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ABSTRACT

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Gas Hydrate Commercialization: The Rainbow in our Future

Gas hydrates, ice-like solids that contain about 160 cubic feet of methane for every square foot of "ice", appear to contain more energy equivalent than all the known oil, natural gas, and coal in the world. Hydrate deposits occur in some of the most hostile producing environments in the world, in sediments underlying deep ocean waters, and onshore in permafrost areas. No one has succeeded in producing gas on a commercial basis from these extensive deposits.

Ongoing research work in the onshore of Canada and the USA have led to monitored test wells that gave valuable insights towards future research directions. Drilling in deep water by Japan and India illustrate the substantial efforts being made by consuming nations to develop their own sources of methane supply from hydrates. The potential supply of hydrate methane is enormous, if successful; the problems of commercial development are truly formidable. Deep water gas hydrate production, on a commercial basis, is currently only a hopeful rainbow.