

18.1 **History of the United States Synthetic Fuels Corporation**

Hervey Priddy

University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas, United States

This paper examines the brief history of the fledging United States Synthetic Fuels Corporation (SFC). The centerpiece of President Carter's July 15, 1979, speech ("The Malaise Speech") to the nation was the creation of this government corporation that would provide financial assistance to the private sector to assist in the development of a national synthetic fuels industry, based primarily on oil shale, coal, and tar sands. The United States possesses enormous reserves of the resources that are comparable in size to the oil and gas reserves located in the Middle East. In his presentation, Carter referred to this new entity as an "energy security corporation." He also proposed an "energy mobilization board." This board would have had the responsibility and authority to cut through the red tape, delays, and the other endless roadblocks to insure the prompt construction and completion of these key energy projects. The corporation would subsequently be renamed the United States Synthetic Fuels Corporation and the "energy mobilization board" never passed Congress. The paper will discuss the beginning of the SFC, the operational phase, and the close-down during the Reagan Administration in 1986. If time and space permit, a brief outline will be provided for those projects that received federal assistance and what happened to them. There will be a brief conclusion discussing where the nation is at the present time and the prospects for another effort on the part of the federal government to develop a synthetic fuel industry.