

its energy reorganization goals. Deregulation of gasoline and oil prices, abolishment of heating restrictions, elimination of commercialization programs, reduction of departmental personnel, and restructure of the energy budget, in Hodel's view, carried out most of the Reagan Administration's energy management priorities.

HODEL SEEKS "BROADENED ENERGY CONSENSUS"

Hodel announced at his confirmation hearing his intention to seek a "broadened energy consensus" between the Reagan Administration and Congress. Because the United States in 1983 faced "neither an immediate energy crisis, nor long-term insoluble problems," Hodel thought it was possible to forge a national consensus based upon adequate and secure supplies of energy available to Americans at reasonable prices. Hodel firmly believed not only that the Federal Government should play a minor role in regulating and controlling energy markets but that it also had a responsibility for protecting public health, safety, and the environment. America's most serious energy problem, he contended, was continued dependence on foreign oil. Hodel was thus in the historical mainstream of federal energy policy.¹⁰⁰

President Reagan's 1983 national energy policy plan reflected Hodel's imprint on the administration's energy goals. Noting increasing supplies of oil and gasoline, coupled with steadily decreasing prices since 1981, the administration continued to oppose energy allocation and price controls and advocated decontrol of natural gas wellhead prices and reform of the nuclear licensing process. Concurrently, the Reagan Administration promoted a "balanced and mixed energy resource base" by supporting research and development across a broad spectrum of energy resources, technologies, and conservation. Energy security, of course, remained a paramount commitment of the Federal Government.¹⁰¹

Although Hodel identified deregulation of natural gas wellhead prices and reform of the nuclear licensing process as vital legislative goals, Congress passed neither the President's proposed natural gas legislation nor his nuclear regulatory reform legislation during Hodel's tenure. Indeed, in seeking his "broad energy consensus," Hodel found himself increasingly caught between Congress and the Office of Management and Budget.



President Reagan and Secretary of Energy Donald P. Hodel (1982-1985) meet with heads of major energy firms. Seated with the President (L to R) are W.P. Schmoe, vice chairman of CONOCO, Inc.; Michel Halbouty, chairman of the board, M.T. Halbouty Energy Co., Houston; C.C. Garvin, Jr., board chairman, EXXON Corp., and chairman of the American Petroleum Institute; and Hodel.

Source: U.S. Department of Energy