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May 15, 2008

# Cold Rush: Arctic is new focus for fossil fuel resources

**Sandra Hines**

News and Information

Some have estimated that 25 percent of the Earth's remaining oil and gas may be buried in the seafloor under the Arctic Ocean. Now that more areas of the ocean once covered by ice year-round are becoming ice free in the summers, chances are increasing that those fossil fuel resources will be exploited.

"It all adds up to a renewed interest in the Arctic — the last large piece of non-jurisdictional real estate on the planet — which went off the screen when the Cold War ended," wrote *Vanity Fair* magazine writer Michael Shoumatoff in the May issue.

A panel discussion, "The Cold Rush: Arctic Energy," brings together a panel of international energy experts to discuss such things as which countries could benefit and how governments might cooperate to manage the situation wisely.

The discussion, at 7 p.m. Wednesday, May 21, in 220 Kane, is free and open to the public and is being sponsored by the UW Canadian Studies Center and the Center for Global Studies, Jackson School of International Studies Global Trade, Transportation and Logistics Studies; Program on the Environment; and the Consulate General of Canada, Seattle. For more information contact the UW Program on the Environment, [poe@u.washington.edu](mailto:poe@u.washington.edu).

Speakers will be:

- Peter Sharp, senior policy analyst for the Energy Secretariat, Department of Canada's Foreign Affairs and International Trade.
- Ben Ellis, Managing Director, Institute of the North, which specializes in how to use and care for resources-rich commons in the Arctic.
- Lawson Brigham, Deputy Director, U.S. Arctic Research Commission, which oversees basic and applied scientific research in the Arctic.
- Mikhail Alexseev, Associate Professor, San Diego State University.

Two of the panelists are on the Arctic Energy Action Team, a group of international policy makers and energy experts formed last October to address common concerns faced by countries rimming the Arctic: Canada, Denmark (including Greenland and Faroe Islands), Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden and the United States. The group's goal is to develop a strategic plan for the next 10 to 20 years that, among other things, considers needed government policies and new energy-related technologies as well as how to meet the needs of Arctic communities.

The team's efforts come in the midst of International Polar Year, a time when countries have concentrated research and policy efforts on issues pertaining to the poles.

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