U.S. Natural Gas Availability: Conventional Gas Supply Through the Year 2000

September 1983

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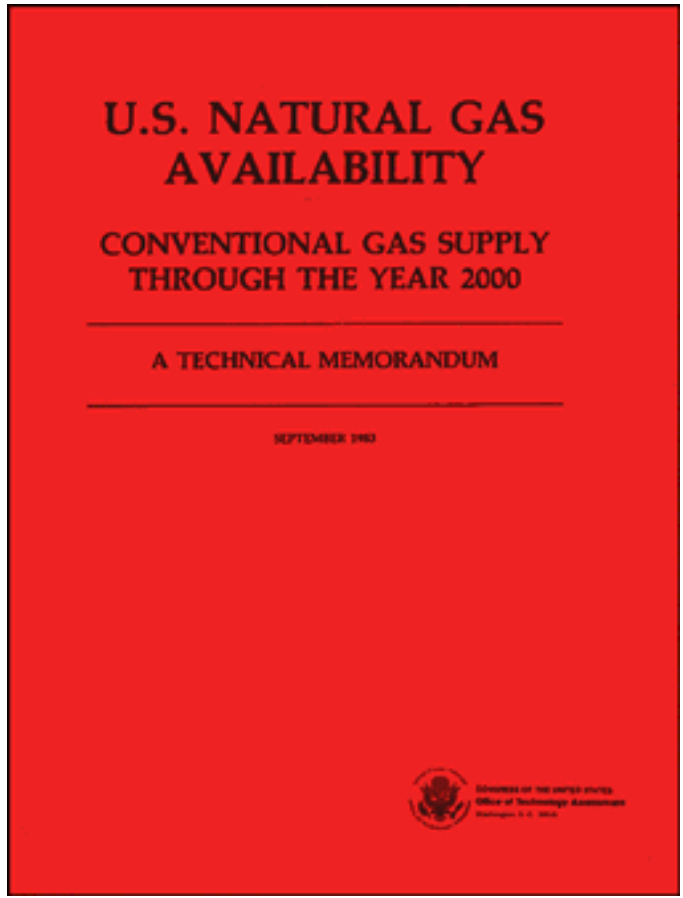

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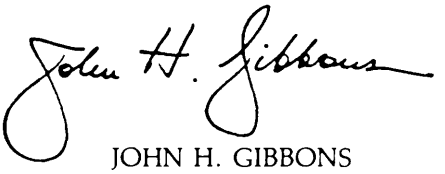
Foreword

This technical memorandum is an interim product of OTA's assessment of "U.S. Natural Gas Availability. " The assessment is examining the future potential for production of all forms of natural gas in the U.S. Lower *48* States, emphasizing the time frame 1990-2000. Gas production in this period will depend primarily on gas that will be made available from the growth of already-discovered fields, from new discoveries of conventional gas, and from the exploitation of those "unconventional" gas sources that today are close to commercial feasibility. The House Committee on Energy and Commerce and its Subcommittee on Fossil and Synthetic Fuels requested the assessment, and the request was endorsed by the Subcommittee on Energy Research and Development of the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

This technical memorandum discusses the future availability of conventional gas—gas that can be produced at prices and with technology that are relatively close to today 's. We first examine the efficacy of different generic resource assessment methods, review specific estimates (including those of the U.S. Geological Survey and the Potential Gas Committee), present alternative arguments concerning specific areas of uncertainty such as the amount of gas to be found in small fields, and describe OTA's conclusions about a plausible range for the size of the conventional gas resource. Next, we discuss trends in reserve additions and production, leading up to a projection of production potential to the year 2000. Finally, we review the potential from gas sources other than domestic production.

The material in this technical memorandum is being released at this time to assist Congress during the current debate over natural gas. The material will also be incorporated, along with OTA's analysis of unconventional gas sources, in a final assessment report to be published at the conclusion of the U.S. Natural Gas Availability study.

OTA is grateful for the assistance of its assessment advisory panel, its contractors, its colleague; at the Congressional Research Service and U.S. Geological Survey, and the many others who provided advice and information. However, OTA assumes full responsibility for this technical memorandum, which does not necessarily represent the views of individual members of the advisory panel.



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