



U.S.-Israel Energy Cooperation

Few statements elicit more nods of approval than when somebody declares that the answer to many of the world's problems is for us to get off oil. The United States and Israel are working together to do just that. Today, the two countries are developing next-generation energy technologies, helping to free ourselves from a dangerous dependence on petroleum and pursuing sustainable technologies to reduce our environmental impact.

Starting with a 1984 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), a number of agreements have helped drive innovation and cooperation between the United States and Israel in the energy arena. In 2008 the countries signed a new MOU for sustainable energy cooperation, which serves as the basis for the U.S.-Israel Energy Cooperation Program.

This program, which is jointly funded by Washington and Jerusalem, brings together and provides seed money to American and Israeli companies and universities to develop cutting-edge technologies. The U.S.-Israel Energy Cooperation Program has been a resounding success to date and demonstrates tremendous return on investment. Six projects are underway and have leveraged more than \$12 million in private-sector investments so far.

Already a global high-tech powerhouse, Israel is pioneering developments in the energy sector. In the Ivanpah section of California's Mojave Desert, BrightSource Energy is constructing the world's largest solar power station using technology developed at its Israel plant. Once complete, the facility will double the amount of solar power produced in the United States, create 1,000 jobs, and generate enough power for 140,000 homes—all while reducing carbon dioxide emissions by 400,000 tons annually.

Meanwhile, the American-Israeli company Better Place is building the world's first electric vehicle network. It recently delivered its first electric cars to Israel and is setting up battery-switching stations throughout the country, which will allow drivers an unlimited driving range. Israeli-American entrepreneur Shai Agassi, the founder and CEO of Better Place, believes that by 2020 most cars sold in Israel will be electric, allowing the Jewish state to achieve oil independence.

President Obama has repeatedly emphasized the danger of America's overreliance on fossil fuels. Much of the world's oil is supplied by Middle East countries that are the most unstable and anti-Western in the world. It is natural, then, that the United States and Israel have joined forces to find alternative sources of energy to pave the way to a cleaner, safer future.