption;

3. Requesting the City and state government of Hamburg (Senat) **to raise awareness of the Peak Oil phenomenon** in all German federal states within the framework of inter-state collaboration processes. This will also include a relevant exchange with Hamburg's partner cities and capitalizing on the experiences made in the framework of the "Agenda 21" process;
4. Requesting the state parliament of Hamburg (Bürgerschaft) to provide a yearly **progress report** on the measures planned, undertaken and completed by the state government (Senat) to enhance Peak Oil resilience for Hamburg;
5. Requesting the state government of Hamburg (Senat) to set up an **administrative department within the Chancellery of the Senate** to coordinate all Peak-Oil-related activities of the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg on state and federal levels, and to supervise the communication of the "Peak Oil problem" to the public; and
6. Requesting the state government and the **state parliament of the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg to make a voluntary pledge** to consider the effects of Peak Oil as a decisive political factor in all future decisions concerning city planning, capital investment and infrastructure projects.

Draft: Paul Nellen 2008 (contact: <http://www.lifeinfo.de>)

Submitted on Feb 26, 2008, to the parliamentary group of Bündnis90/Die Grünen-GAL (the Green Party in Hamburg) after intensive discussions within the Peak Oil Group Hamburg, with the intention of submitting the resolution for approval to the state parliament of the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg (Bürgerschaft)

Special thanks to

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Bernd Ohm, Peak Oil Group, Hamburg (Germany)

Dr. Werner Zittel (ASPO Germany, EWG)

Please feel free to copy and imitate as you wish!

⁷ Bundesverband der Deutschen Industrie (Federation of German Industry), Verband Deutscher Reeder, (Association of German Shipowners), Verband der Automobilindustrie (Association of German Automobile Manufacturers)

