

**The original documents are located in Box 5, folder “1/21/75 - Press Conference Opening Remarks” of the President’s Speeches and Statements: Reading Copies at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.**

### **Copyright Notice**

The copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material. Gerald Ford donated to the United States of America his copyrights in all of his unpublished writings in National Archives collections. Works prepared by U.S. Government employees as part of their official duties are in the public domain. The copyrights to materials written by other individuals or organizations are presumed to remain with them. If you think any of the information displayed in the PDF is subject to a valid copyright claim, please contact the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN *df.*

PRESS CONFERENCE

TUESDAY, JANUARY 21, 1975

BEFORE WE GET INTO QUESTIONS, I WANT TO TAKE  
A MOMENT TO BRIEFLY REVIEW WITH YOU SEVERAL CRITICAL  
ENERGY ISSUES.

THE ENERGY DECISIONS I ANNOUNCED AS PART OF  
MY STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS RESULTED FROM THE MOST  
COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW THIS NATION HAS EVER MADE OF ITS  
ENERGY PROBLEMS.

THIS STUDY DEMONSTRATED THAT THERE ARE ONLY  
THREE BASIC ALTERNATIVES. THE FIRST IS TO CONTINUE DOING  
WHAT WE HAVE BEEN DOING. I HAVE REJECTED THIS BECAUSE,  
*continued*  
IF WE DO, WE WILL BE IMPORTING TWENTY-FIVE PERCENT MORE  
OIL BY 1977. BY 1985, WE WILL BE DEPENDENT ON FOREIGN  
SOURCES FOR MORE THAN HALF OF OUR OIL. THIS WOULD  
SUBJECT THE ECONOMY OF THE UNITED STATES TO VERY SERIOUS  
DISRUPTION IF THESE SUPPLIES WERE ONCE AGAIN CURTAILED.

THE EMBARGO OF 1973 OCCURRED DURING A PERIOD WHEN  
A LITTLE MORE THAN ONE-THIRD OF OUR OIL CAME FROM FOREIGN  
SOURCES. THE DISRUPTIONS WE SUFFERED THEN WERE JUST  
A SMALL TASTE OF WHAT WOULD LIKELY HAPPEN IN THE EVENT OF  
A FUTURE EMBARGO WHEN WE WOULD BE FAR MORE VULNERABLE.

SOME HAVE SUGGESTED RATIONING AS THE SECOND  
ALTERNATIVE. I CAN UNDERSTAND WHY MANY IN CONGRESS  
AND ELSEWHERE ARE ATTEMPTING TO FIND A SOLUTION WHICH  
DOES NOT ENTAIL SACRIFICE AND HARDSHIP. BUT THERE  
IS NO EASY SOLUTION. I NEVER PROMISED ONE.

I BELIEVE THAT THOSE WHO PROPOSE RATIONING DO NOT  
HAVE A CLEAR UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT THEIR PLAN WOULD  
ENTAIL FOR THE AMERICAN PEOPLE.

MANY OF US, OF COURSE, REMEMBER RATIONING  
DURING WORLD WAR TWO. I HAVE NO DOUBT THAT THIS  
NATION IS CAPABLE OF SUSTAINING A RATIONING PROGRAM  
DURING A SHORT EMERGENCY. HOWEVER, TO REALLY  
CURB DEMAND, WE WOULD HAVE TO EMBARK ON A LONG-RANGE  
RATIONING PROGRAM OF MORE THAN FIVE YEARS. THOSE  
FAVORING RATIONING MUST BE THINKING OF A SHORT-TERM  
PROGRAM, NOT A SERIOUS LONG-TERM EFFORT TO END  
ENERGY DEPENDENCY.

FURTHER, THERE IS SIMPLY NO WAY TO REACH  
OUR GOALS BY RATIONING. RATIONING PROVIDES NO  
STIMULUS TO INCREASE DOMESTIC PETROLEUM SUPPLY OR  
ACCELERATE ALTERNATIVE ENERGY SOURCES. BY  
CONCENTRATING EXCLUSIVELY ON GASOLINE RATIONING,  
MANY OTHER AREAS FOR ENERGY CONSERVATION ARE OVERLOOKED.



IN ADDITION TO BEING INEFFECTIVE, GAS RATIONING IS INEQUITABLE. EVEN A RATIONING SYSTEM THAT IS DESIGNED WITH THE BEST MOTIVES IN MIND AND IMPLEMENTED BY THE MOST CONSCIENTIOUS ADMINISTRATORS WOULD NOT BE FAIR. IF YOU WERE TO GO AROUND THE COUNTRY AND ASK INDIVIDUALS WHAT THEY SHOULD GET UNDER A "FAIR" RATIONING SYSTEM, YOU WOULD FIND THAT THERE WOULD SIMPLY NOT BE ENOUGH GASOLINE TO GO AROUND. IN FACT, TO REACH OUR 1975 GOAL OF REDUCING OIL IMPORT BY ONE MILLION BARRELS PER DAY, A GAS RATIONING SYSTEM WOULD ~~NEED TO~~ LIMIT EACH DRIVER TO LESS THAN NINE GALLONS A WEEK.

INEQUITIES WOULD BE EVERYWHERE -- HOW

WOULD PEOPLE IN REMOTE AREAS OF THE COUNTRY GET ENOUGH

GAS TO DRIVE INTO TOWN? HOW WOULD FARMERS GET

ENOUGH GAS TO HARVEST THEIR CROPS? WHAT

WOULD HAPPEN TO PEOPLE WHO MUST DRIVE A LONG WAY TO

WORK? AND WHO WOULD MAKE THOSE DECISIONS?

IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT WE RECOGNIZE THE SIZE OF  
THE PROBLEM WHICH WE ARE ATTEMPTING TO SOLVE. AS A  
CONSEQUENCE, WE MUST EVALUATE EACH ENERGY PROGRAM TO SEE  
WHETHER IN FACT IT CONFRONTS -- AND SOLVES -- THE PROBLEM.  
IT DOES US LITTLE GOOD TO IMPOSE RATIONING OR A GASOLINE TAX  
OR SIMPLY SHUTDOWN GASOLINE STATIONS ON SUNDAY.

THESE WILL NOT GIVE US ENERGY INDEPENDENCE. THE ALTERNATIVE

I HAVE CHOSEN RELIES ON FREEDOM OF INDIVIDUAL CHOICE,

GIVING PEOPLE AND BUSINESSES AN INCENTIVE TO SAVE ENERGY.

THAT IS THE ONLY WAY TO ACHIEVE OUR ENERGY GOALS. THE

NEED FOR ACTION NOW IS CLEAR.

THEREFORE, LATER THIS WEEK, I WILL SIGN A  
PRESIDENTIAL PROCLAMATION WHICH WILL SET IN MOTION THE  
MOST IMPORTANT AND FAR REACHING ENERGY CONSERVATION  
PROGRAM IN OUR NATION'S HISTORY. IT IS THE FIRST  
STEP TOWARD REGAINING OUR ENERGY FREEDOM.

WE MUST REVERSE OUR INCREASING DEPENDENCY  
ON IMPORTED OIL. IT SERIOUSLY THREATENS OUR NATIONAL  
SECURITY AND THE VERY EXISTENCE OF OUR FREEDOM AND  
LEADERSHIP *IN THE FREE WORLD.*

THE PROCLAMATION IS DESIGNED TO IMPOSE  
HIGHER FEES ON IMPORTED OIL WHICH ARE EQUITABLE AND FAIR.  
FOR EXAMPLE, IT WILL CONTAIN SPECIAL PROVISIONS TO  
AVOID UNDUE HARDSHIPS ON CERTAIN REGIONS OF THE COUNTRY --  
SUCH AS THE NORTHEAST -- WHICH ARE HEAVILY DEPENDENT  
UPON HIGH-COST FOREIGN OIL. ON THURSDAY, I WILL  
MEET WITH THE GOVERNORS OF THE NORTHEAST STATES ON  
THEIR SPECIAL PROBLEMS.

IT IS ABSOLUTELY CRITICAL THAT CONGRESS ACT QUICKLY  
ON MY ENERGY PROPOSALS. THE INCREASED REVENUES WHICH  
THE GOVERNMENT WILL COLLECT FROM ENERGY TAXES MUST BE  
RETURNED TO CONSUMERS AND BUSINESSES THROUGH MY PROPOSED  
TAX CUT. TO INSURE SPEEDY ENACTMENT OF THE PROGRAM,  
I WILL WORK WITH <sup>THE</sup> CONGRESS.  
^

I WILL NOT SIT BY AND WATCH THIS NATION  
CONTINUE TO TALK ABOUT AN ENERGY CRISIS AND DO NOTHING  
ABOUT IT. NOR WILL I TAKE HALF-WAY MEASURES WHICH  
FAIL TO CHANGE THE DIRECTION THAT HAS PUT OUR NATION IN  
THIS POSITION. WE HAVE THE RESOURCES IN THIS COUNTRY,  
THE TECHNOLOGICAL CAPABILITY AND THE SPIRIT TO REGAIN  
OUR ENERGY INDEPENDENCE.



I WILL USE ALL OF MY POWERS AS PRESIDENT TO MAKE  
CERTAIN THAT WE SUCCEED.

I BELIEVE MR. CORMIER HAS THE FIRST QUESTION.

END OF TEXT