

The Final Round¹

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THBT the reopening of federal land and water for oil and gas drilling will do more harm than good.

A Note about the Notes

These are my notes from the final round at AITE. They are limited by how quickly I could write and how well I heard what was said. I apologize for any errors, but I hope debaters will appreciate this insight: what a judge hears may not be what they said or wish they had said.

There are two versions of the notes. The one below is chronological, reproducing each speech in the order in which the arguments were made. It shows how the debate was presented. The second is formatted to look more like my written flow chart, with each contention “flowed” across the page as the teams argued back and forth. It’s closer to the way I take notes during the debate.

The Final Round

The final round at AITE was between the Ridgefield team of Gabriel Uceda-Sosa and James Cox-Donovan on the Affirmative and the Stamford team of Ryan Shoztic and Julia Schager on the Negative. The debate was won by the Negative.

1) Prime Minister Constructive

- a) Introduction
- b) Statement of the motion
- c) Outline: Definitions, framework, contentions
- d) Definitions:
 - i) TH as the US Federal Government
 - ii) “reopening” concerns the provisions of the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) and Biden Administration as described
- e) Our framework is utilitarian, net benefits
- f) G1²: Drastic action is required to deal with climate change
 - i) Need to reduce CO2 emission to zero by 2050 to meet goals
 - (1) This requires we stop new drilling
 - ii) US can set a precedent for other gov’ts that are not acting
 - iii) Leasing will result in 700 million metric tons of CO2
 - iv) No action will lead to disaster
- g) G2: Renewables are better able to meet our energy needs
 - i) US has oil, but prices are up due to policy mistakes
 - (1) Pandemic swung demand down then up, affecting company decisions

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² “G1” indicates the Government first contention, “O2” the Opposition second contention and so forth.

- ii) Technology exists to cover energy demand
 - (1) Batteries, hydrogen, CO2 capture
 - (2) These need investment, better than investing in oil
- iii) Renewables are good for job creation
- h) G3: The land is already used efficiently
 - i) Federal parks, Native American reservations
 - POI: Isn't that only 20% of the land?*
 - (1) 20% isn't insignificant
 - ii) Blackfoot Settlement show US lags behind other countries
 - (1) Canada respects their claims
 - (2) Pope's visit shows efforts for reconciliation

2) Leader of the Opposition Constructive

- a) Intro, statement of the motion
- b) Outline: Definitions, Opp case, Gov case, weighing
- c) We accept the Gov definitions
- d) O1: Reopening necessary for the economy
 - i) Oil prices are driving inflation
 - (1) Lifeblood of the economy
 - (2) Oil prices drive food prices harm consumers
 - ii) Drilling can meet needs with little harm
 - (1) Spills are rare
 - iii) Food is a major export
 - POI: Aren't there other policies to deal with inflation?*
 - (1) Yes, but not as quickly due to Congressional gridlock
 - (2) We see that in lack of support for nuclear, solar, wind
- e) O2: Not drilling will betray American values
 - i) Allies will turn to other producers
 - (1) Europe faces a cold winter due to Russia
 - (2) Using biomass, which is worse for CO2
 - (3) North Africa, Libya use slave labor
 - (4) Venezuela is corrupt and the economy is collapsing
 - ii) All these are worse than US on corruption, human rights violations, etc.
- f) O3: Compromise necessary to meet climate goals
 - i) Technology exists, but implementation requires compromise
 - (1) IRA green provisions only passed because drilling was added
 - (2) Net impact is to reduce CO2 compared to no IRA
- g) G1: We agree climate change requires action
 - i) IRA was a tradeoff, renewables for drilling
 - ii) Have to be practical, not idealistic
 - iii) To phase out carbon, need to compromise
- h) G2: IEA says renewables won't meet goals
 - i) Only half of 2020 goals met

3) Member of Government Constructive

- a) Intro, motion
- b) Outline: Opp agreed with definitions, Gov, Opp
- c) G1: IRA aims to reduce total oil usage by increasing use of renewables

- i) Using more oil will have a negative environmental impact
- ii) It's the wrong type of oil, thick when we need clean
 - (1) We will keep importing
 - POI: Isn't the IRA 1.1 billion CO2 reduction through renewables greater than the 700 million increase from drilling?*
 - (2) IRA reopens land for oil, raising CO2, won't meet climate need
- iii) IRA isn't drastic action, but a compromise
- iv) IEA says we have to stop new projects to meet climate goals
- v) The statistics are only projections, not certainties
 - POI: So the 700 million is a projection?*
 - (1) Yes, but it's reliable based on past information
 - (2) IRA numbers from optimistic gov't sources
- vi) Is change likely to result in political turmoil?
 - (1) Yes, but Opp only blunts it, Gov acts now
 - (2) Kyoto promises were only met by one country
 - (3) Obama agreed to Paris, Trump pulled us out
- d) O1: Other policies can work on inflation
 - i) Gov plan will create 30 million jobs
- e) O2: True betrayal is failing to meet climate goals
 - i) IRA promises not likely to be met

4) Member of the Opposition Constructive

- a) Intro, motion
- b) Outline: Gov, Opp, Weighing
- c) G1: IRA is a reasonable plan
 - i) Radical proposals won't pass, need compromise
 - POI: What's more important, the harm or passage?*
 - (1) The issue is Gov plan is a radical act, won't pass
 - ii) 30 million jobs is 10% of the population, so unlikely
 - iii) Real problem is inflation
- d) G2: If US oil is sufficient, why do we import?
 - i) IRA compensates for drilling with CO2 reduction
 - POI: If we drill, will it stop imports?*
 - ii) Can't predict, but will decline, and we can refill the reserve
- e) G3: Current land use?
 - i) Land under IRA not inhabited, not reservations
- f) O1: My partner dealt with this issue
- g) O2: American values matter
 - i) OPEC funds oppression, e.g., slave labor in Libya
 - ii) Can solve by drilling here
- h) O3: We agree we need to fund clean energy
 - i) Congress is motivated by self-interest
 - ii) No compromise, no action
 - iii) Many in Congress want oil and gas
- i) Weighing
 - i) Gov: nothing passes, no action on climate
 - ii) Opp: IRA helps lower gas prices and inflation

(1) Good for all US citizens

5) Leader of Opposition Rebuttal

- a) US politics is fickle
 - i) This is the primary voting issue
 - ii) Need to support clean energy, then need compromise
- b) Numbers?
 - i) IEA says problem isn't technology but investment
 - ii) Need compromise on fossil fuel to get IRA passed
 - iii) West Virginia cares about coal
- c) Economics?
 - i) Short-term suffering due to inflation
 - ii) More oil, lower prices
 - iii) 30 million jobs is not realistic
- d) Environment?
 - i) IRA is the only policy in round with net lower CO2
 - (1) 1.1 billion tons vs 700 million tons from Gov
- e) Action?
 - i) Quick action requires compromise
- f) Values?
 - i) Good for US, good for environment
 - ii) Harms VZ, Libya, Saudi Arabia
 - iii) Gov gets no change in CO2

6) Prime Minister Rebuttal

- a) Opp argues oil is essential
 - i) Drill more, we still import unless we double output
 - ii) More GDP means more oil imports
 - (1) 60% of US oil is imported
 - (2) 10% increase in production won't eliminate this
- b) Politics?
 - i) Increase in prices due to the pandemic
 - ii) We can deal with inflation w/o more oil
- c) Clash
 - i) Is Gov idealistic?
 - (1) Short-term, no increase in oil, it remains expensive
 - (2) Long-term encourages sustainable policies
 - (3) IEA climate warnings, submerged islands, real risk
 - ii) Drilling reinforces half measures
 - (1) US can be a model for others