

# Renewable Energy:

## an investment perspective

Vinod Khosla  
Khosla Ventures  
Oct 2008



“all progress depends on the unreasonable man”

**George Bernard Shaw**

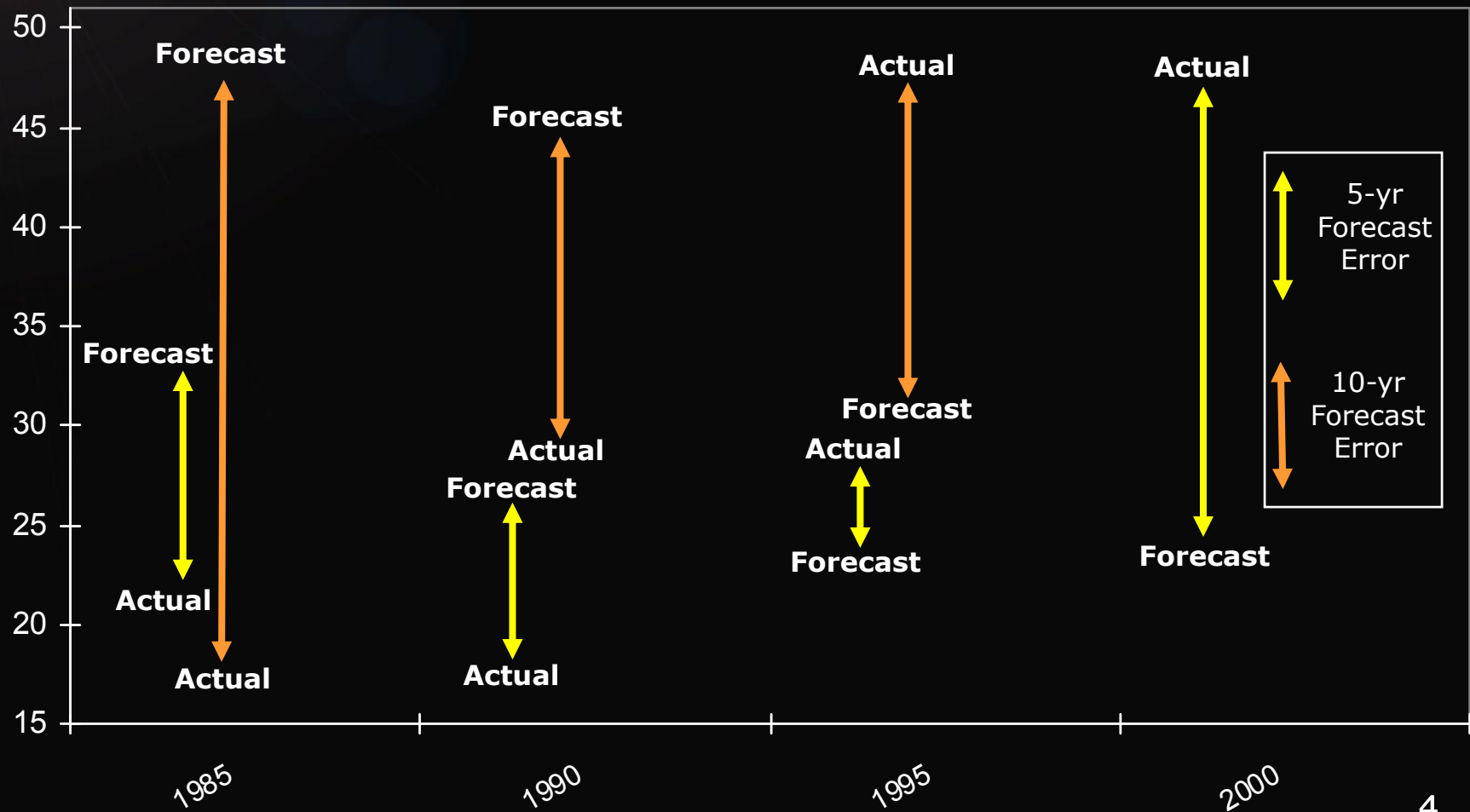
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“Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic.”

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-Arthur C. Clarke

# oil price forecasts (1985-2005)



# the US market for mobile subscribers

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<u>Source</u>	<u>Forecasts</u>	<u>Actual</u>
> <i>Fortune</i> (1984 => 1989)	> 1M	> 3.5M
> McKinsey for AT&T (1980 => 2000)	> 0.9M	> 109M
> Herschel S. Ostreck (1991 => 2004)	> 60-90M	> 182M

**The same mistakes are repeated again and again!**

# yesterday's technology, tomorrow's forecast

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> 1980's phone



> The actual market



... "relevant cost"  
... "relevant scale"  
... "relevant adoption"

# Beyond cost, scale & adoption risk

- ...trajectory (cost, carbon, and scalability)
- ...capital formation
- ...optionality
- ...carbon reduction capacity



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# ...the chindia test

only scalable if competitive unsubsidized

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# ...the scaling model

brute force or exponential, distributed...

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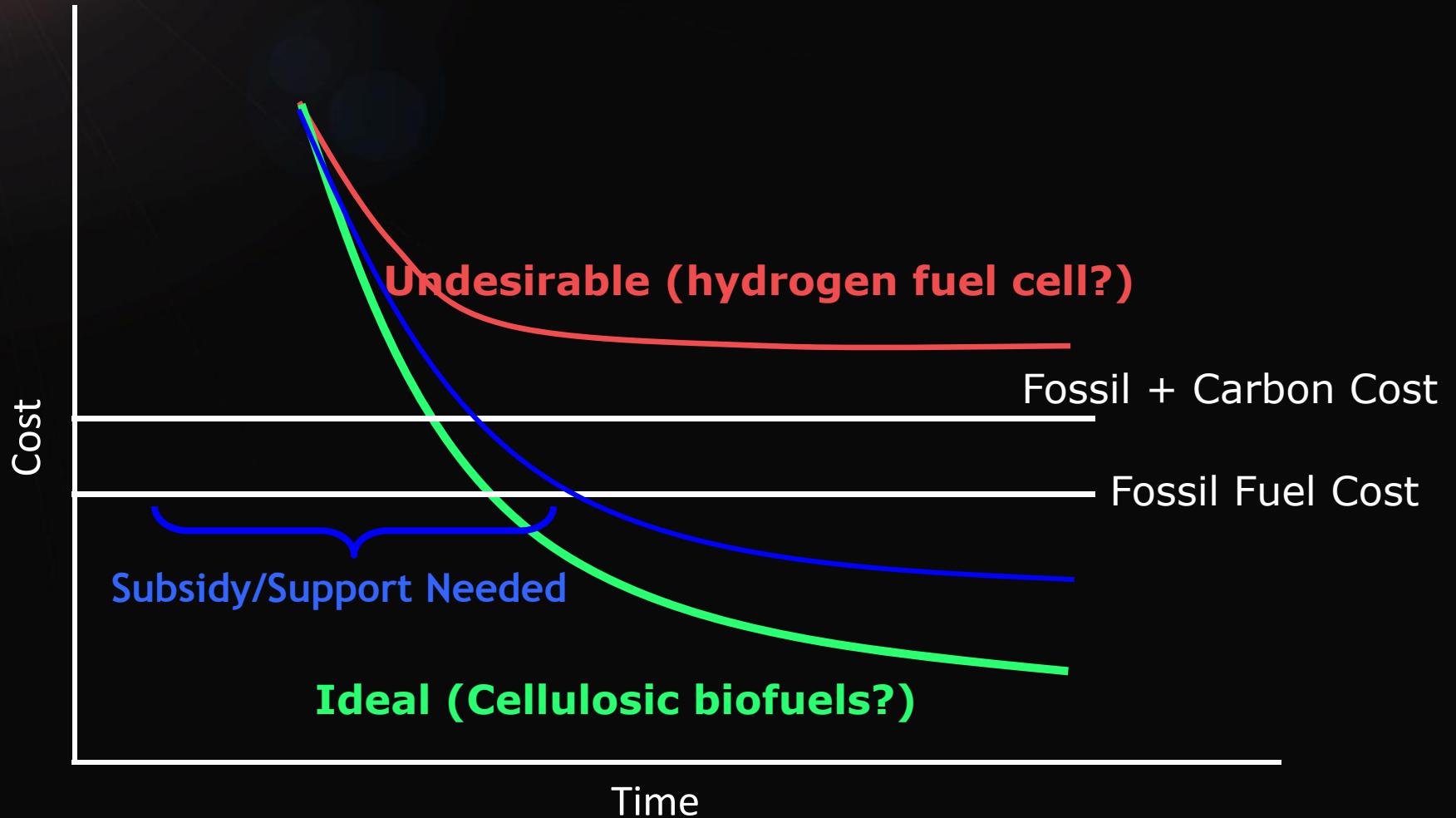
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# ...the adoption risk

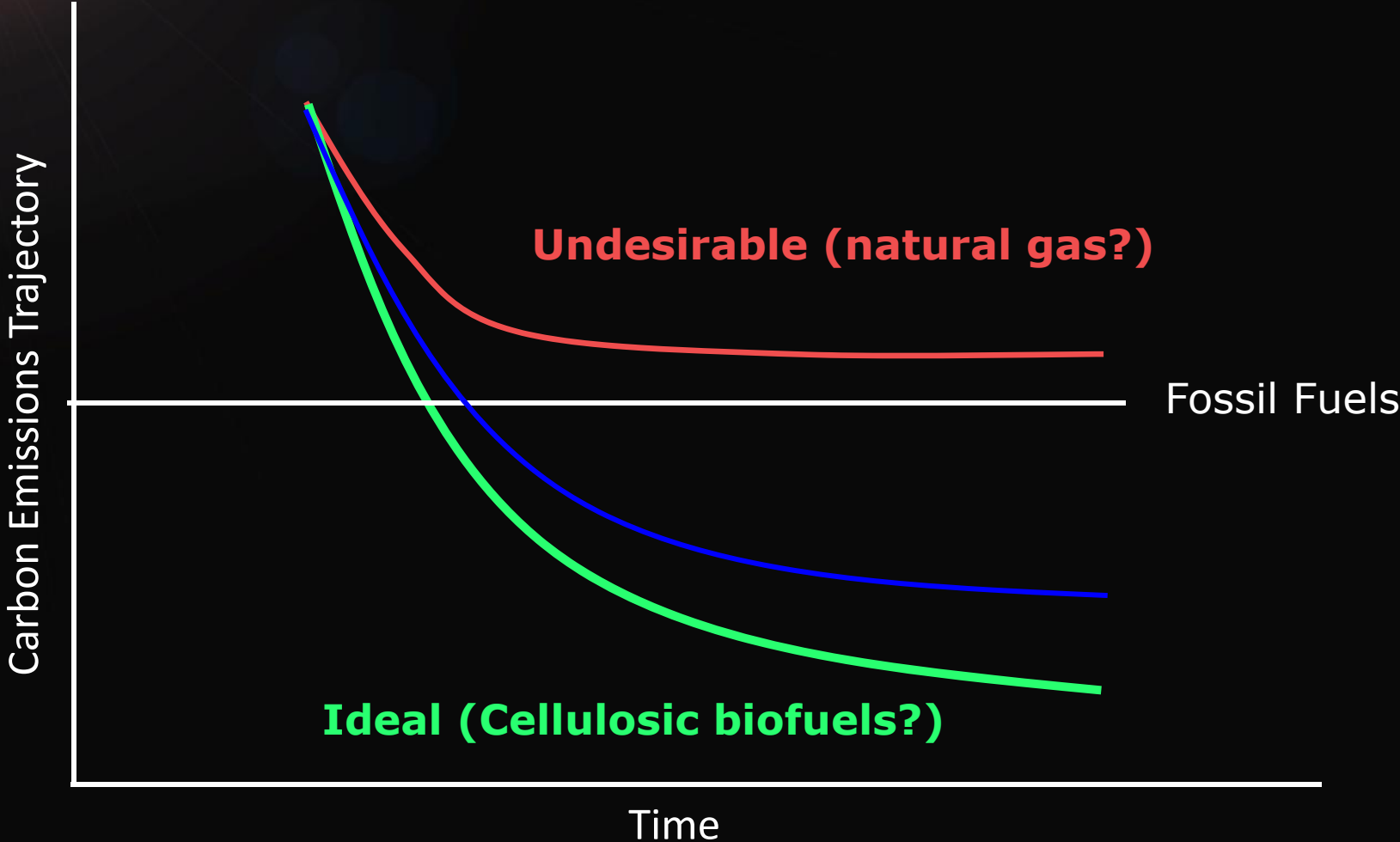
financial, consumer acceptance, market entry

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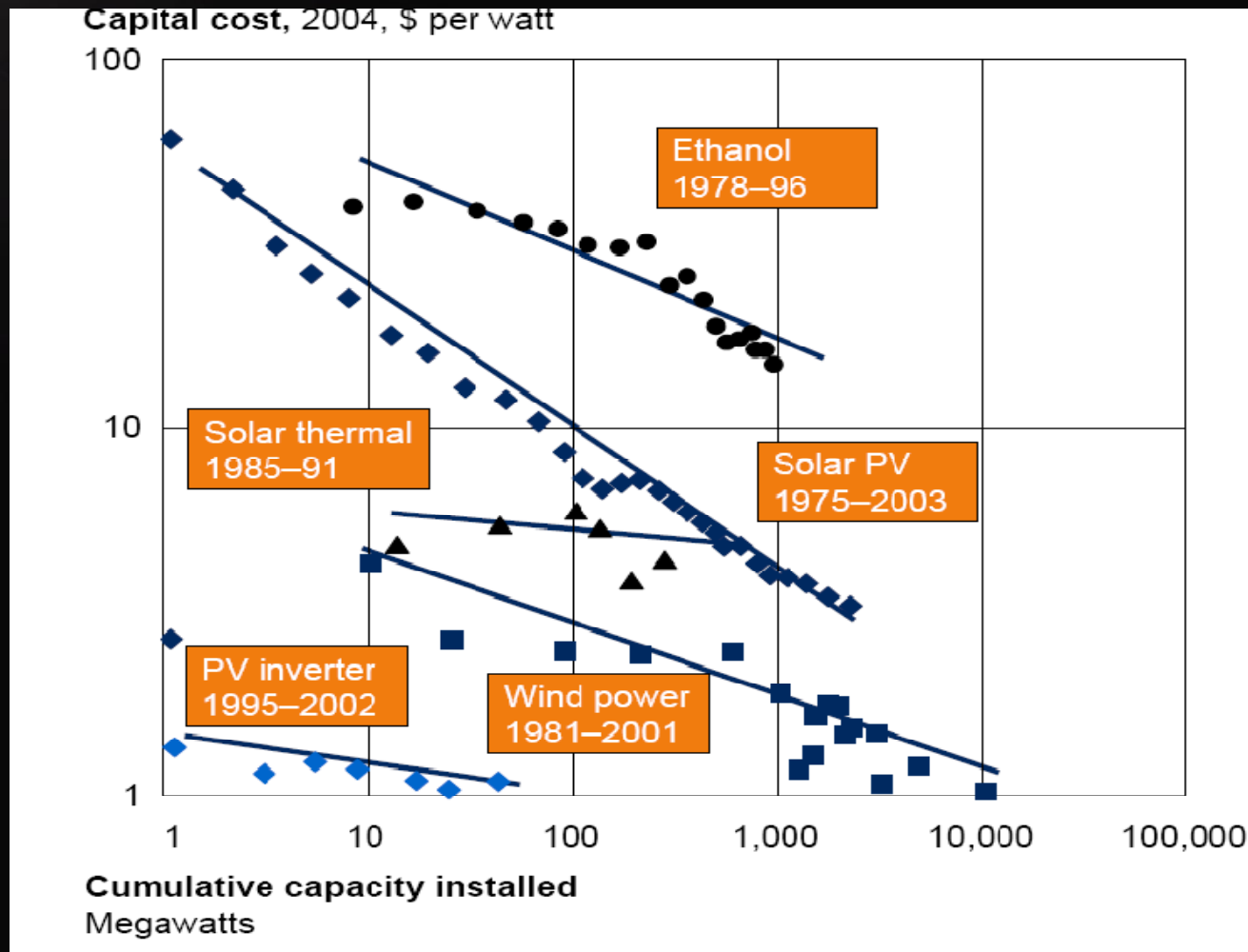
# Cost trajectory:



# Carbon trajectory:

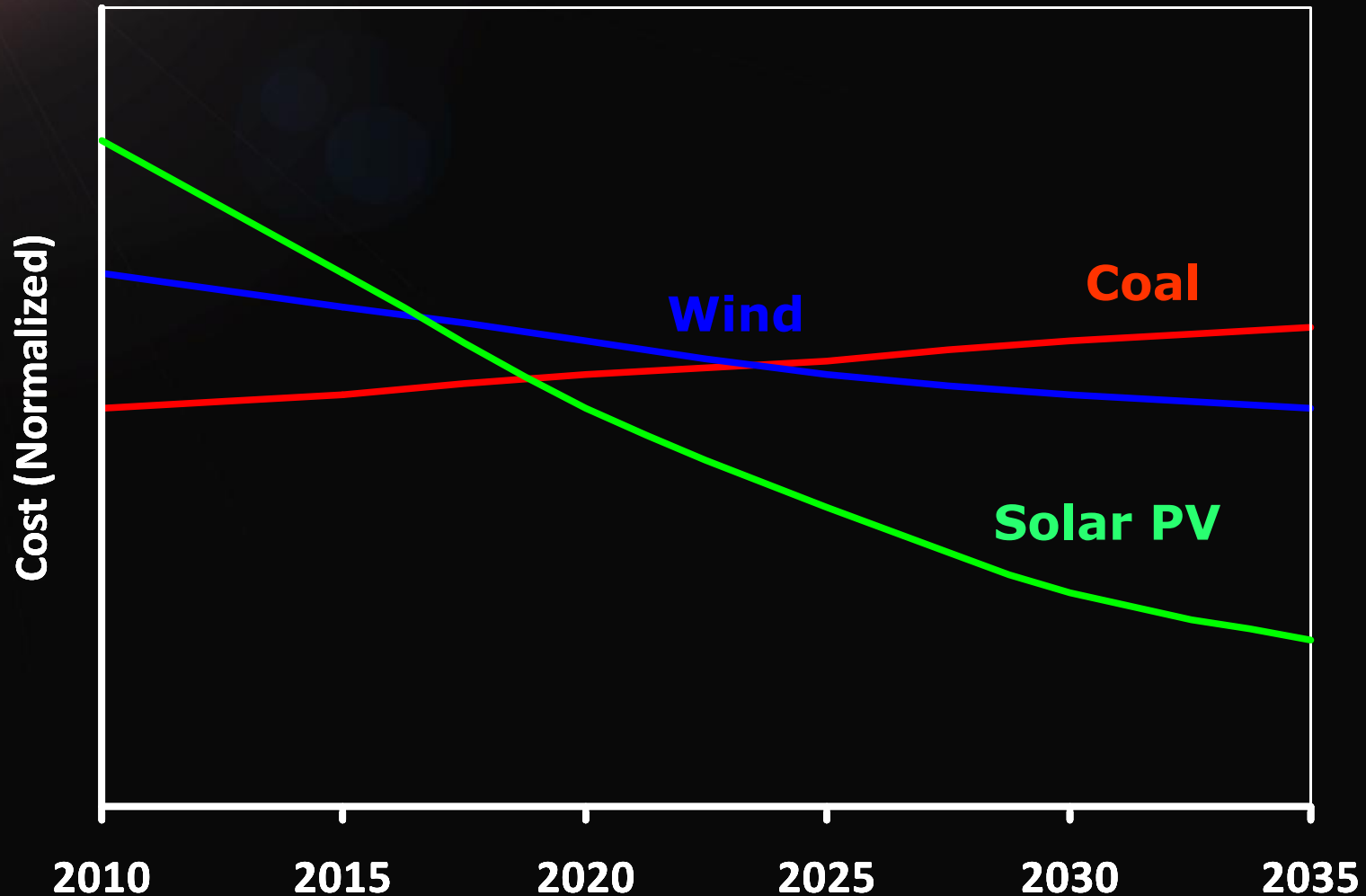


# cost: driving down the cost curve

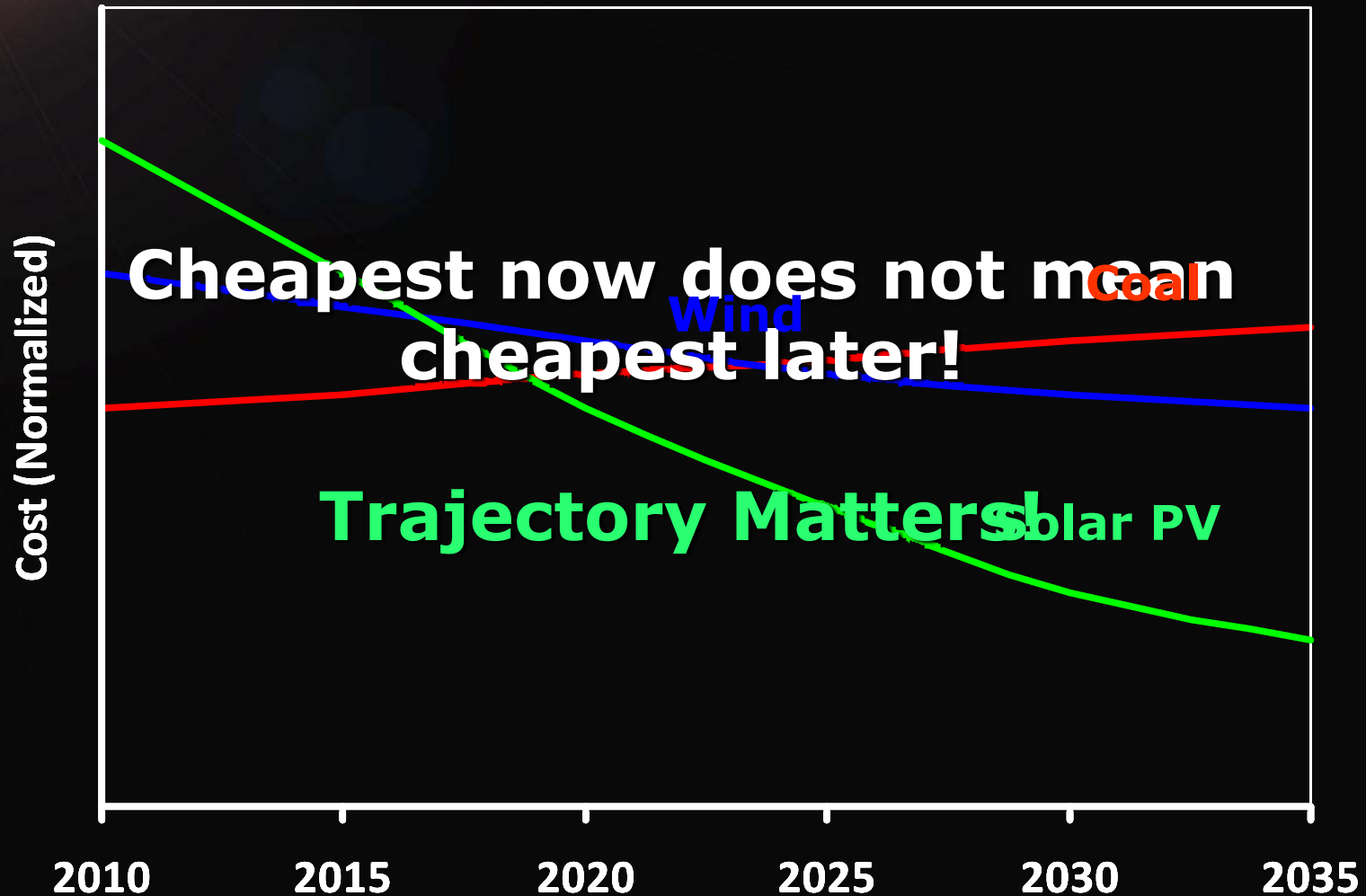


# cost: not all technology curves are the same

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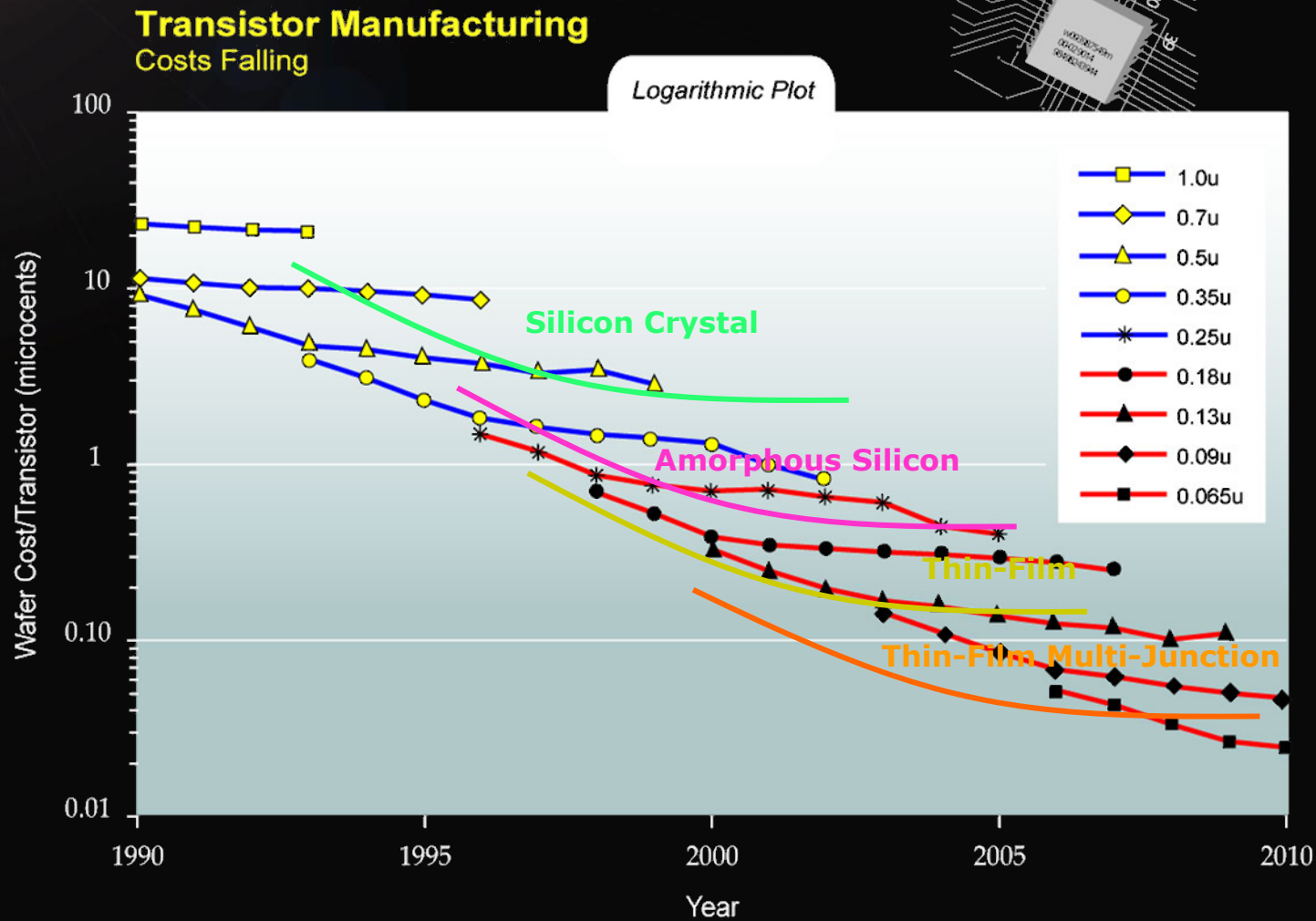
# cost: not all technology curves are the same



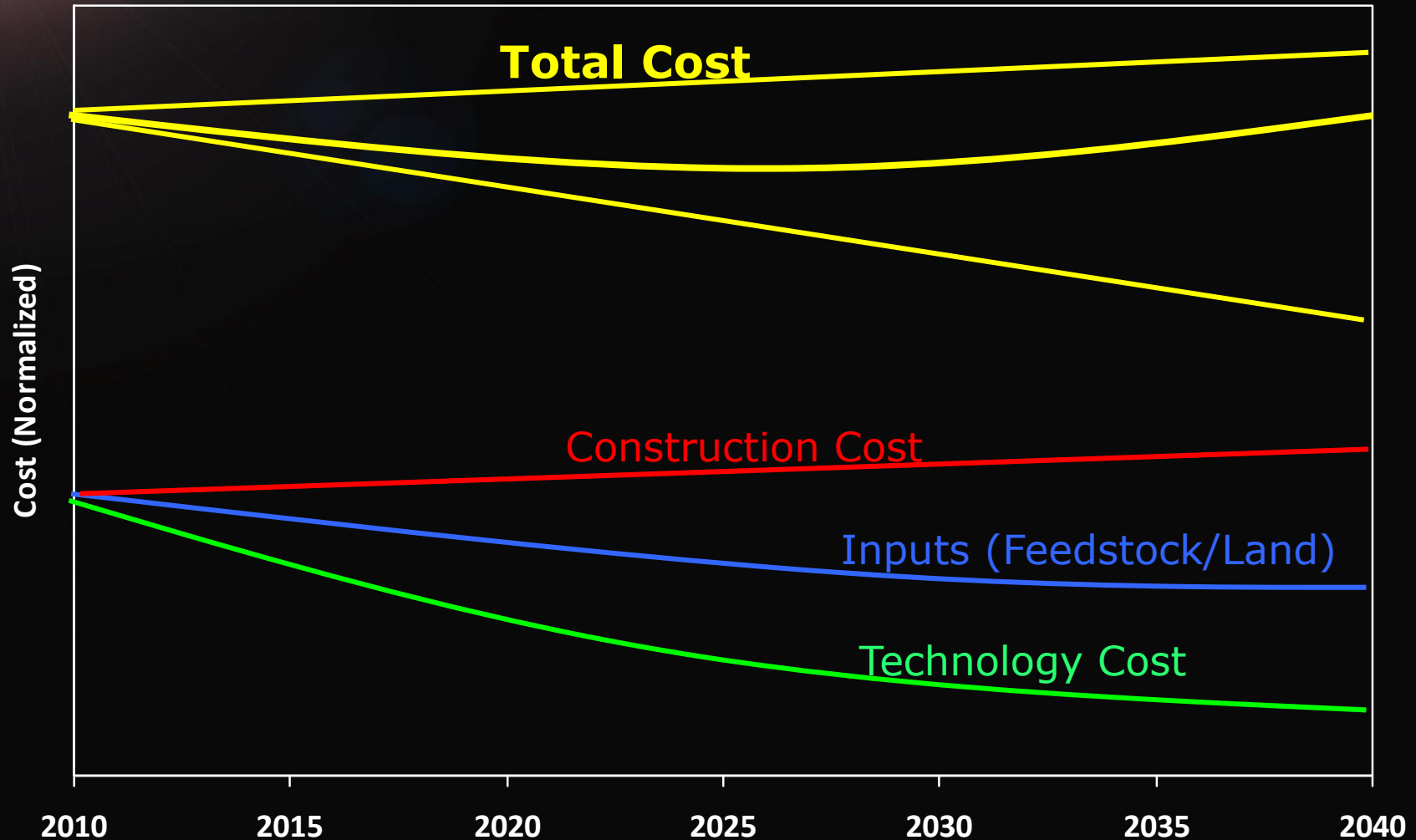


# declining technology cost...

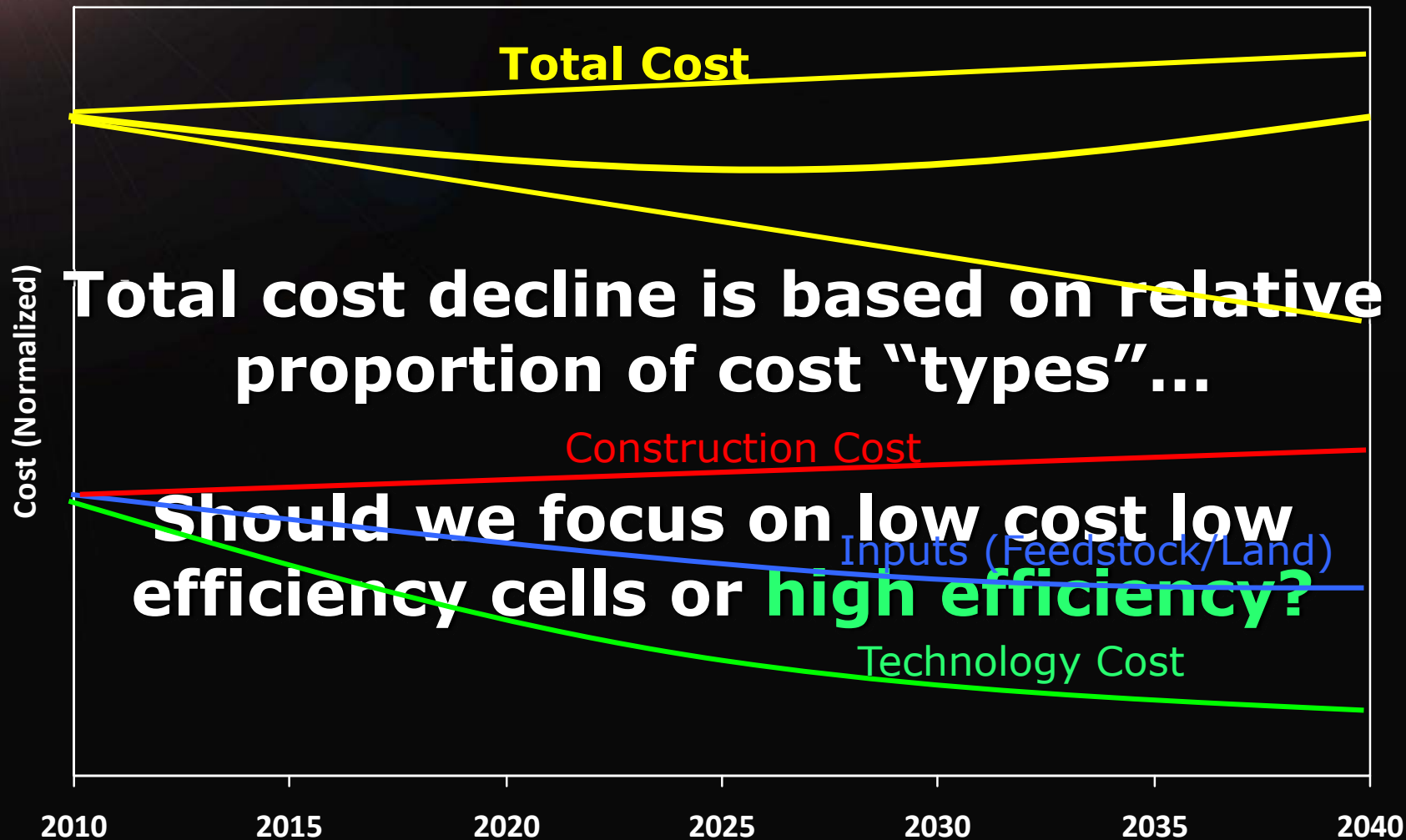
## Generations of Solar Photovoltaics...



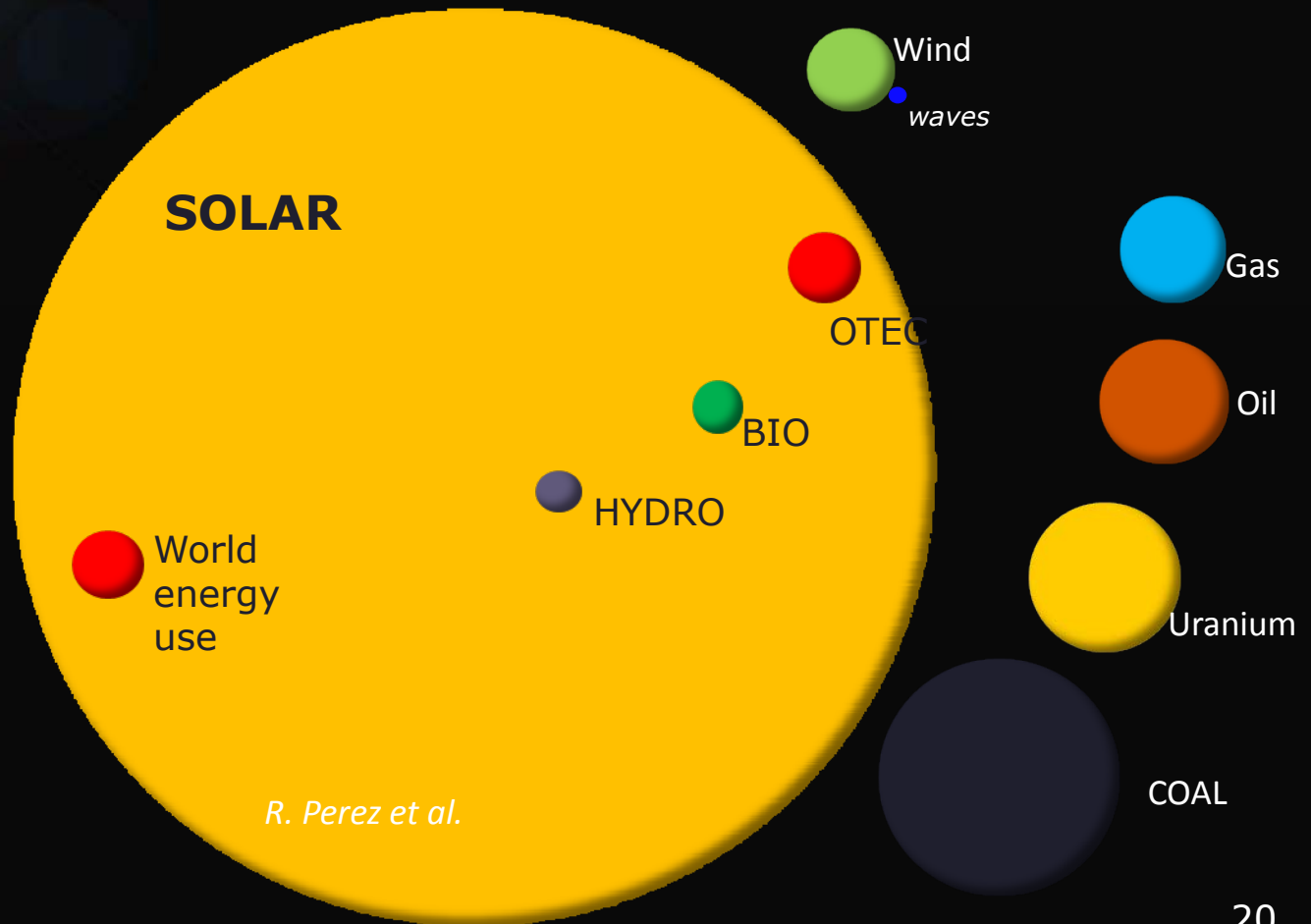
# but tech cost decline isn't enough...



# but tech cost decline isn't enough...



# Scalability: solar



# Scalability: Land is not (remotely) a constraint

→ 3000 km



More than 90% of world pp could be served by clean power from deserts (*DESERTEC.org*) !

world electricity demand (18,000 TWh/y) can be produced from 300 x 300 km<sup>2</sup> = 0.23% of all deserts distributed over "10 000" sites

# scalability shortfalls

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- > Geothermal, Wind
  - > not enough availability, dispatchability
  - Scale differentiates a niche solution from a material one!**
- > Electric Cars
  - > limited by battery cost trajectory
- > “Classic” Biodiesel
  - > limited room for optimization; low land efficiency

# example: solar PV

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... but

- > solar cell costs are only 30-40% of total cost; installation costs increasing; inverters on slow curve
- > Scale: no storage, no base-load power
- > Rooftop = need better sun locations

Solutions:

- > High cell efficiency = lower installation costs/kw
- > Better locations for more KW per hour

# example: wind

---

Good:

- > Wind turbine shows declining costs over time

... but

- > Technical: Betz limit (59.6%)
- > Scalability: good sites declining
- > Systems for distributed sources
- > Cost: increasing cost with scale

**Storage is the key for wind power**



# example: natural gas automobiles

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Good:

- > Moderate CO2 reductions

**Picken's plan is a dead end  
street**

... but


- > Commodity price variability & supply risk
- > Mature technology with "fossil" carbon limits
- > No capacity building towards 80% reduction

adoption risk - \$2,500 nano

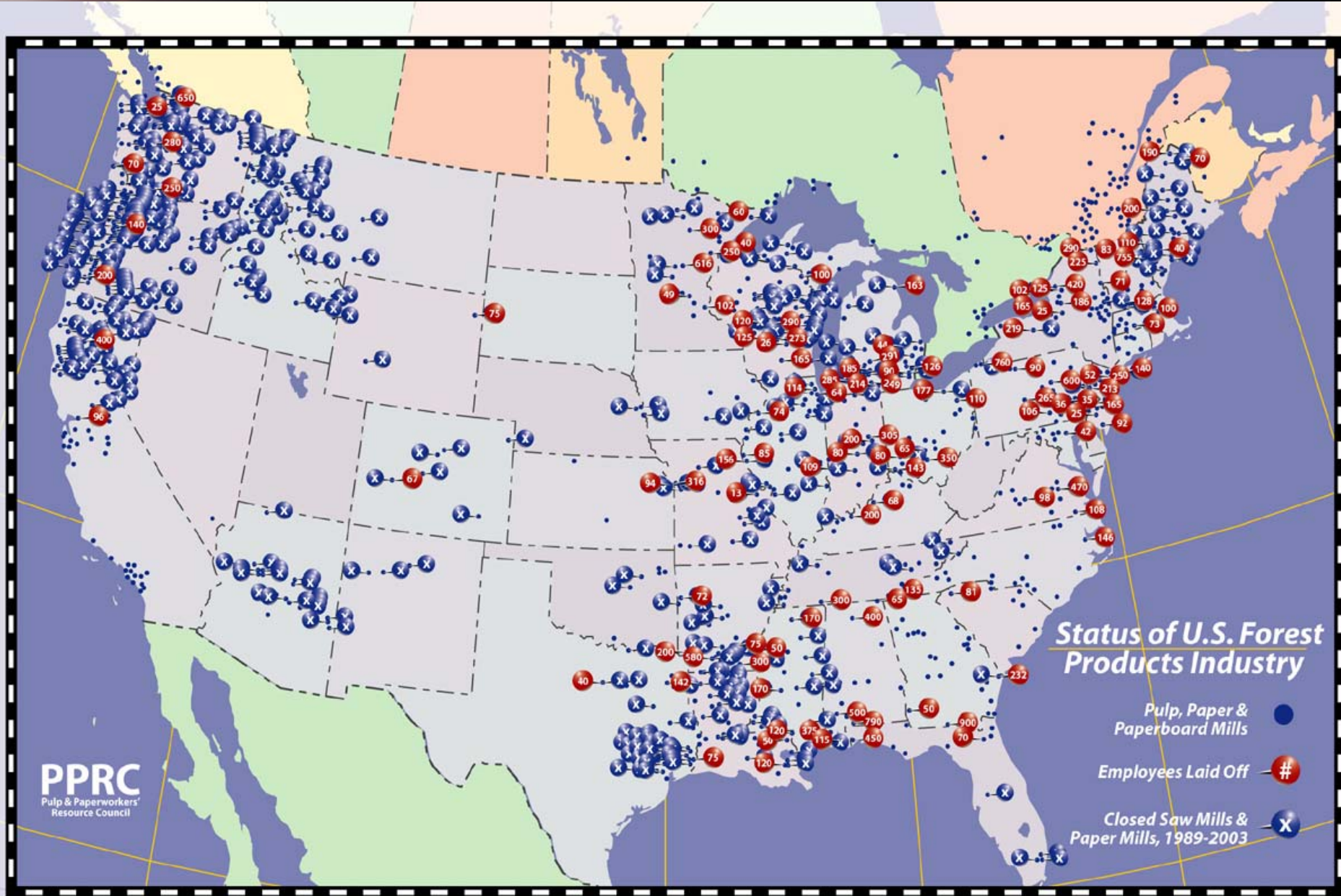
... ICE or hydrogen?

...the Chindia test on relevance

TATA nano

A red Tata Nano car is shown from a front-three-quarter view. The car is compact and has a black bumper. The license plate area displays "TATA nano". The car is parked on a dark surface, and the background is dark with some blue lighting.

# adoption risk: U.S. mill closures



# capital formation

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- > **Short Innovation Cycles (3-5 years)**

- > Not "fusion"; Not "nuclear"; Not CCS

- > **Mitigate technical AND/OR market risk quickly and cheaply**

- > (technical) - solar thermal

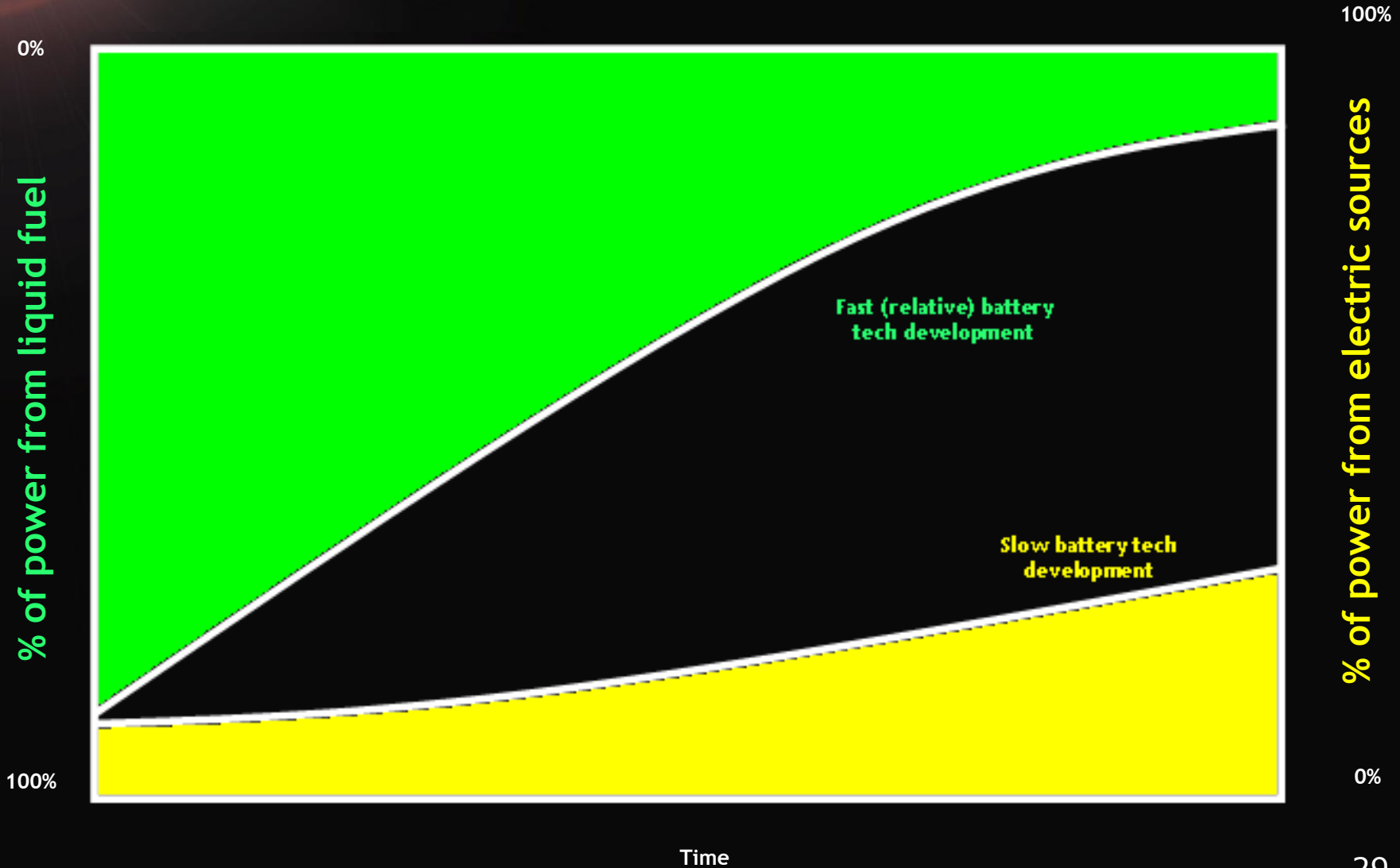
- > (market) - corn ethanol

- > **Investor returns at each stage of technology development**

- > **Unsubsidized market competition: 7-10 years**

**Private money will flow to ventures that return investment in 3-5 year cycles!**

# optionality: hybrids or biofuels?



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# goal:

cost, carbon reduction capacity, carbon & scaling trajectory, capital formation, low adoption risk, & optionality

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... "relevant scale" solutions for

... oil

... coal

... materials

... efficiency

# ...“lets face the facts”

... Prius: vs. painting 1000 sq-ft of roof white

... Wind & PV: unscalable solutions without storage!

... “Classic” Biodiesel: a technological dead-end!

... CCS Coal: “FutureGen” or “Nevergen”?

... Hydrogen powered cars: a bridge to nonsense?



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“extrapolation of the past”

**VS.**

“inventing the future”

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“no change bigotry”

**VS.**

“environmental everything”

**VS.**

praggmentalists

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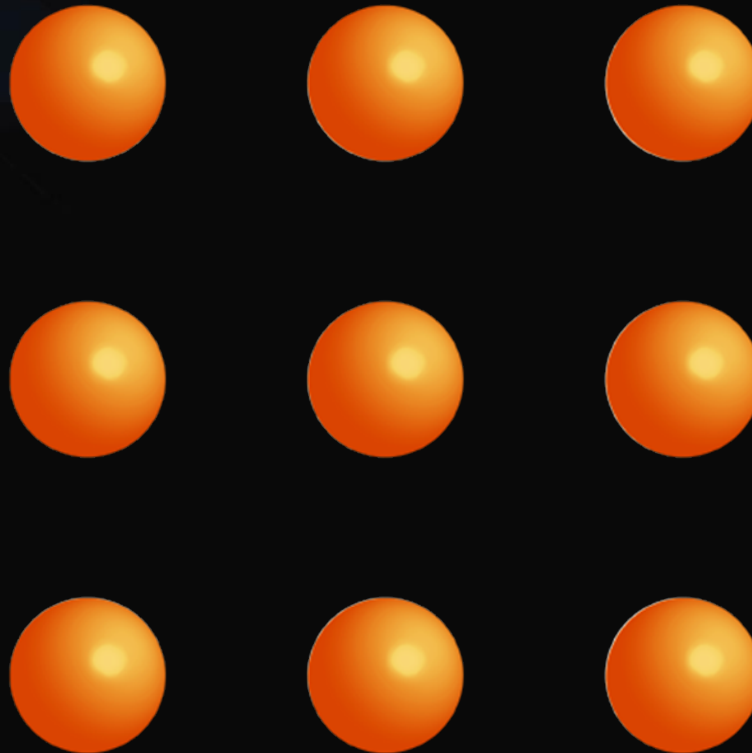
Challenge conventional wisdom!

The nine dots problem...

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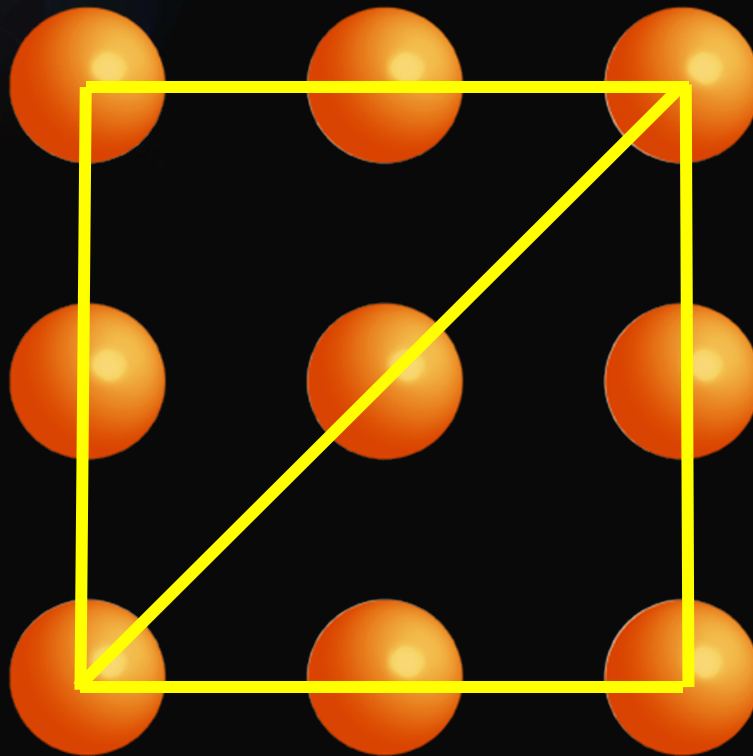
# The nine dots problem

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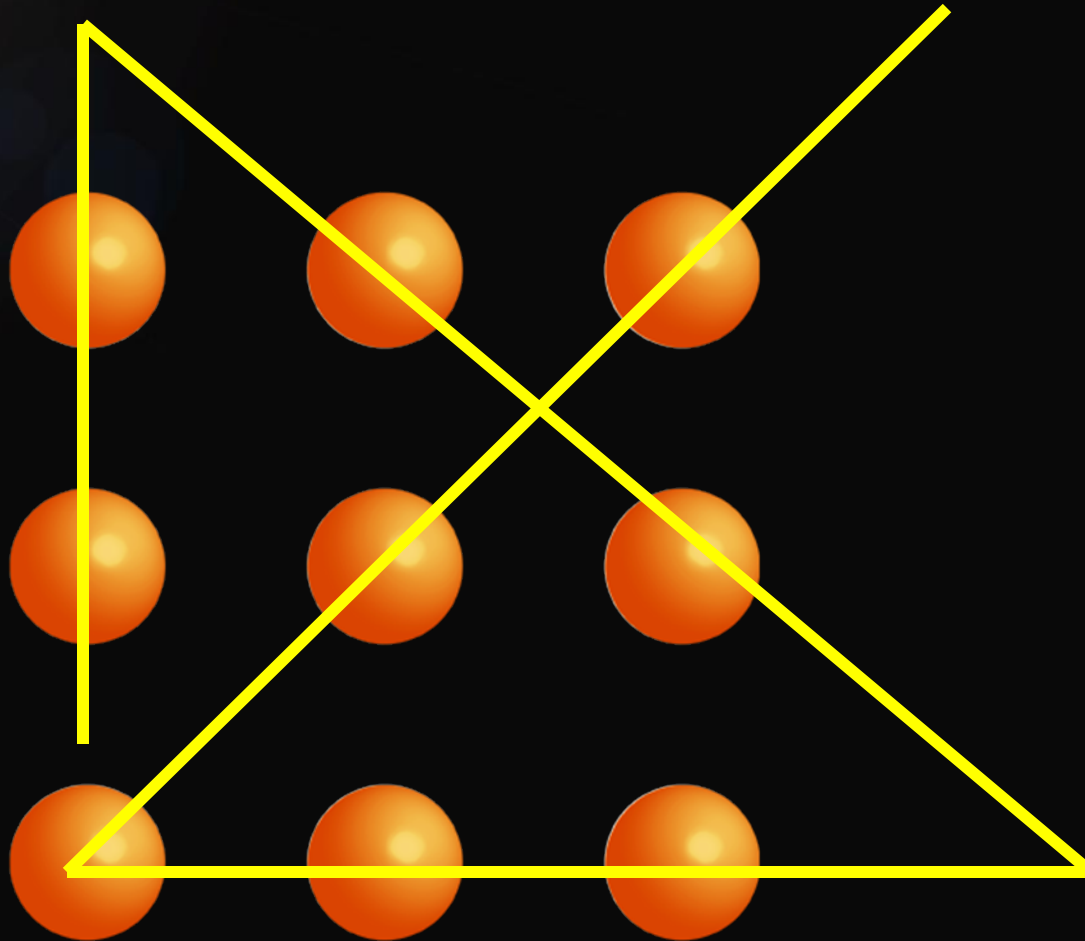
# Standard solution: Five lines

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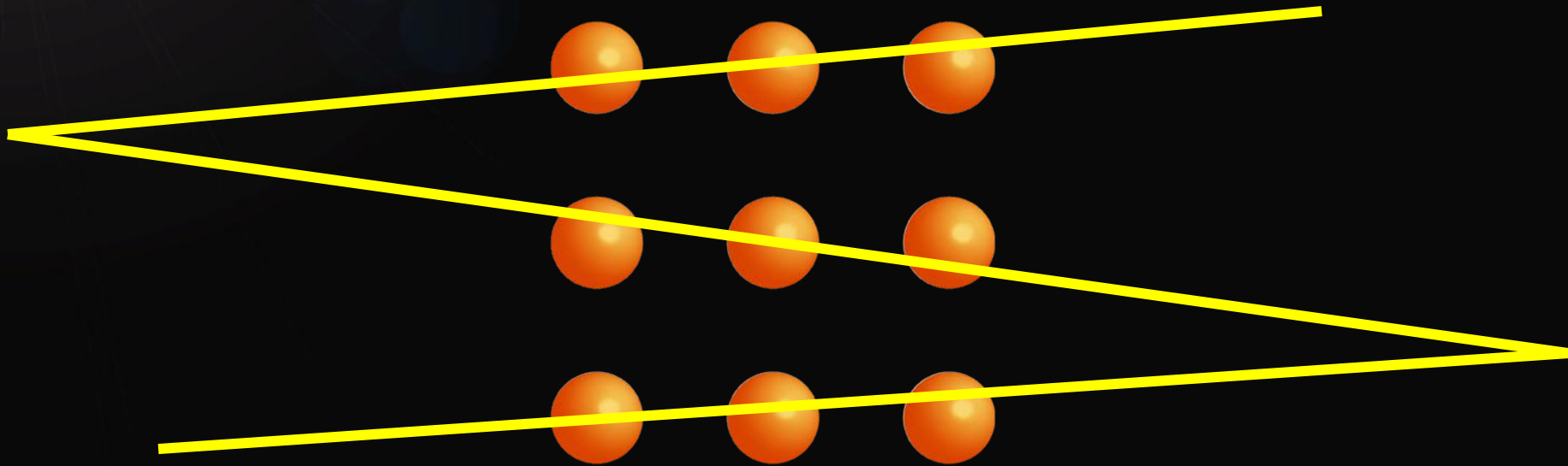
# Four Lines

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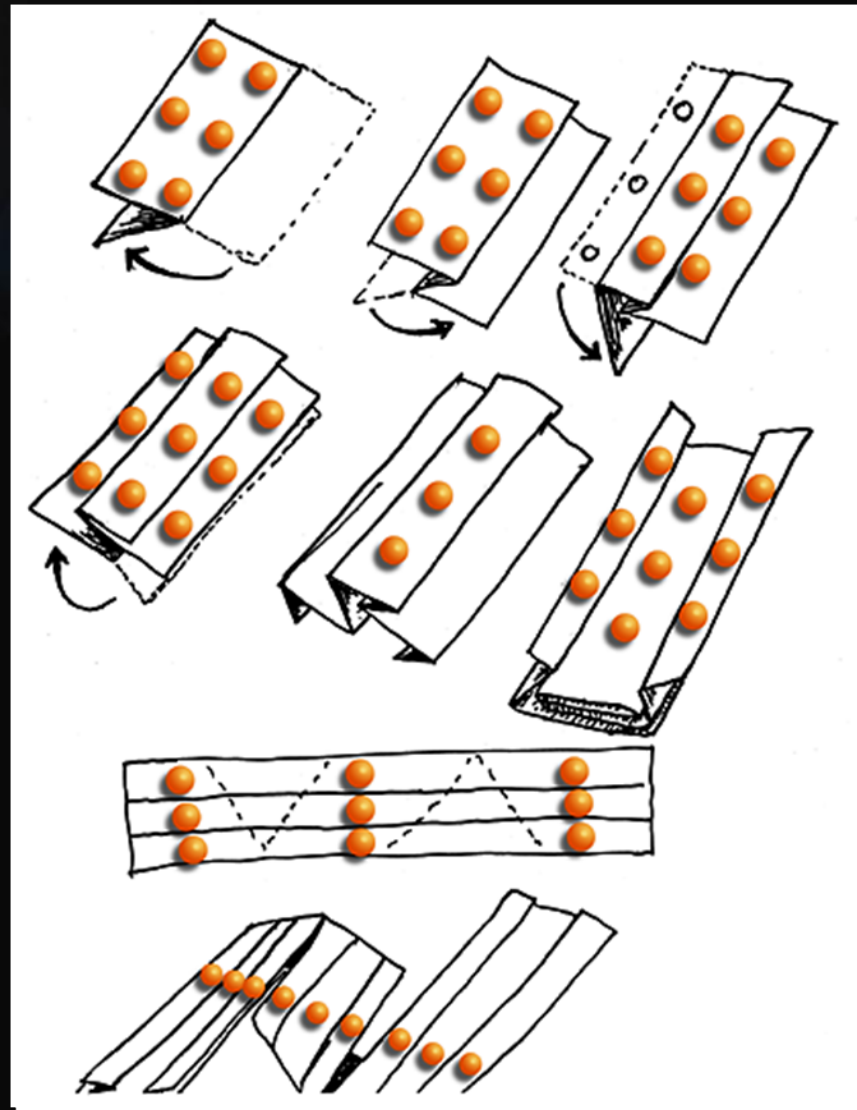
# Better: use just three lines

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But...how about just *one* line?

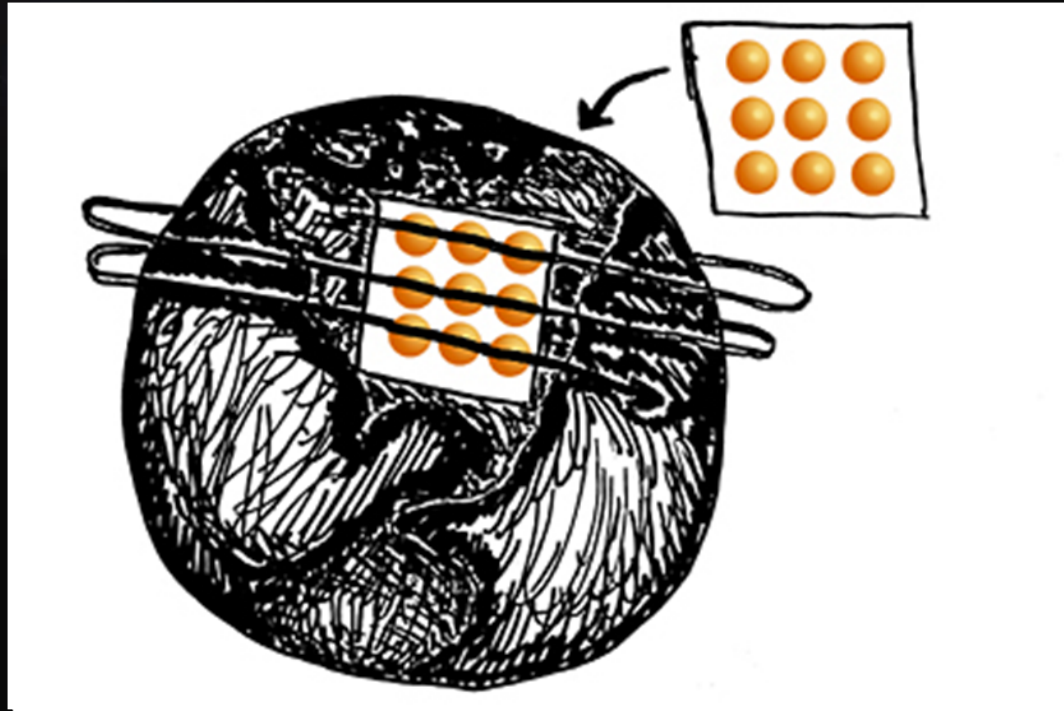
# Origami Solution





# Geographer's Solution

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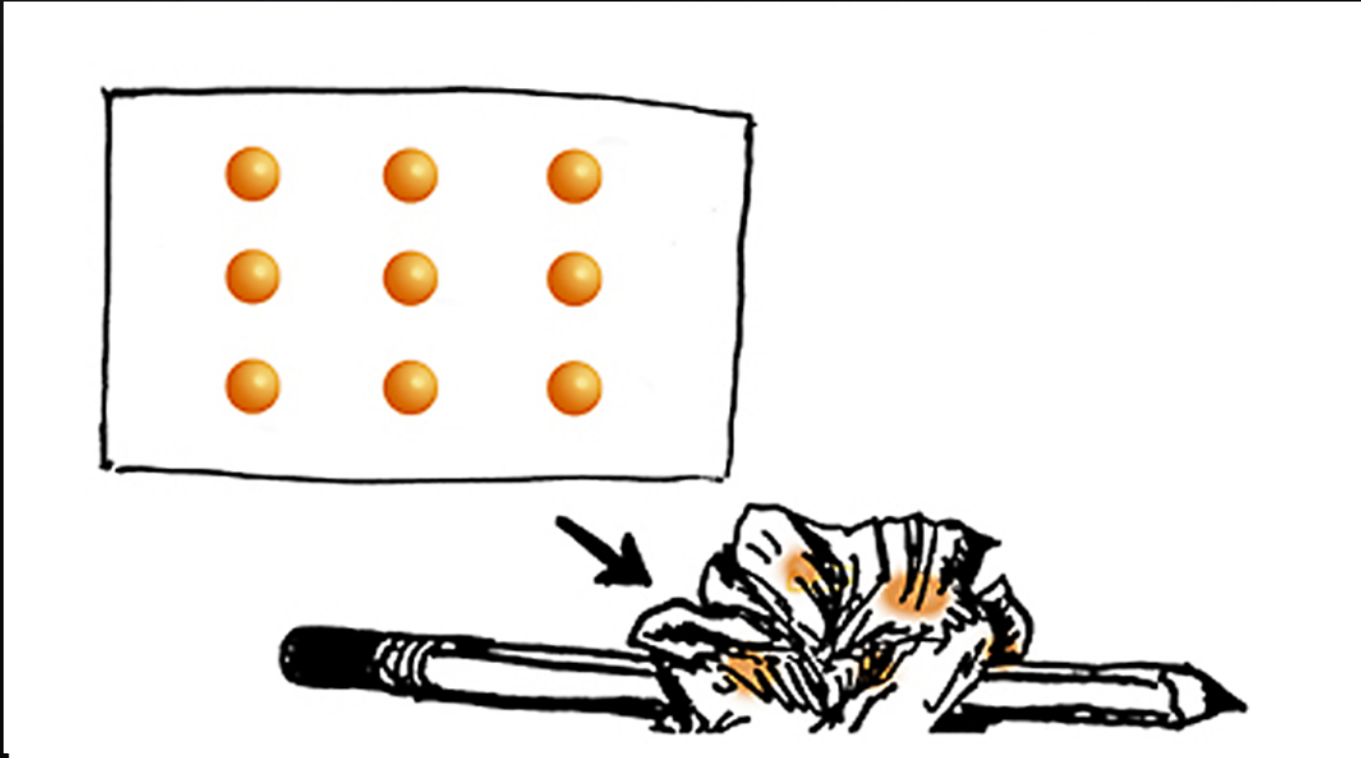
# Mechanical Engineer's Solution

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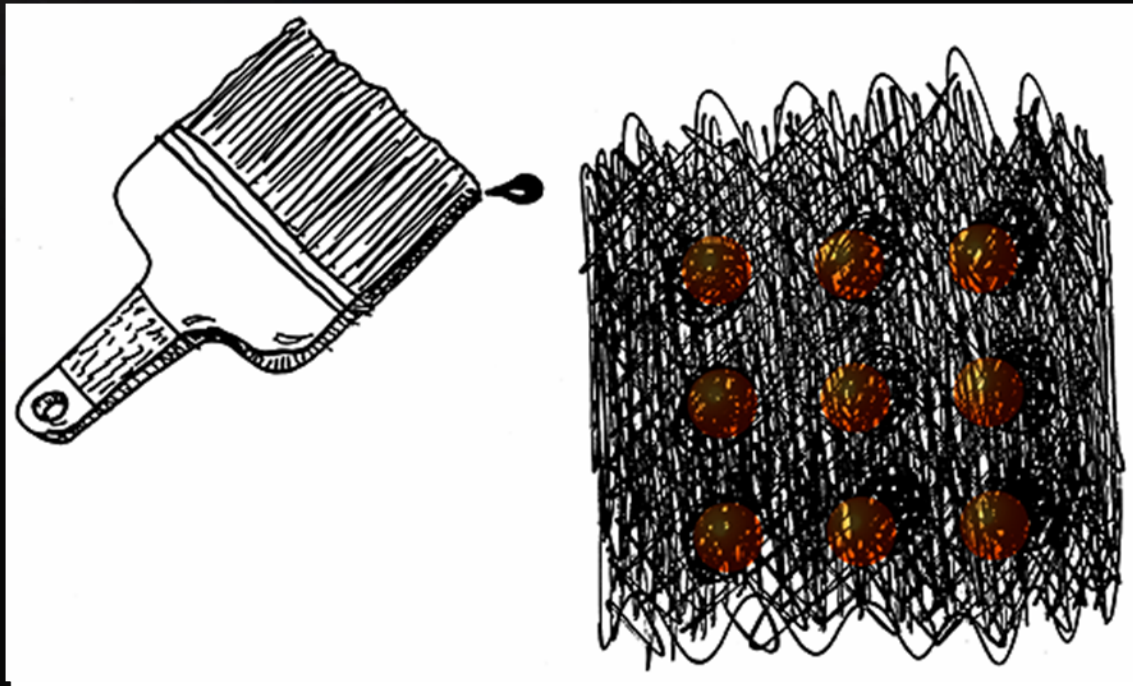
# Statistician's Solution

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# Wide Line Solution

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# “black swan” solutions ?

Black Swans events are:

- > Outliers: outside realm of traditional expectations
- > Material: make significant, game-changing impact
- > Justifiable: not predicted, but justified on ex-post basis

**“rarity, extreme impact, and retrospective  
(though not prospective) predictability”**

# “black swan” solutions ?

Black Swans events are:

- > Outliers: outside realm of traditional expectations
- > Material: make significant, game-changing impact

Technology shocks are classic “Black Swans”!  
> Justifiable, not predicted, but justified on ex post basis

Strategy: More “at bats”; “shots on  
“rarity, extreme impact,” and retrospective  
(though not prospective) predictability”

# “what if...”

- > “more coal plants meant cleaner air”
- > “more driving meant less carbon”
- > “cement was carbon negative & free”
- > “a million year crude production cycle reduced to hours?”
- > “engines were twice as efficient cutting world oil consumption in half”

We are working on these &  
imagining the future!

# Calera

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- > Cement that sequesters CO<sub>2</sub>, instead of emitting it!



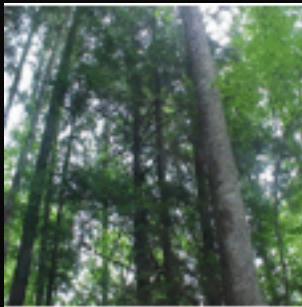


# “biocrude” replaces crude



Crude oil

Refinery



  
Biocrude



# EESTOR ceramic battery

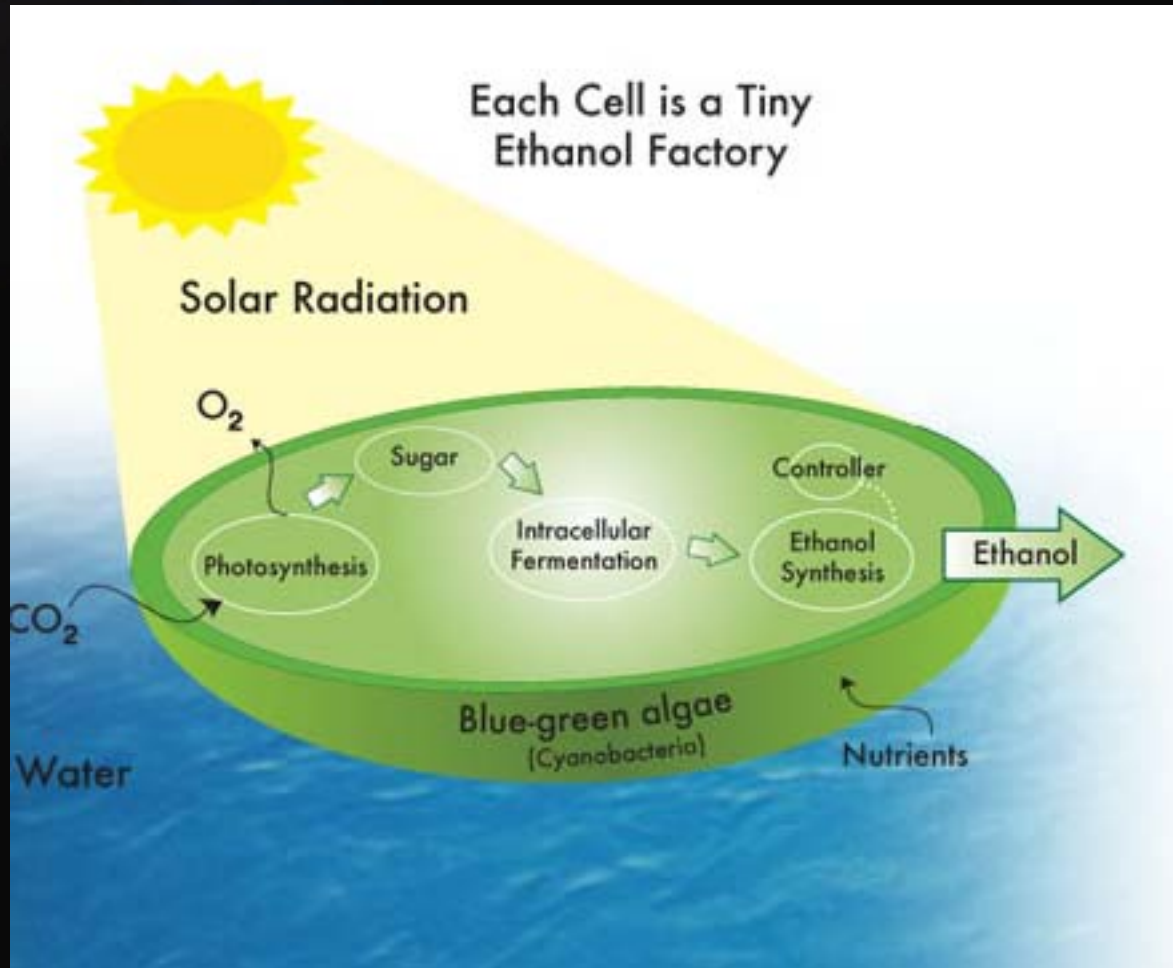
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- Up to 10X energy density of lead-acid battery
- Up to 1/10<sup>th</sup> weight and volume!



# Algenol

- Direct “algae to ethanol” technology
- Yields > 6,000 gallons per acre



# not your niche markets anymore!

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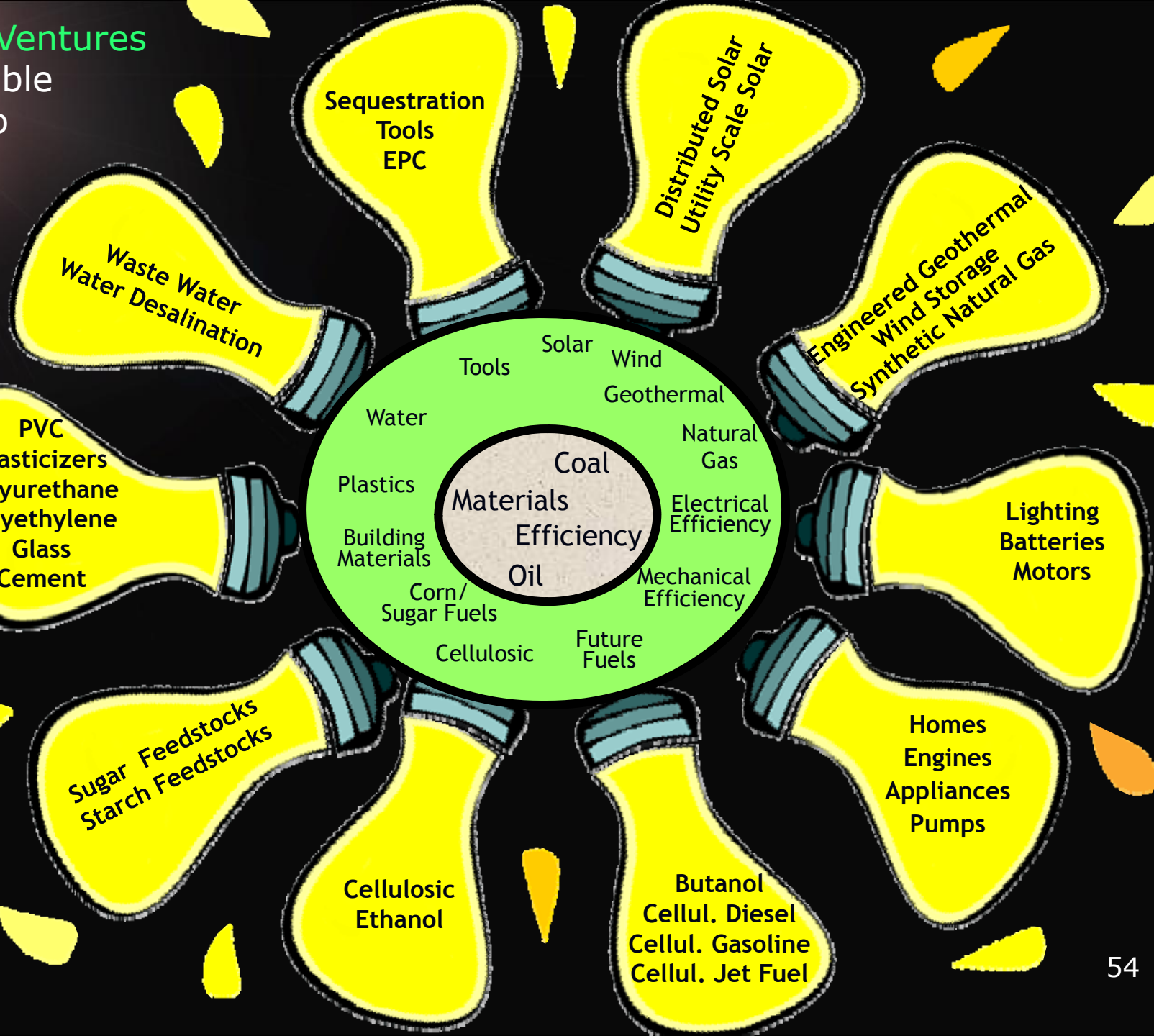
## The New Green The Markets You Think Of

- Engines (\$200B)
  - Lighting (\$80B - US)
    - Corn Ethanol
    - Biodiesel
  - Appliances (\$10'sB+)
  - Batteries + Flow Cells (\$50B+)
    - Solar PV
    - Wind
    - Geothermal
  - Cement (\$100B+)
  - Water (\$500B+)
  - Glass (\$40B)
  - Home Building (!!!)
  - BioPlastics (\$10'sB+)
- Generation - \$250B - US
- Gasoline (\$500B+)
  - Diesel (\$500B+)
  - Jet Fuel (\$100B+)
  - Solar Thermal
  - EGS
  - Clean Coal
  - New Nukes

...our **renewable** portfolio

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# Khosla Ventures Renewable Portfolio



# Khosla Ventures Renewable Portfolio

NanoH2O

Nanostellar  
Codon  
Praj

Stion  
Ausra  
Infinia  
PVT

AltaRock  
Great Point Energy

Draths  
Segetis  
Soladigm  
Calera

Solar  
Wind  
Geothermal  
Natural Gas  
Coal  
Materials  
Efficiency  
Oil  
Mechanical Efficiency  
Future Fuels  
Cellulosic  
Corn/  
Sugar Fuels  
Building Materials  
Plastics  
Water  
Tools

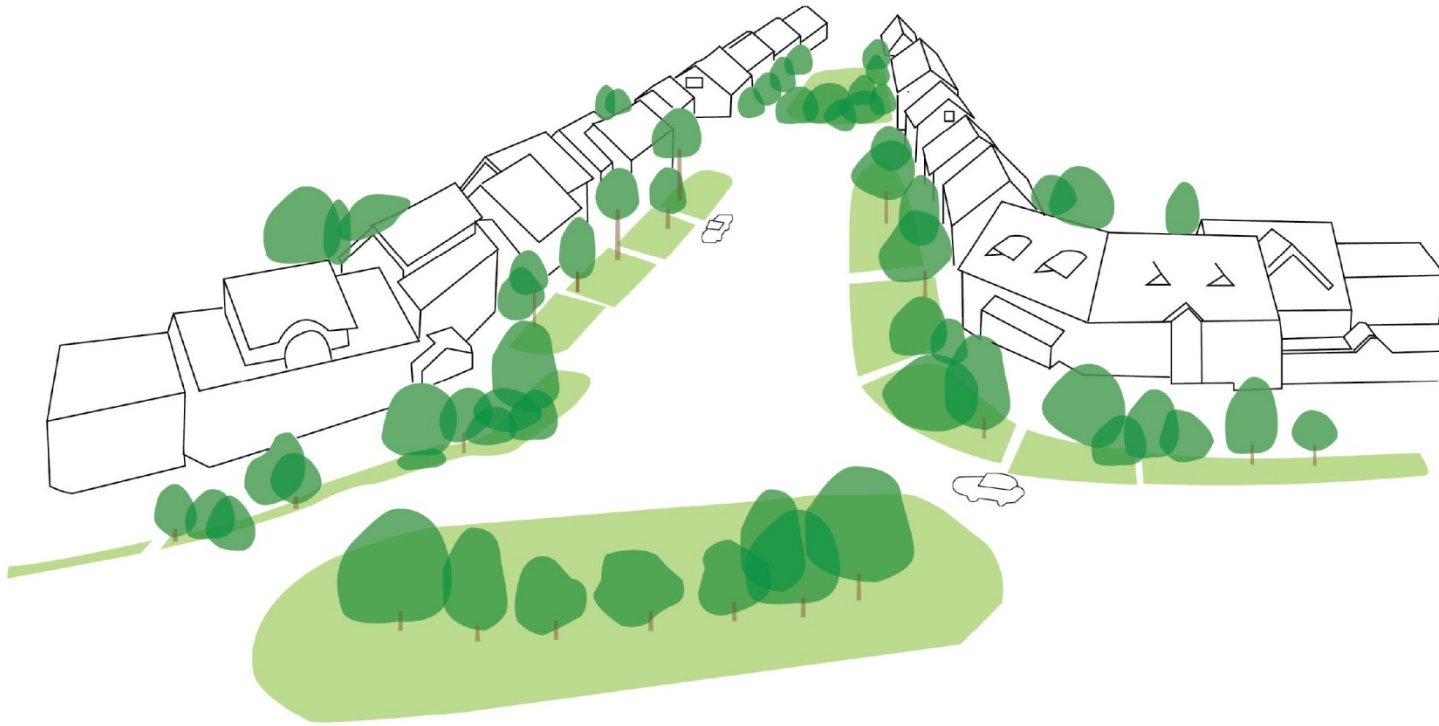
Seeo  
Kaai  
Soraa  
Lumenz  
Topanga  
GIV  
Ramu  
Sakti3  
Firefly

Cilion  
Ethos

Mascoma  
Range  
Coskata  
Lanza

Amyris  
LS9  
Gevo  
KiOR

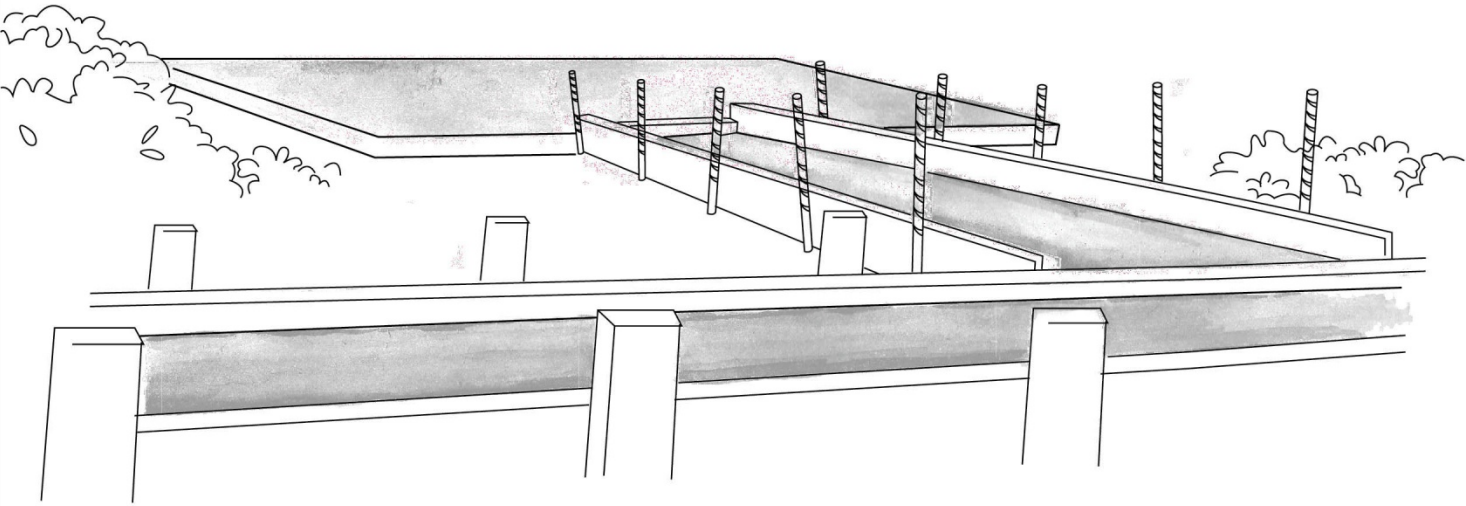
PAX Streamline  
LivingHomes  
EcoMotors  
Trasonic  
Tula



Together, our products will improve the way all people live



Calera Corporation



Built on carbon negative cement

Living Homes



And prefabricated, environmentally friendly, cheaper, LEEDS homes

Soladigm



Using electrochromatic windows

Companies

Amyris

LS9

Gevo

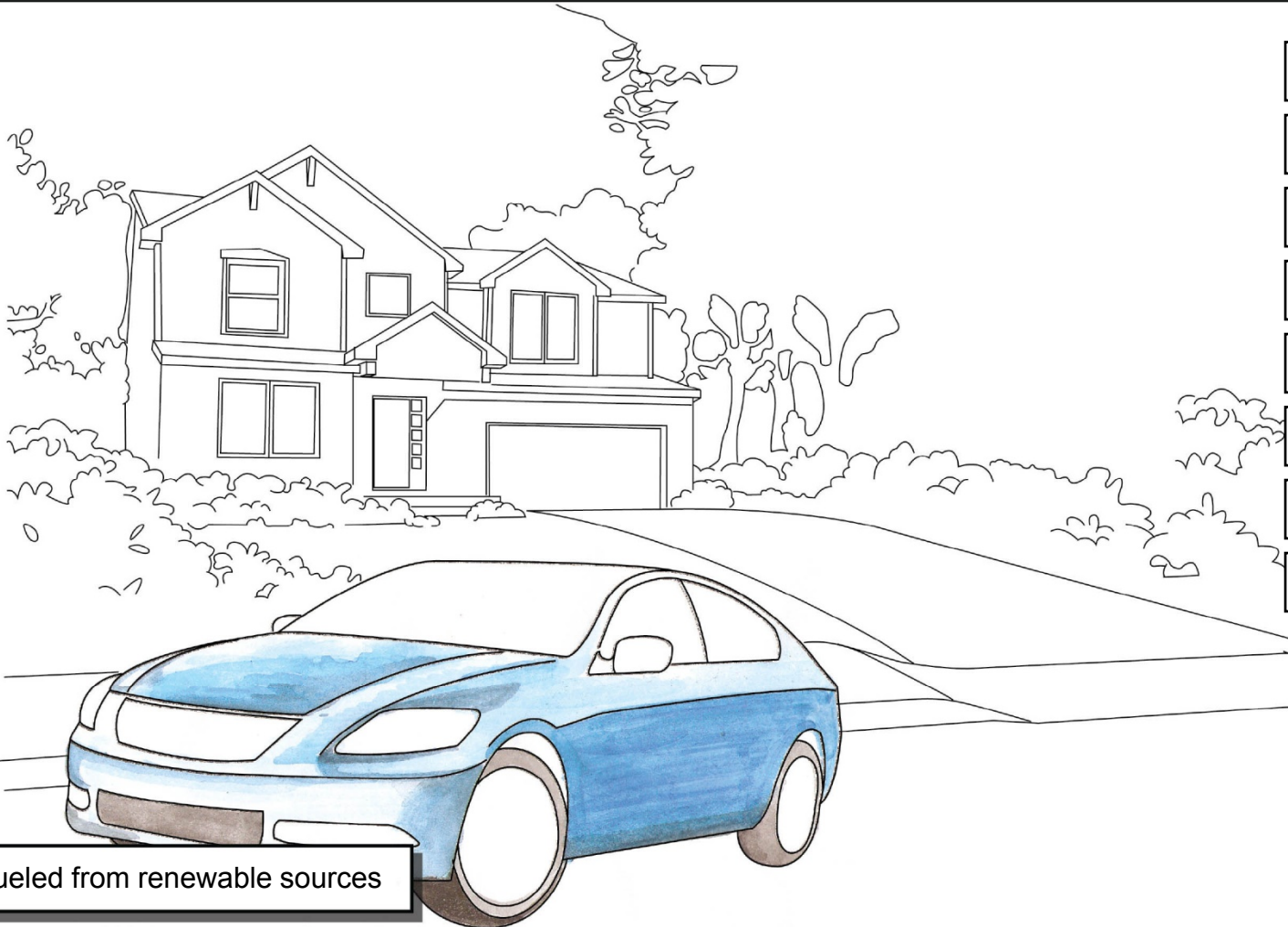
Kior

Mascoma

Range Fuels

Coskata

LanzaTech



Fueled from renewable sources

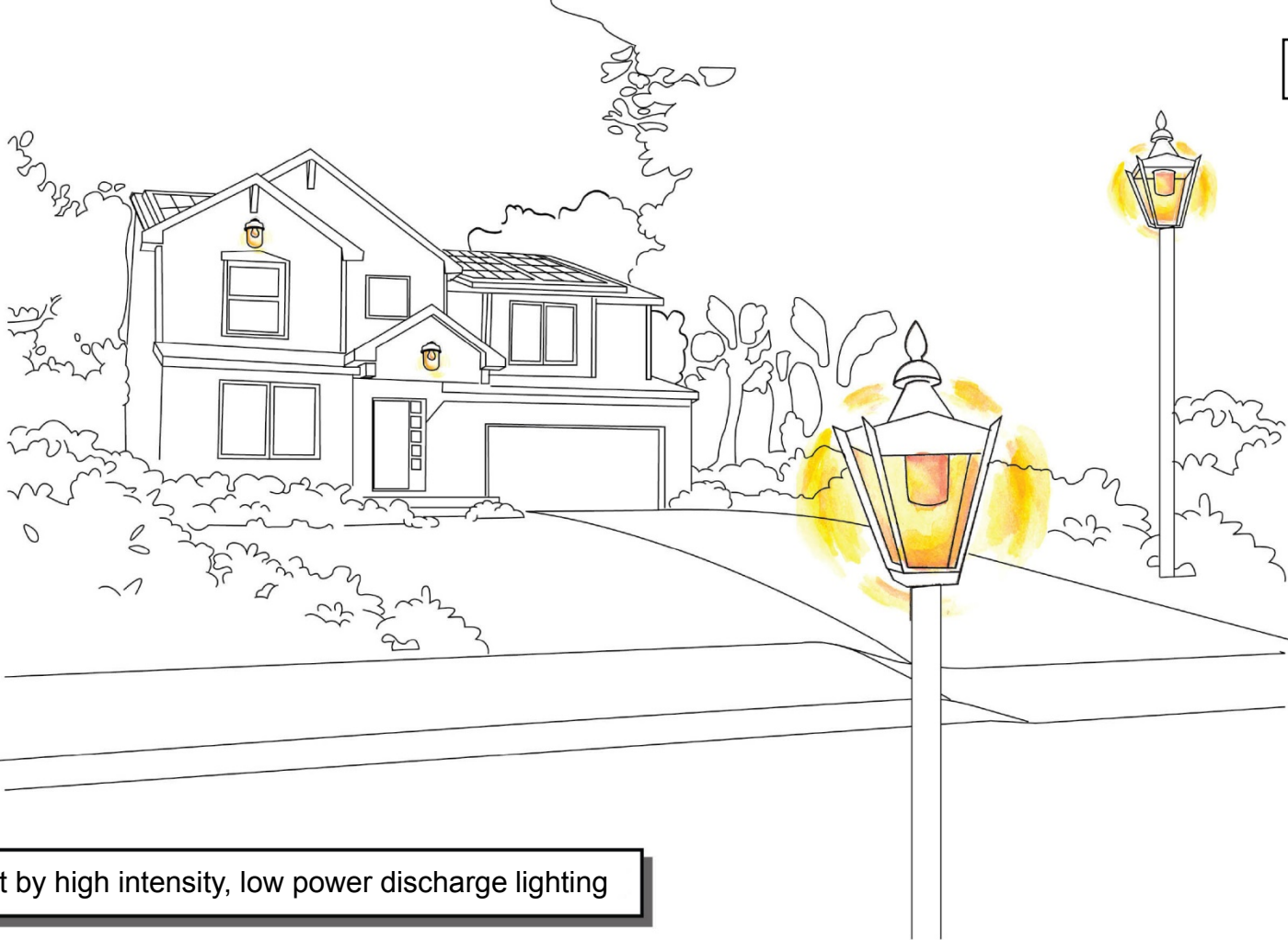
Companies



- Ramu
- EcoMotors
- Transonic
- Firefly
- Seeo
- Sakti3
- Nanostellar
- Tula Technologies

With reduced fuel consumption and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions

Topanga



Lit by high intensity, low power discharge lighting

Companies

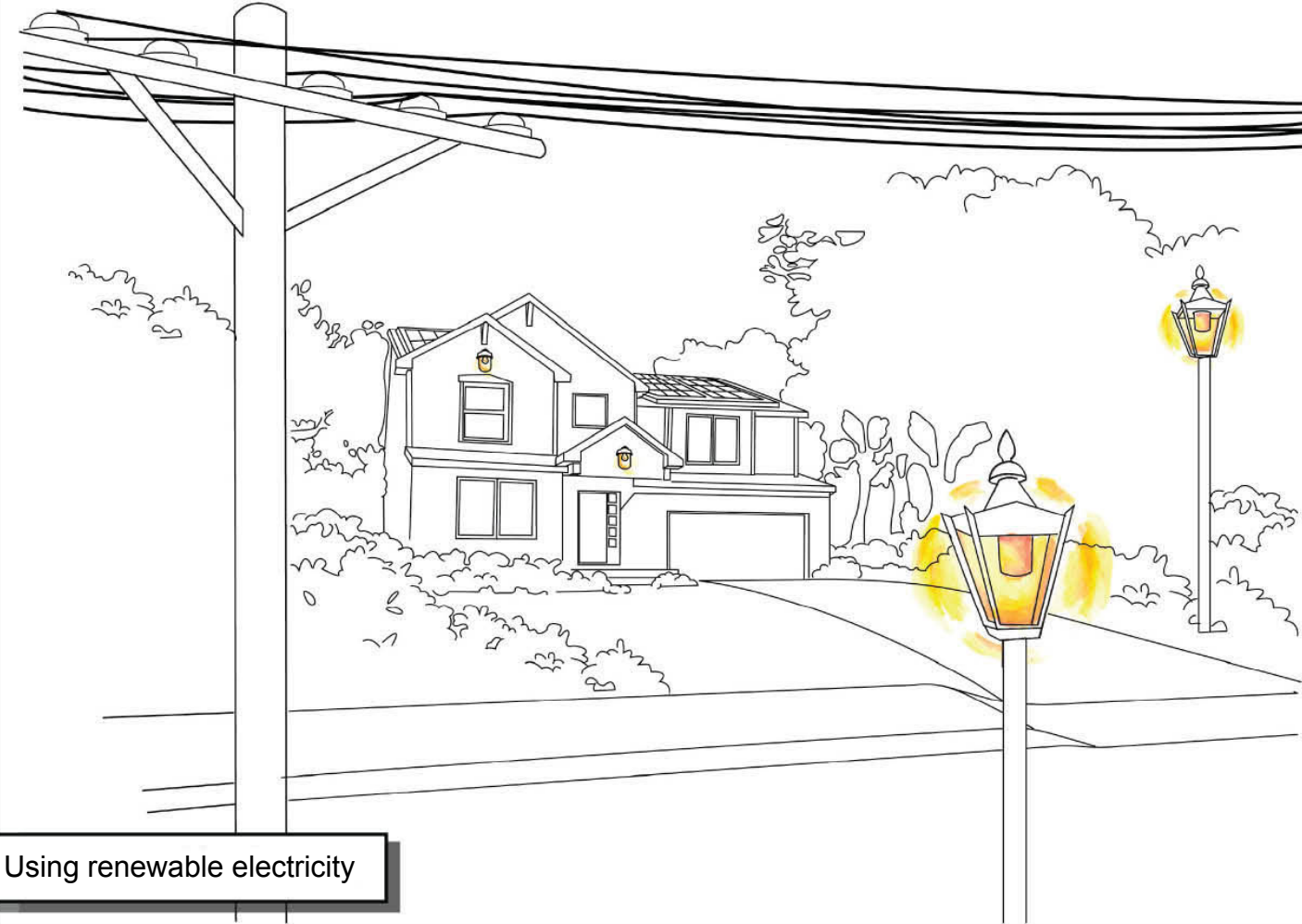
Ausra

Altarock

Infinia

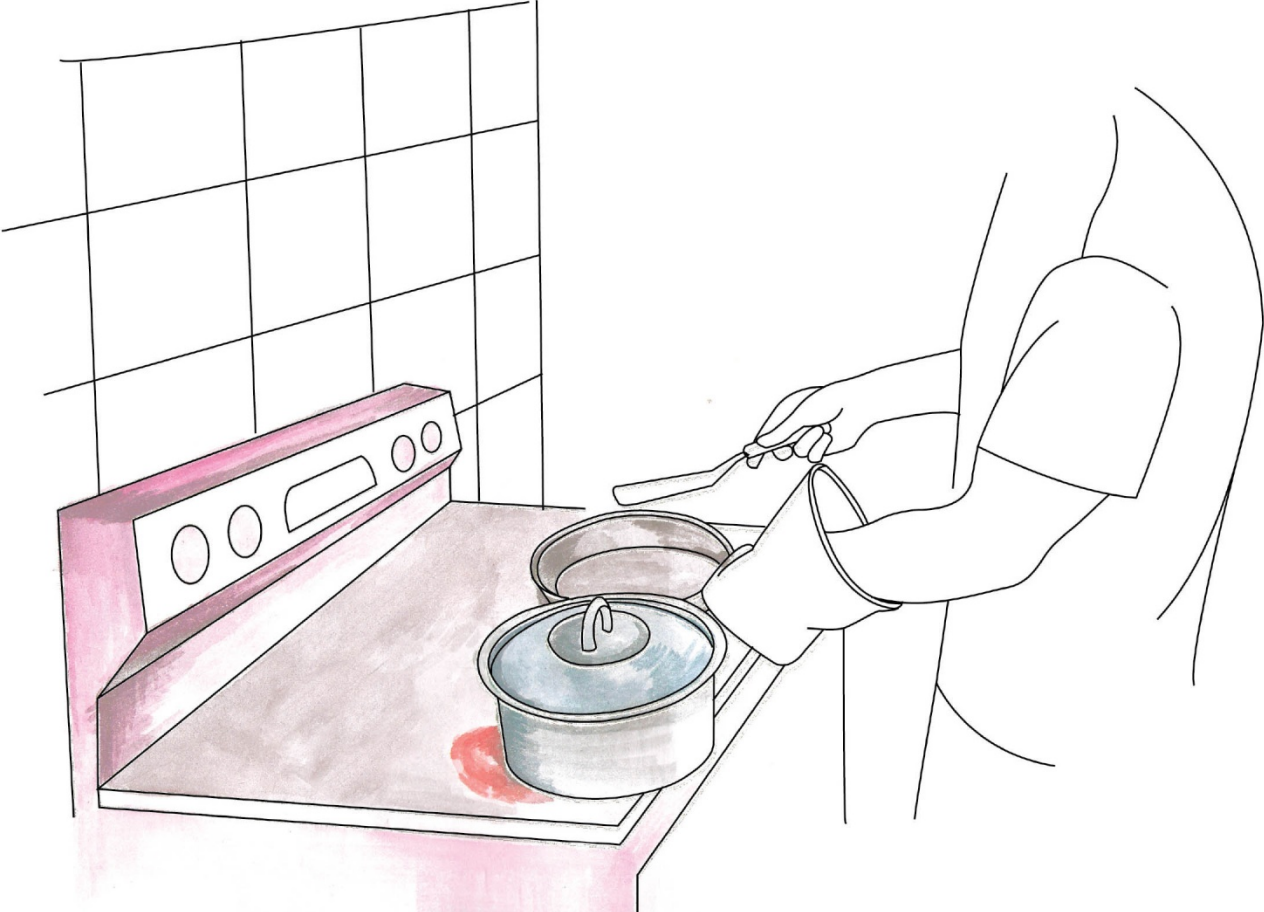
Stion

PVT Solar



Using renewable electricity

Great Point Energy



Cooking with natural gas from clean coal & biomass



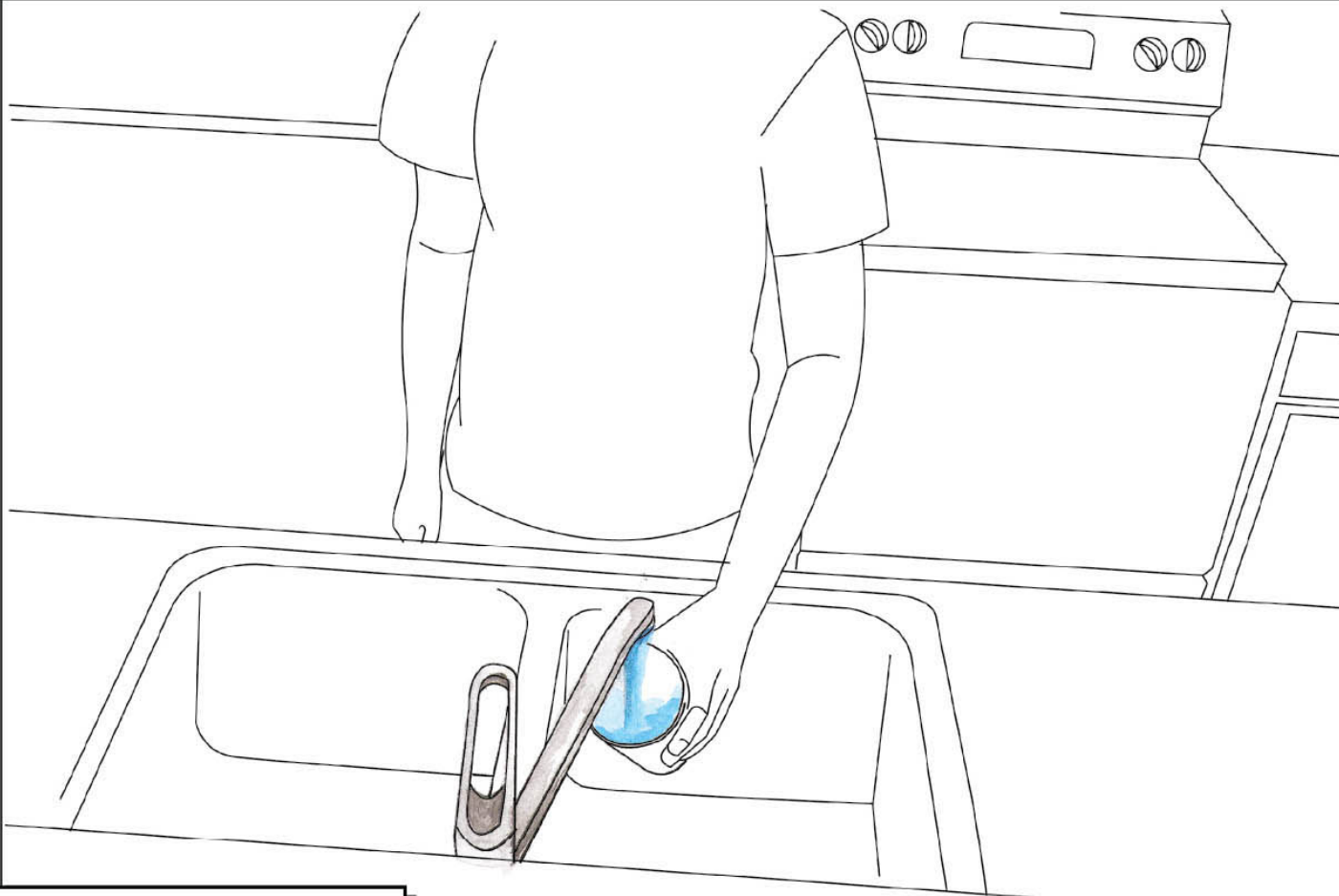
Companies

- Lumenz
- Group IV
- Soraa



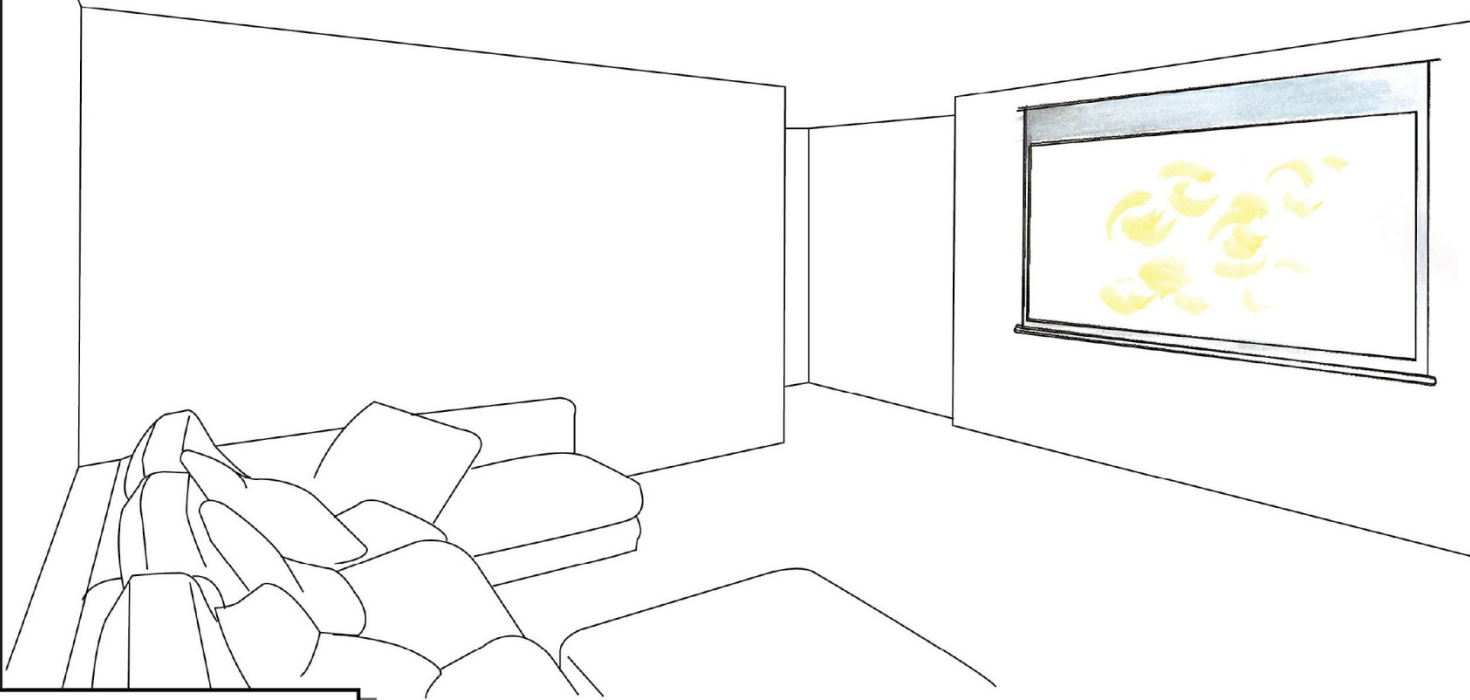
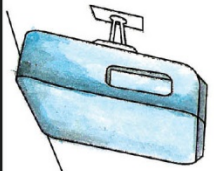
Reading with LED lighting

NanoH2O



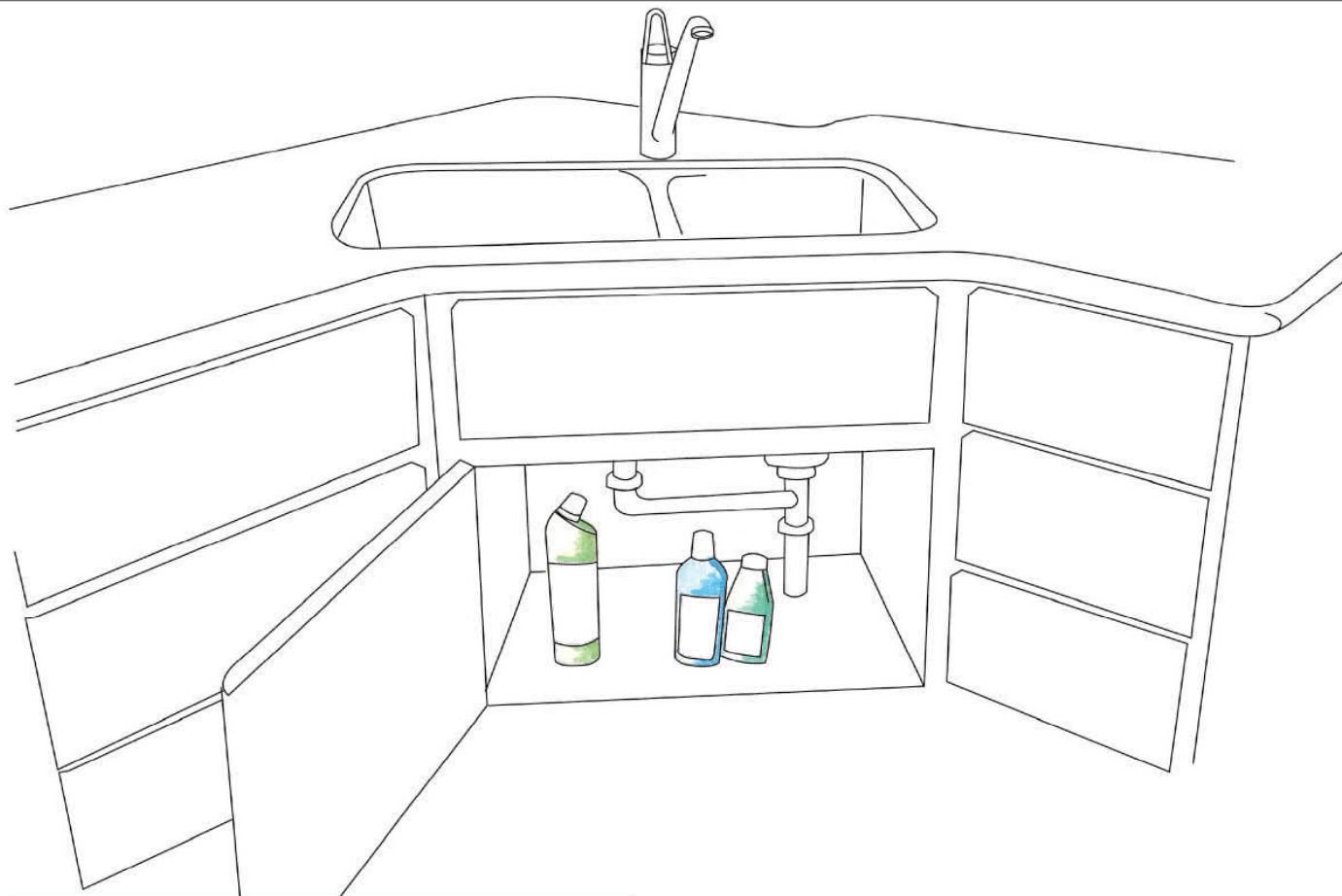
Drinking desalinated water

Kaai



Watching HD laser TV

Segetis



Safely using biobased plastics and chemicals

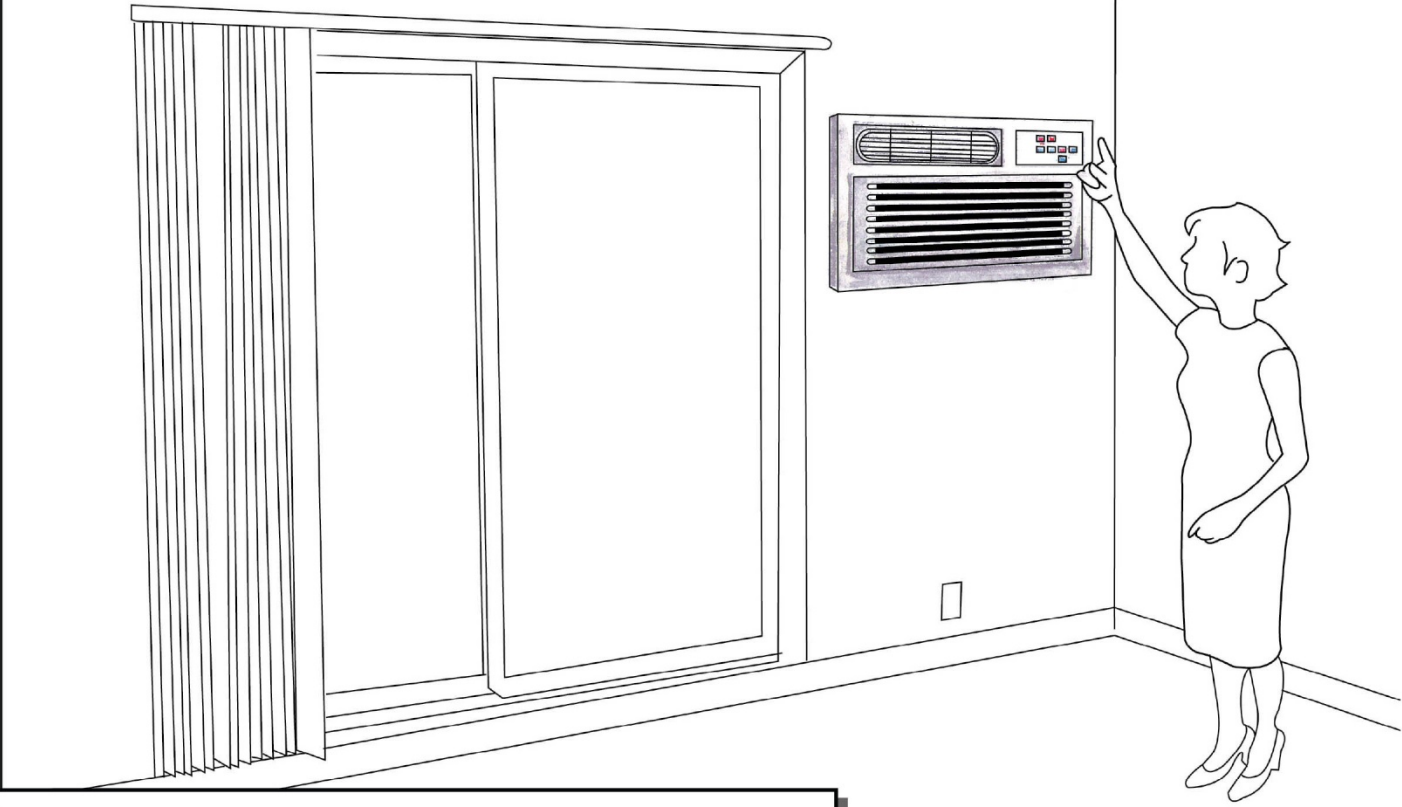
Companies

Draths

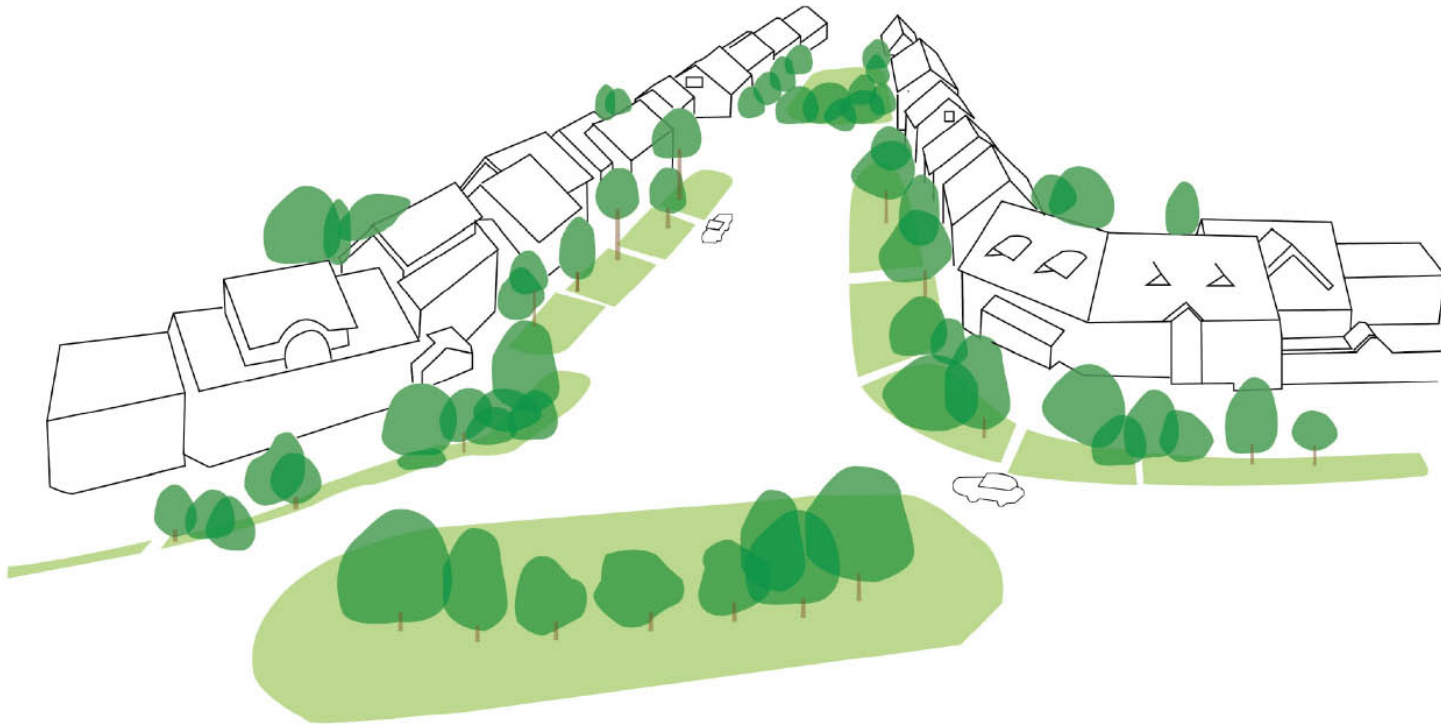


Biobased materials for your home

Pax Streamline



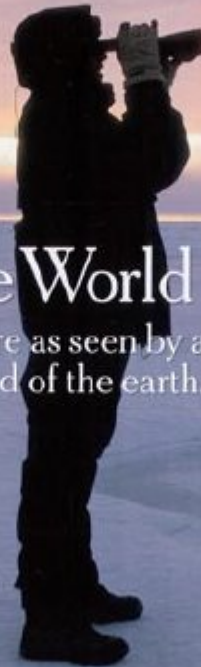
Staying comfortable with more efficient air conditioning



Change every aspect of daily living

The New York Times Magazine

JANUARY 4, 2009 / \$10 US



# Watching the World Melt Away

The future as seen by a lonely  
scientist at the end of the earth. By Darcy Frey

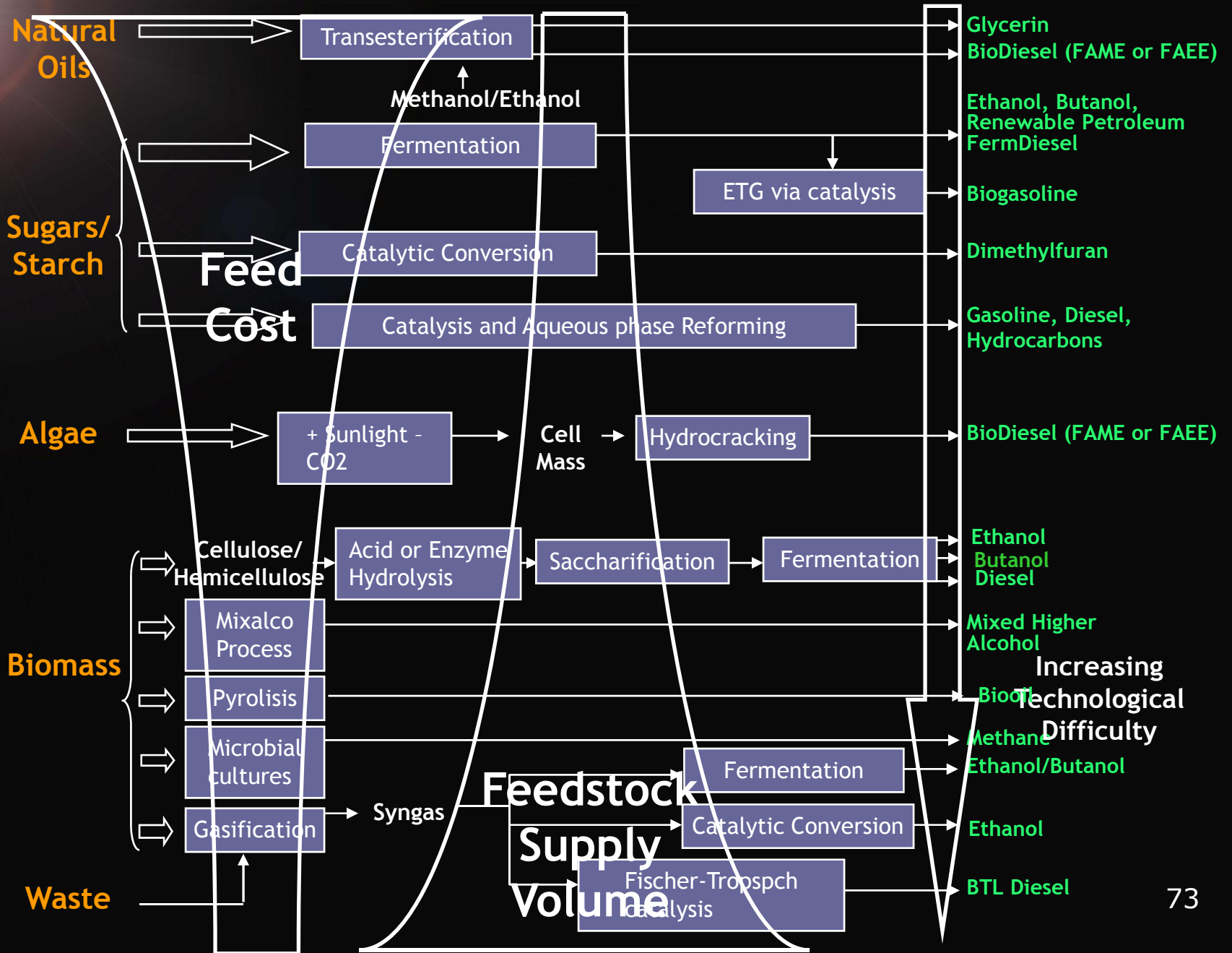
Beverly Sills's Frustrating Last Act, by Frank Bruni • America's Go-To Warlord, by Peter Maass

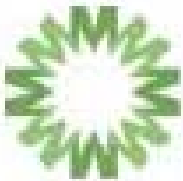
|...or get to **work**

[vk@khoslaventures.com](mailto:vk@khoslaventures.com)  
[khoslaventures.com/resources.html](http://khoslaventures.com/resources.html)

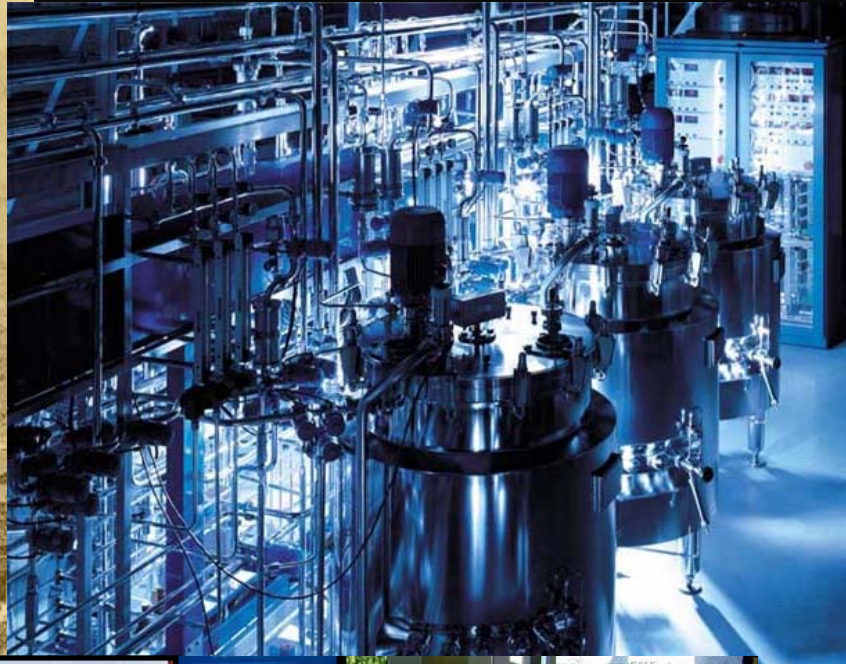
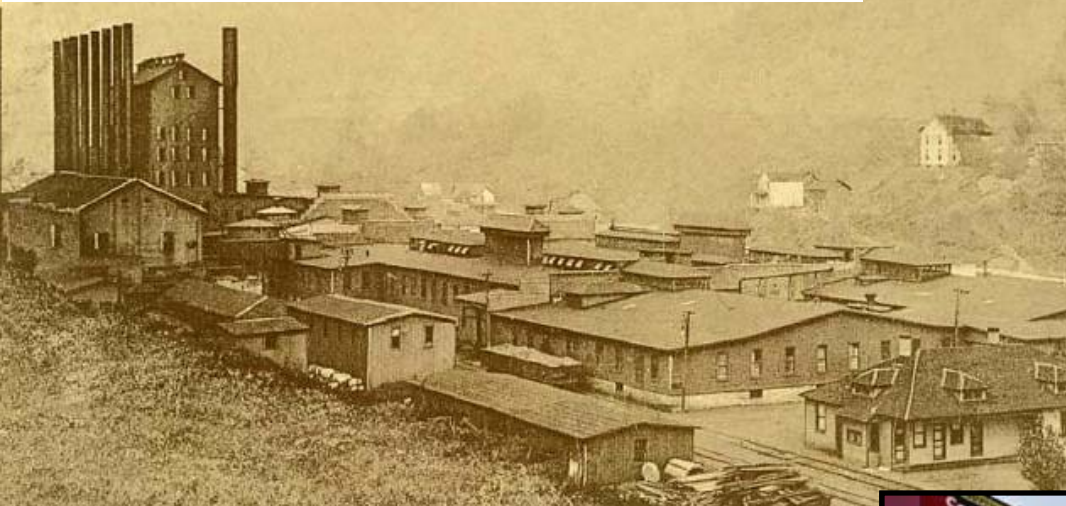


# optionality: biofuels feedstocks & pathways ...





# MASCOMA

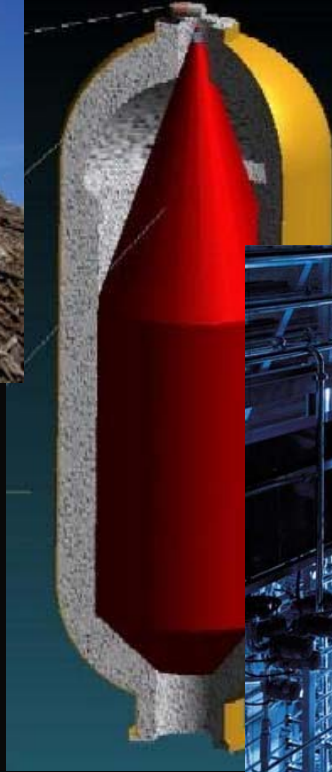


© 2014 Mascoma Corporation. www.E85Fuel.com. Renewable.



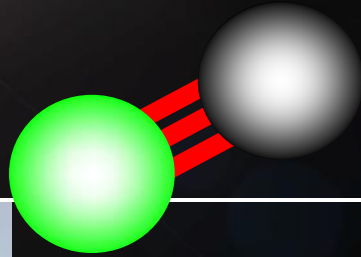


Gasifier



Fermenter





**Carbon  
monoxide gas**



**Steel mill waste  
gas**

OR



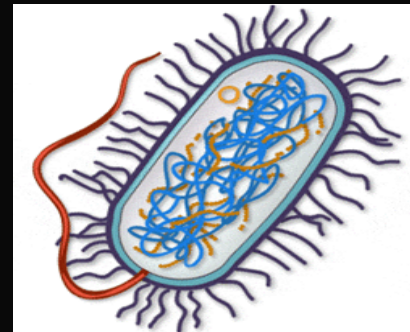
**Biomass syngas**

+

**LanzaTech  
Process**



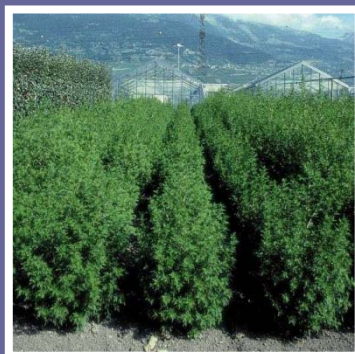
+



**Ethanol &  
Butanol fuels**

Synthetic Biology

Anti-Malarial



Gene 1

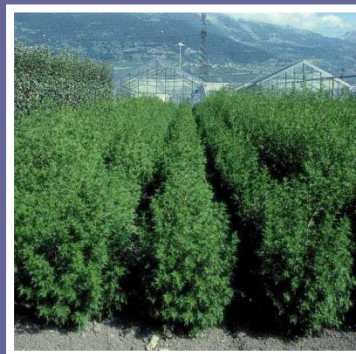
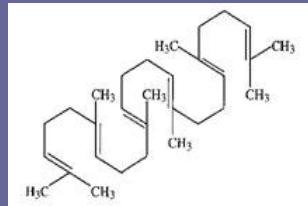
Source of genes

Custom-Built Microbe

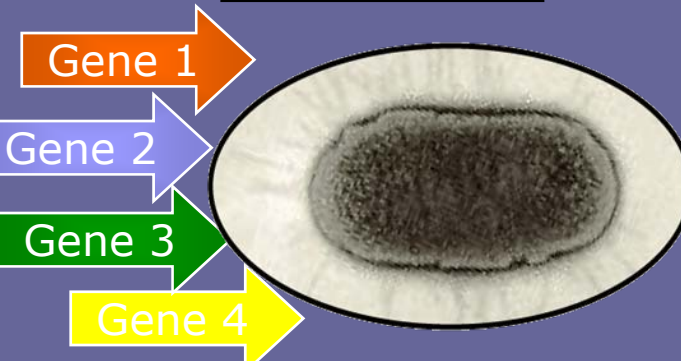
**Artemisinin**

**Recombinant Small Molecule Bio-Synthetic Pathway**

## Synthetic Biology Fermentation Diesel



Source of genes



Custom-Built Microbe

**Artemisinin**

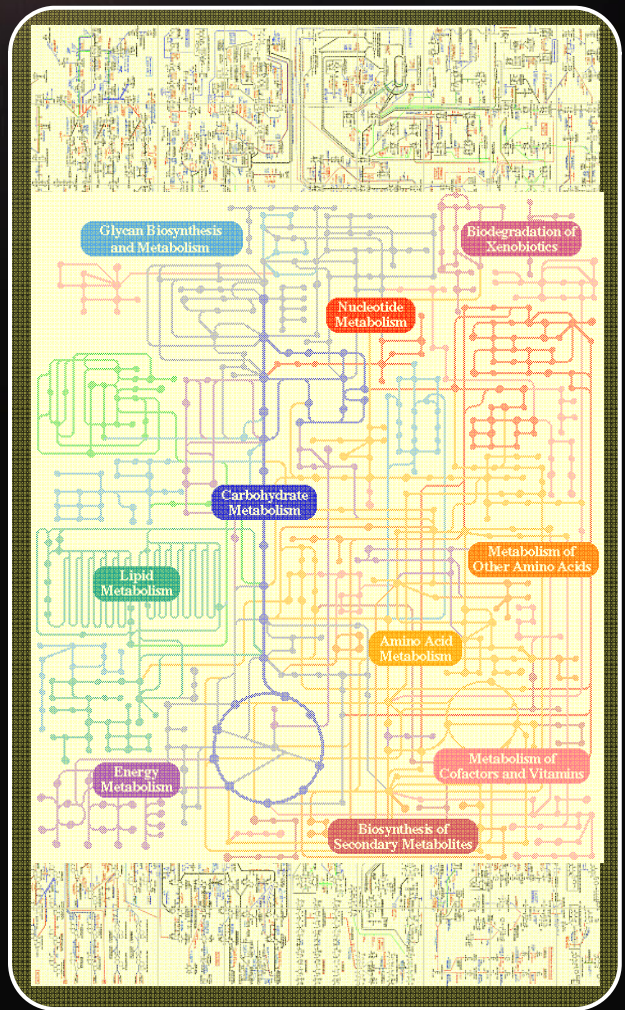
**Recombinant Small Molecule Bio-Synthetic Pathway** 79



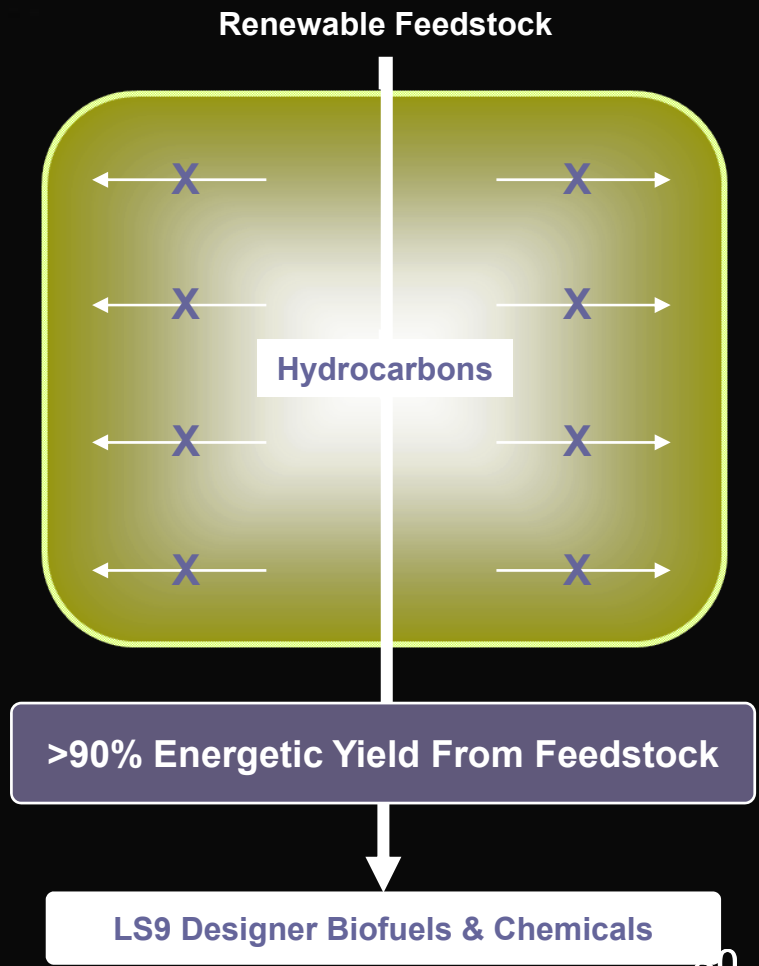
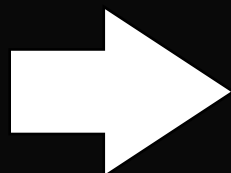
**LS9, INC.**  
the renewable petroleum company™

# Hydrocarbon Biosynthesis

## Nature's Energy Storage

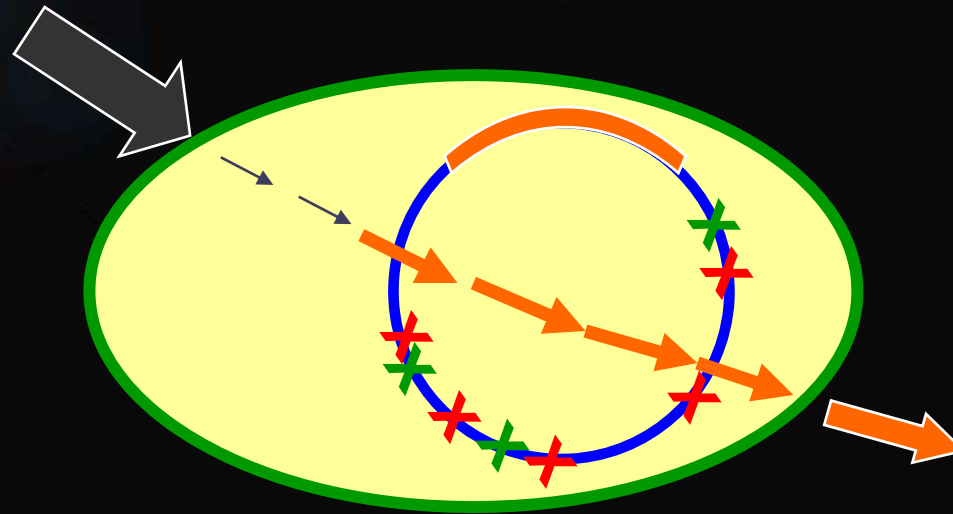


Metabolic modeling  
+  
Synthetic biology





**Biomass  
Hydrolysate**



**BUTANOL**

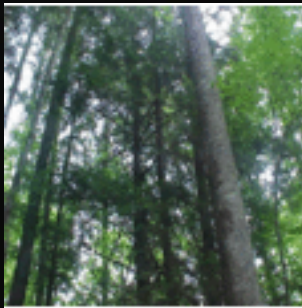
Classical and genetic techniques are used to improve **butanol** tolerance.

# “biocrude” replaces crude



Crude oil

## Refinery

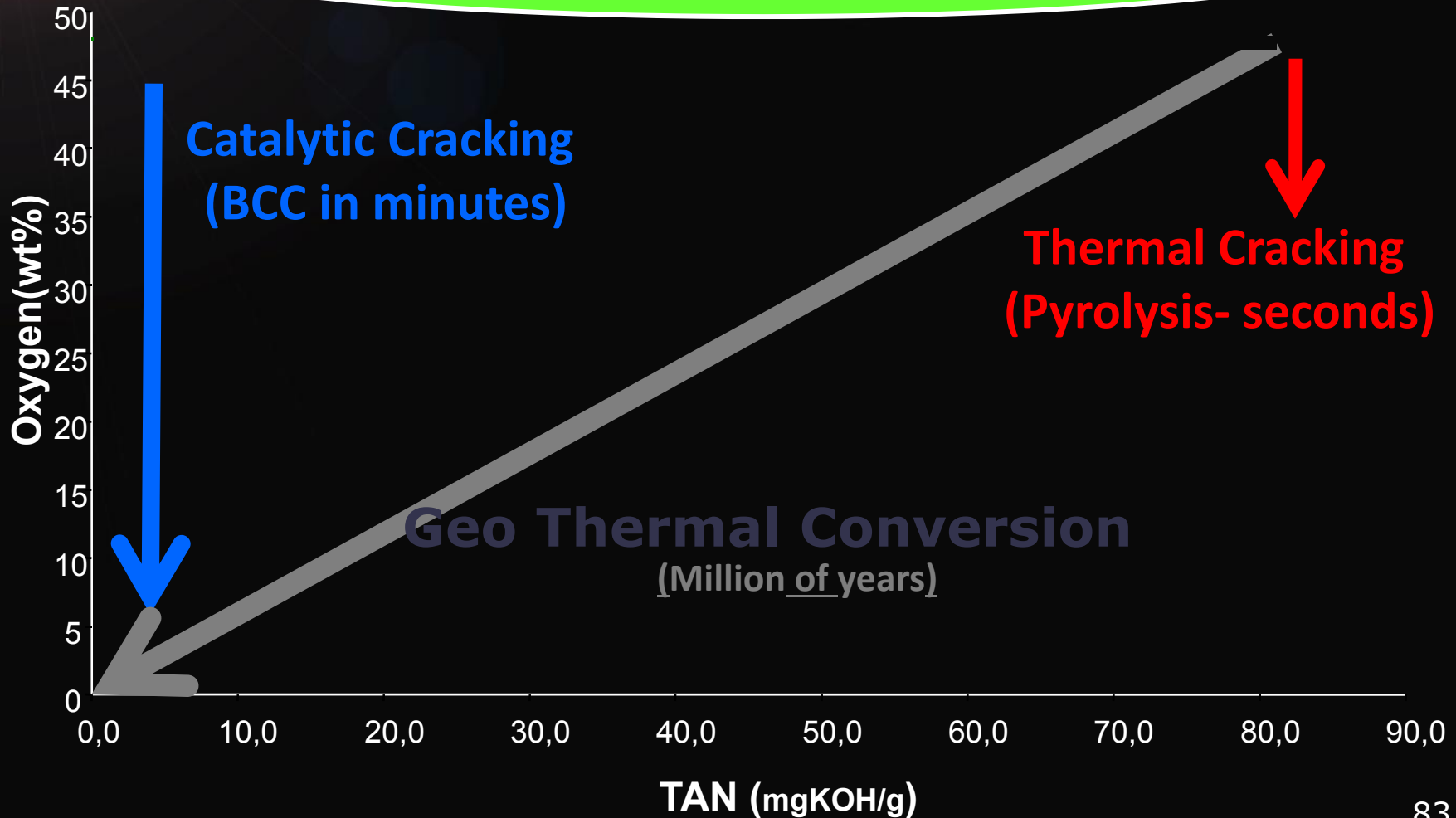


  
Biocrude



**Kior:** millions of years → minutes!

**Biomass**

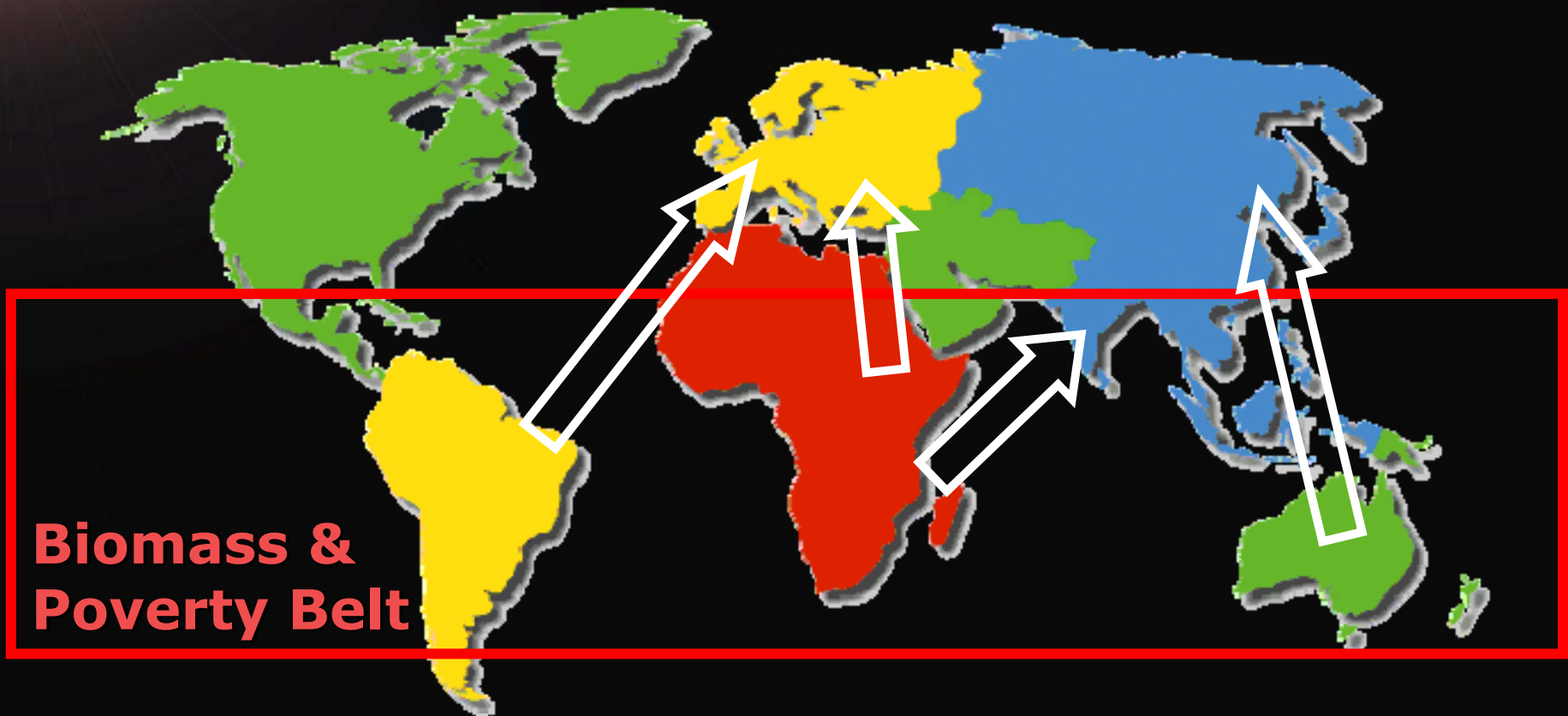


# the “salve” for Africa?

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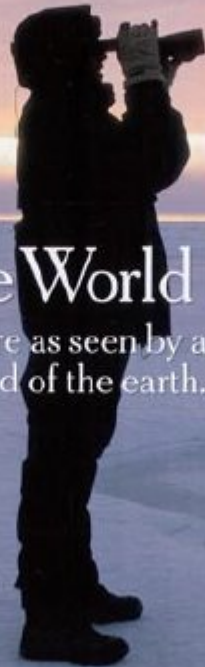
- > Carbon Price (\$100's billion per year?)
- > Biomass based Energy (\$500 billion a year?)
- > Opportunities for “resource poor” (Solar & Biomass?)
- > vs. Aid, Debt Forgiveness, Trade Treaties ...

# biomass, geopolitics, and poverty



The New York Times Magazine

JANUARY 4, 2009 / \$10 US



# Watching the World Melt Away

The future as seen by a lonely scientist at the end of the earth. By Darcy Frey

Beverly Sills's Frustrating Last Act, by Frank Bruni • America's Go-To Warlord, by Peter Maass

|...or get to **work**

[vk@khoslaventures.com](mailto:vk@khoslaventures.com)  
[khoslaventures.com/resources.html](http://khoslaventures.com/resources.html)

# **Biofuels** Case Study

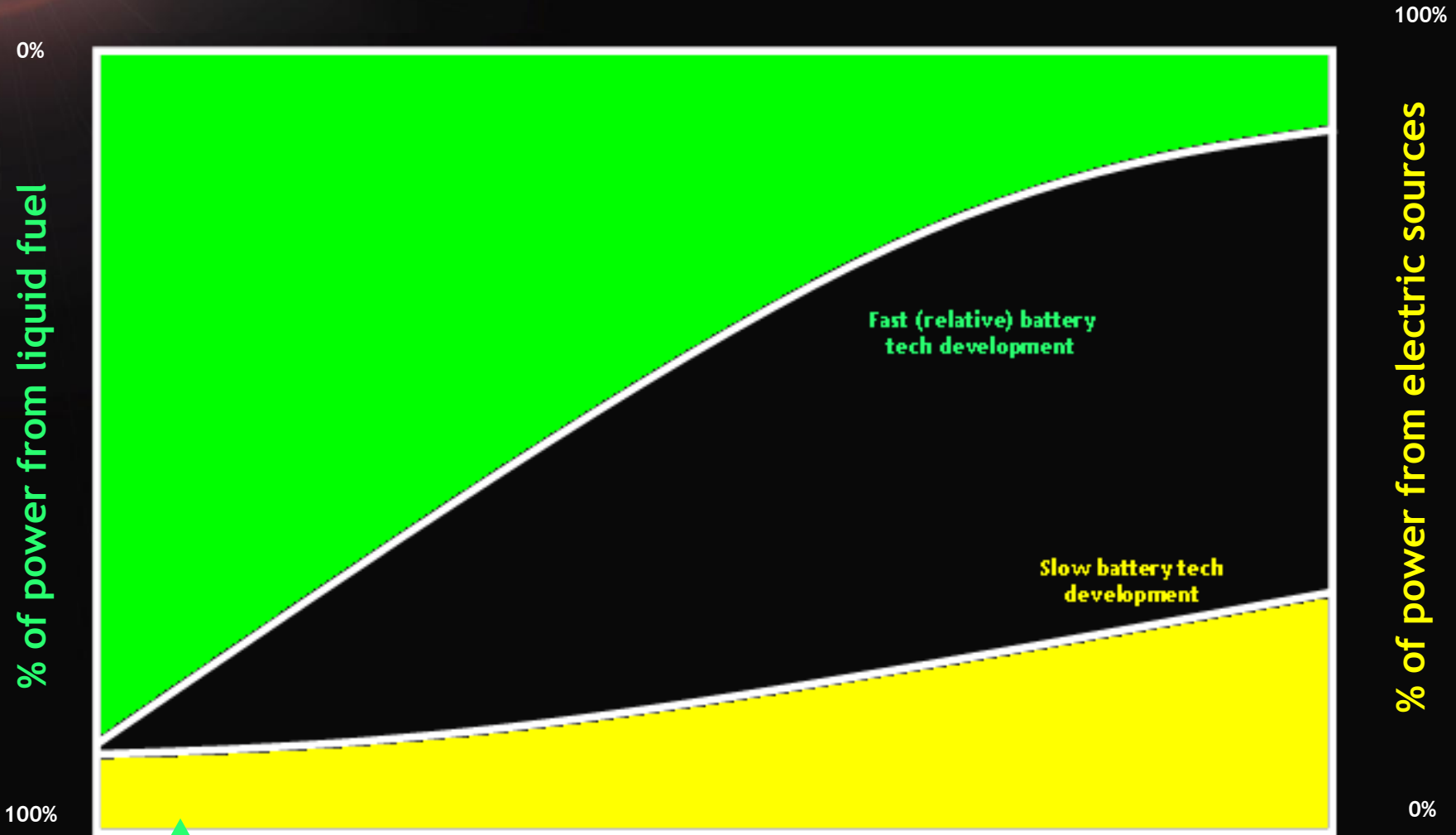
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# trajectory: reducing our oil dependence

	Ethanol	"Classic" Biodiesel	Cellulosic Hydrocarbons	Hybrids	PHEV's	Natural Gas
CO <sub>2</sub> Reduction - 2008	20%	80%	N/A	20%	N/A	30%
CO <sub>2</sub> Reduction - 2017	80%	80%	80%	25-35%	?	30%
Scalability - 2030	High	Limited	High	Med	?	Med
Sustainability - 2030	High	Poor	High	Med	Elec. source	Med
Quality	Good	Poor	Very Good	Good	Good	Good
Unsubsidized Market Competitiveness (worldwide - 10 yrs)	High	Poor	High	Low-Med	Low-Med	Med
2010/20 Production Cost	Med/Low	High/High	Med/Low	High/?	High/?	Med/Med
Technology	In process	Poor Good:Algae	Nascent	Developing	Need Black Swan	Limited



# optionality: hybrids or biofuels?



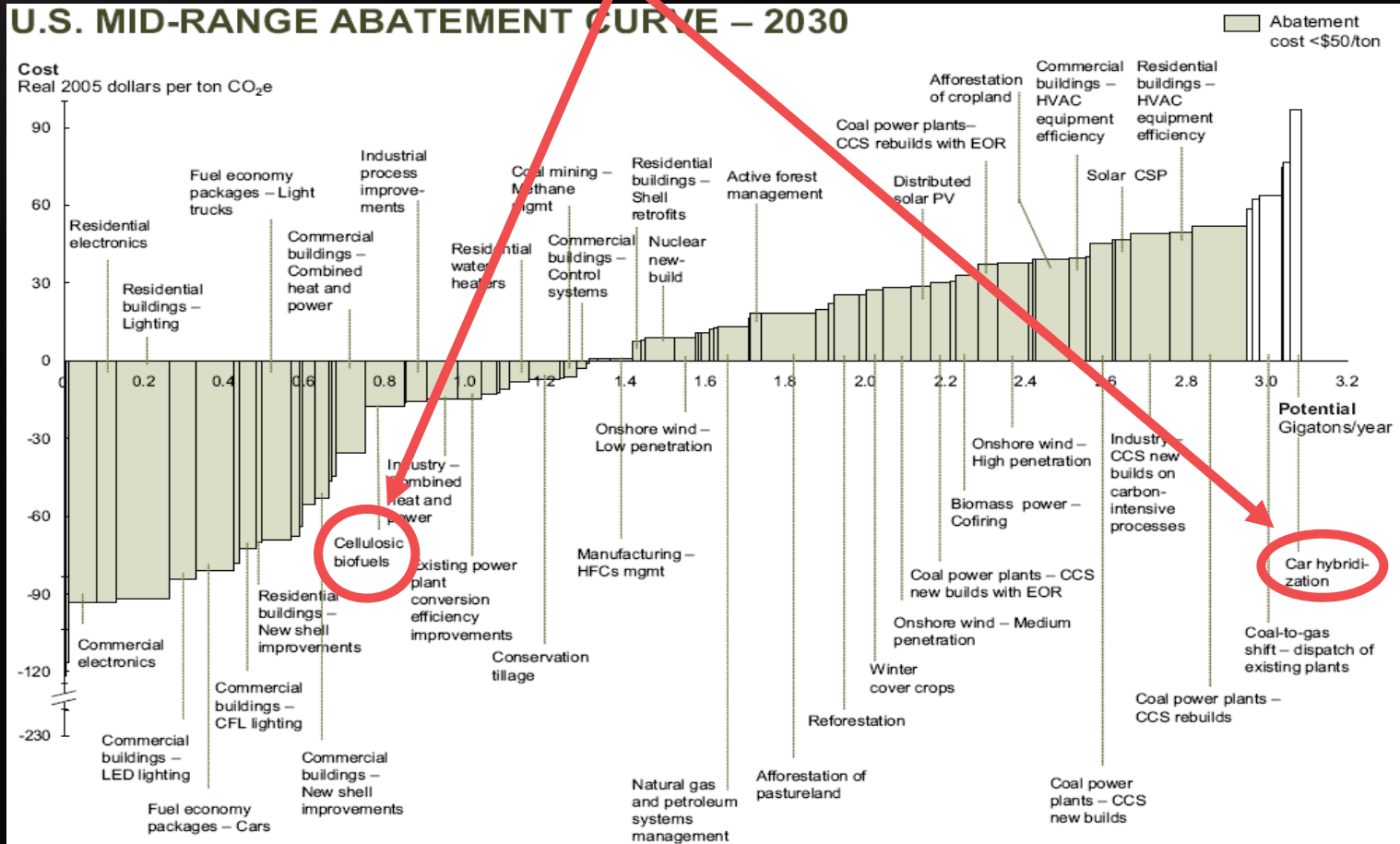
Tata Nano vs. Honda Hybrid (India)  
2010: >100X the volume?

# Trajectory 2017: Carbon Emissions

Car	CO2 Emissions - grams per mile	Monthly Cost (Car + Fuel)
Toyota Prius - 1.6KWh, \$21,200	238	\$490
Toyota Corolla - (hypothetical FFV, Cell. E85, \$14,500)	88	\$355
Honda Civic Hybrid - (On Gasoline, \$22,600)	260	\$524
Honda Civic - (FFV - on Cell. E85, \$15,110)	94	\$372
GM Volt - (16 Kwh, \$30,000) - Electricity	144	\$623
GM Volt - (16 Kwh, \$30,000) - Cell. E85	55	\$641
Public Transportation - US "Heavy Rail" (Subway) System	157	N/A

# trajectory: market or carbon?

Hybrids are an inefficient carbon solution



# Adoption Risk - \$2,500 Nano

...the Chindia test on relevance



# Biofuel Myths

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- **Prices:** Food CPI is affected by oil 2-3X more than corn
- **Corn usage:** 16oz steak = 1 gallon of ethanol
- **Carbon reduction:** Hybrid = Corn Ethanol (at 1% of the cost!)
- **Choice:** Biofuels or tar sands?
- **Biofuels vary:** A cocaine and aspirin “drug” of biofuels

# CLAW: doing biofuels right

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- > **C – CARBON** relative to gasoline
- > **L –net LAND** use impact
- > **A – AIR** quality impact
- > **W – WATER** use relative to gasoline

## > **We propose**

- > **Facility-level individual certification**
- > **“LEEDS” like goodness rating**
- > **Tradable CLAW certificates**

# the problems with the “iLUC” standard

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- > **Claim: modeling of “real uncertainties”**
  - > does not account for changes in economic signals
  - > cannot cover range of fuels, crops, agronomy
- > **Belief: iLUC more dangerous than beneficial**
  - > no recognition of value of optionality
  - > non-zero iLUC = more promising technologies discouraged!
- > **Claim: no proof of benefits using degraded cropland**
  - > but iLUC standard would penalize energy crops in advance!
  - > Lack of quantitative modeling = lack of technology

**iLUC = akin to using coal power plants to assess electric cars**

# Searchinger

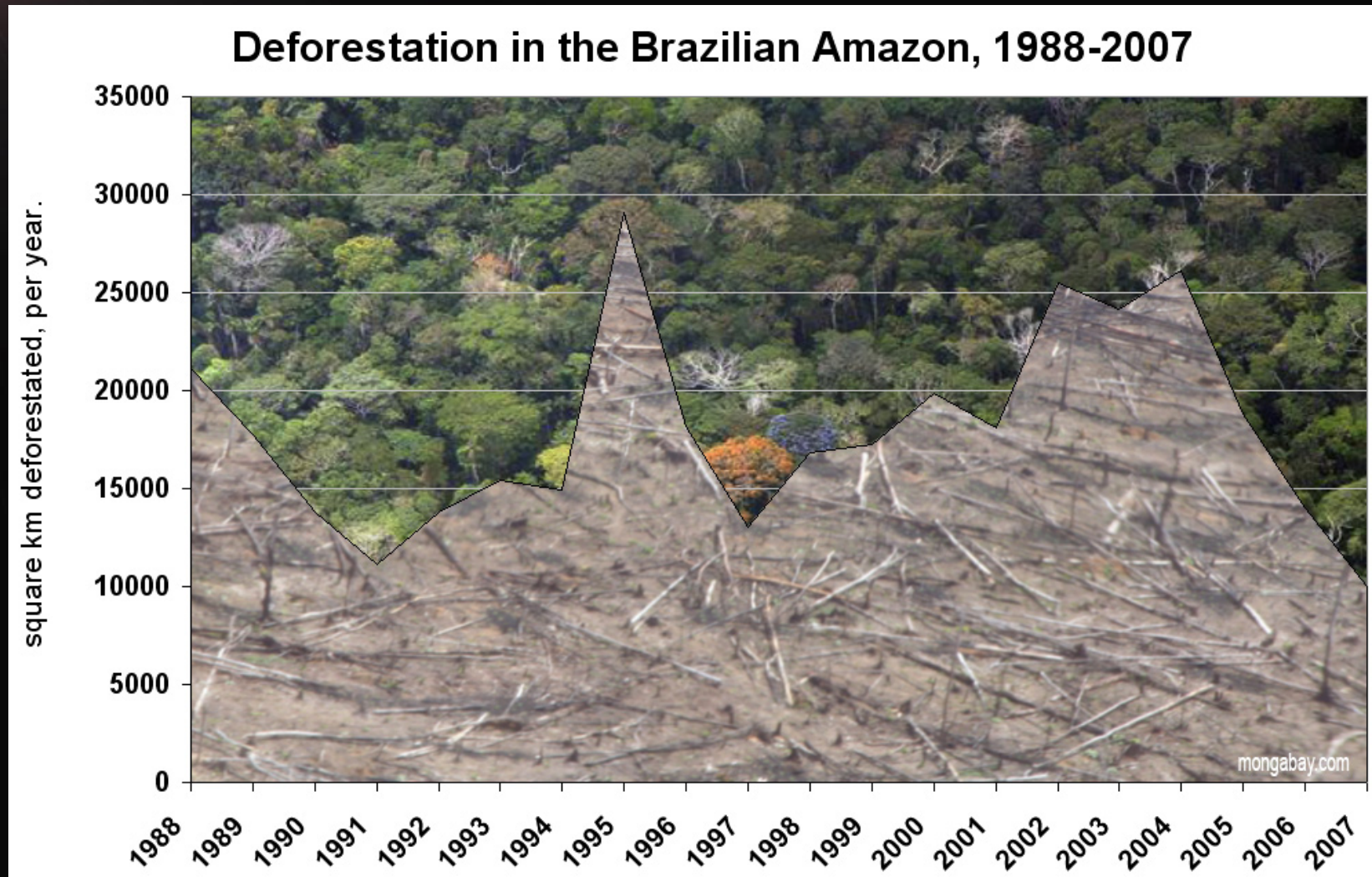
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## right model, wrong interpretation

- **Agronomic Output**
  - Steven Long data: 250% error in feedstock potential
  - Potential for 20-24 tons/acre by 2050?
- **Biofuel Innovation**
  - Biocrude increases energy yield by 200% or more?
- **Agronomic Innovation: increase sequestration**
  - Polyculture, perennial systems to increase soil carbon
  - Biochar & “terra peta”
  - Many biofuels will use non-land based feedstocks
- **Tool for deforestation or reforestation?**
  - Policy to encourage correct behavior?
  - What if WTO prohibit exports from countries that don’t meet reforestation targets?



# are biofuels root cause of deforestation?

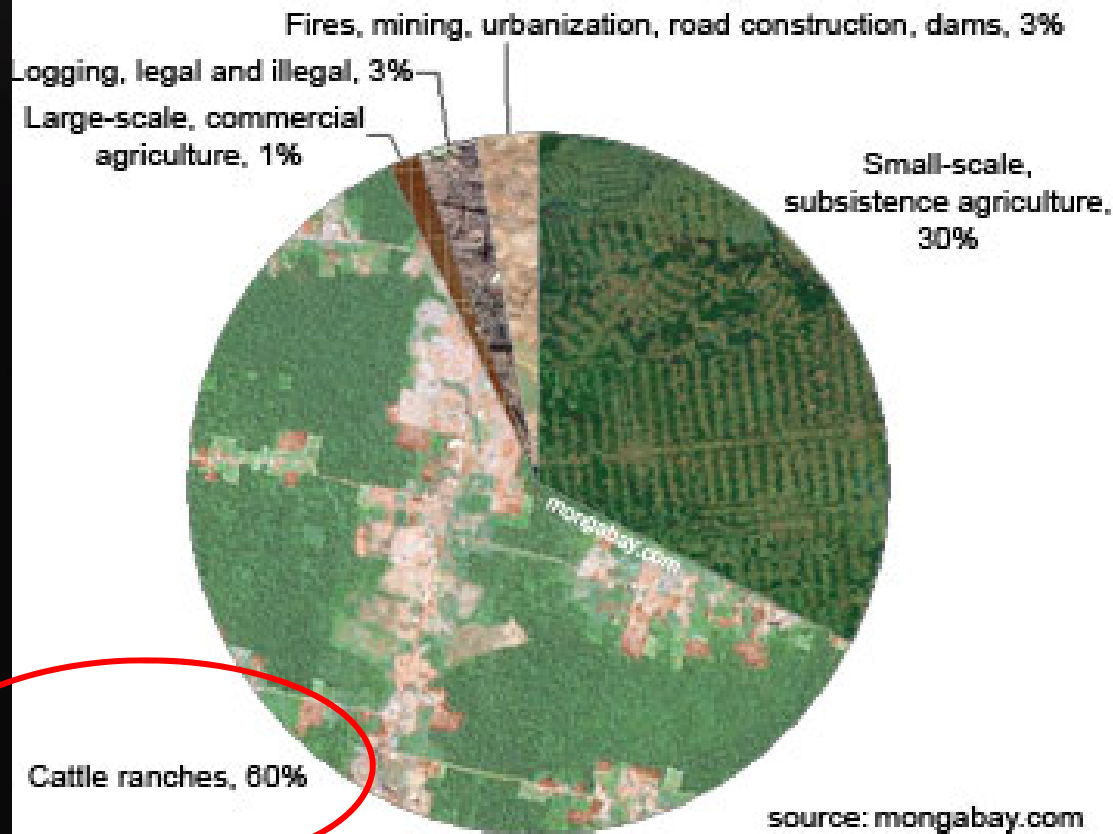


# are biofuels root cause of deforestation?



# a pound of steak or a gallon of ethanol?

## Causes of Deforestation in the Amazon, 2000-2005



# livestock - the numbers

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**70% (50%) of the agricultural output of the US (world) goes to feed its livestock.**

Source: <http://www.goveg.com/environment.asp>

# US land: Little land use next 10 years

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- > Reality of Land Use
  - > Economics means lowest cost sources used first (waste)
  - > **Source:** DOE 1.3B dry tons with “modest changes in land use”
  - > **Source:** Winter cover crops: no marginal land usage
  - > **Sources:** GMO, better worldwide yields, marginal or unused lands...
  
- > Propagating the ILUC Myth:
  - > ignore range of crops, practices, economic signals, value of optionality
  - > The “best science” is not good enough to use
  - > Lack of zero ILUC model: absence of proof is not proof of absence

**Land use will be immaterial through  
the current RFS standard!**

# trajectory: biodiesel vs. ethanol vs. cellulosic Diesel

	<b>"Classic" Biodiesel</b>	<b>Ethanol</b>	<b>Cellulosic Diesel</b>
<b>Carbon reduction - 2008</b>	80%	20-30%	Not Available
<b>Carbon reduction - 2012</b>	80%	80%	80%
<b>Scalability (2030 Gallons/acre)</b>	600-900	2500 (cellulosic)	2500 (cellulosic)
<b>Sustainability (2030)</b>	Poor	High	High
<b>Unsubsidized 10 yr market competitiveness</b>	Poor (@ \$45 oil price)	Good (@ \$45 oil price)	Good (@ \$45 oil price)

# Energy Crops: **Miscanthus**

**Little water, little  
fertilizer, no  
tillage, lots of  
biomass,**

**...energy crops  
make it possible**



# energy crops: Sorghum

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25 tons/acre (Prof. Holtzapple- Texas A&M)



# the perennial advantage



**Perennial crops:**

- less land erosion
- Better water/  
nutrient management
- Diversity protects  
against epidemics  
and diseases

# the perennial advantage



**...perennial biomass polyculture crops can produce more than their annual counterparts, while requiring less human/energy inputs – on a sustainable basis!**

- Perennial crops:**
- Less land erosion
  - Better water/nutrient management
  - Diversity protects against epidemics and diseases

Source: Wes Jackson, Land Institute

# the polyculture advantage





SWITCHGRASS | FALLOW

**Previously  
Switchgrass**

**Previously  
Fallow**

# Where Will Biomass Come From?

## Scenario 1:

Demand - 2030	Waste	Winter Cover Crops	Forest Excess Waste	Dedicated Crop Land
<u>1,363M tons</u> - 150 billion gallons at 110 gal/acre	<u>136M tons equiv.</u> - 15 billion gallons of production	<u>735M tons</u> - (158.5M acres at 4.6 tons/acre)	<u>158M tons</u>	<u>334M tons</u> - 13.6M acres at 24 t/acre - 27.3M acres at 12 t/acre

- **2030 Assumptions (Production):**

- 50% of annual crop land for winter cover crops and 70% of forest excess waste used
- Yields of 110 gallons per acre
- No recovery of degraded land is modeled; note 15.5M acres (or 70%) of land used for corn ethanol will be reclaimed in this scenario

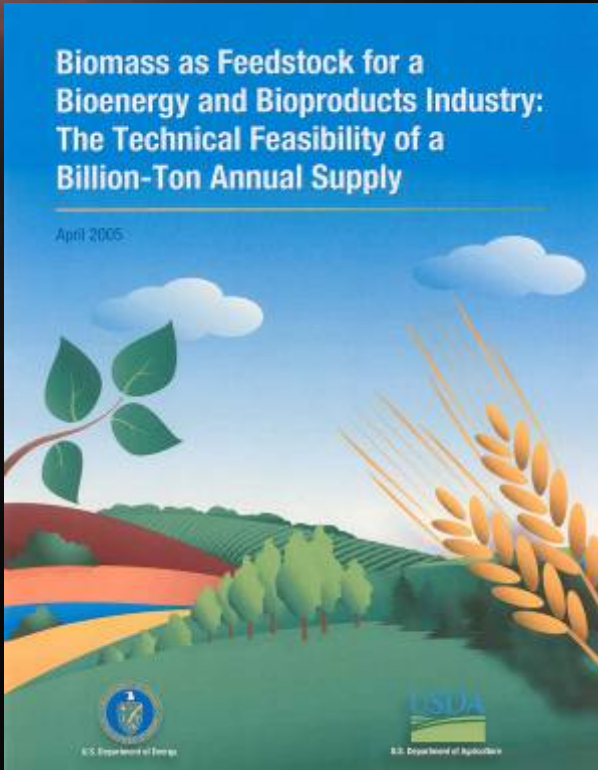
- **2030 Assumptions (Demand):**

- 2030 AOE projections for US reduced by 20% to reflect CAFE / Energy Bill
- Ethanol mileage discount of 15%
- 90% of fleet is FFV

# meeting biomass needs - scenarios

	Waste Resources (% of total 2030 demand)	Winter Cover Crop (% of annual crop land acres)	Winter Cover Crop Yield (Tons / Acre)	Excess Forest Biomass (dry tons – millions)	Biofuel Yields (gallons per ton)	Dedicated Land Use @ 24/18/12 tons/acre	Net Land Use @ 24/18/12 tons/acre
1	10% - 15B gallons	50%-159M	3-4.6	70%-158M	90-110	13.6 / 18.2 / 27.3	-1.9 / 2.7/11.8
2	-	50%-159M	3-4.6	50%-221M	90-110	21.0 / 28.1 / 42.1	5.5/12.6/16.6
3	-	50%-159M	3-4.6	70%-158M	90-130	12.5 / 16.6 / 25.0	-3.0/1.1/9.5
4	-	50%-159M	3-4.6	70%-158M	90-130	10.6 / 14.2 / 21.3	-4.9/1.3/5.8
5	-	50%-159M	3-4.6	100%-226M	90-130	7.9 / 10.5 / 15.7	-7.6/-5.0/0.2
6	10% - 15B gallons	70% - 221M	3-4.6	100%-226M	90-130	-	-15.5

**Trivial amount of land to  
replace oil**

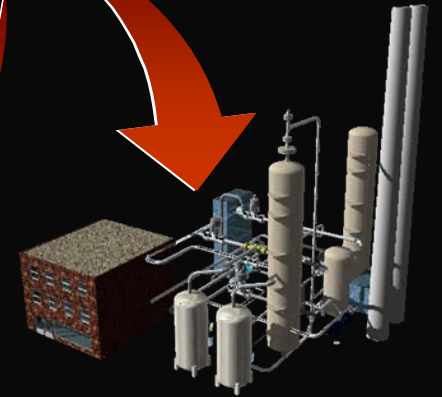


**~1.3 Billion tons/yr  
US Biomass Potential**

**Displace gasoline demand**

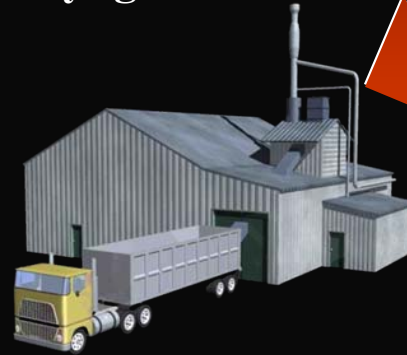


**Sugar Platform**

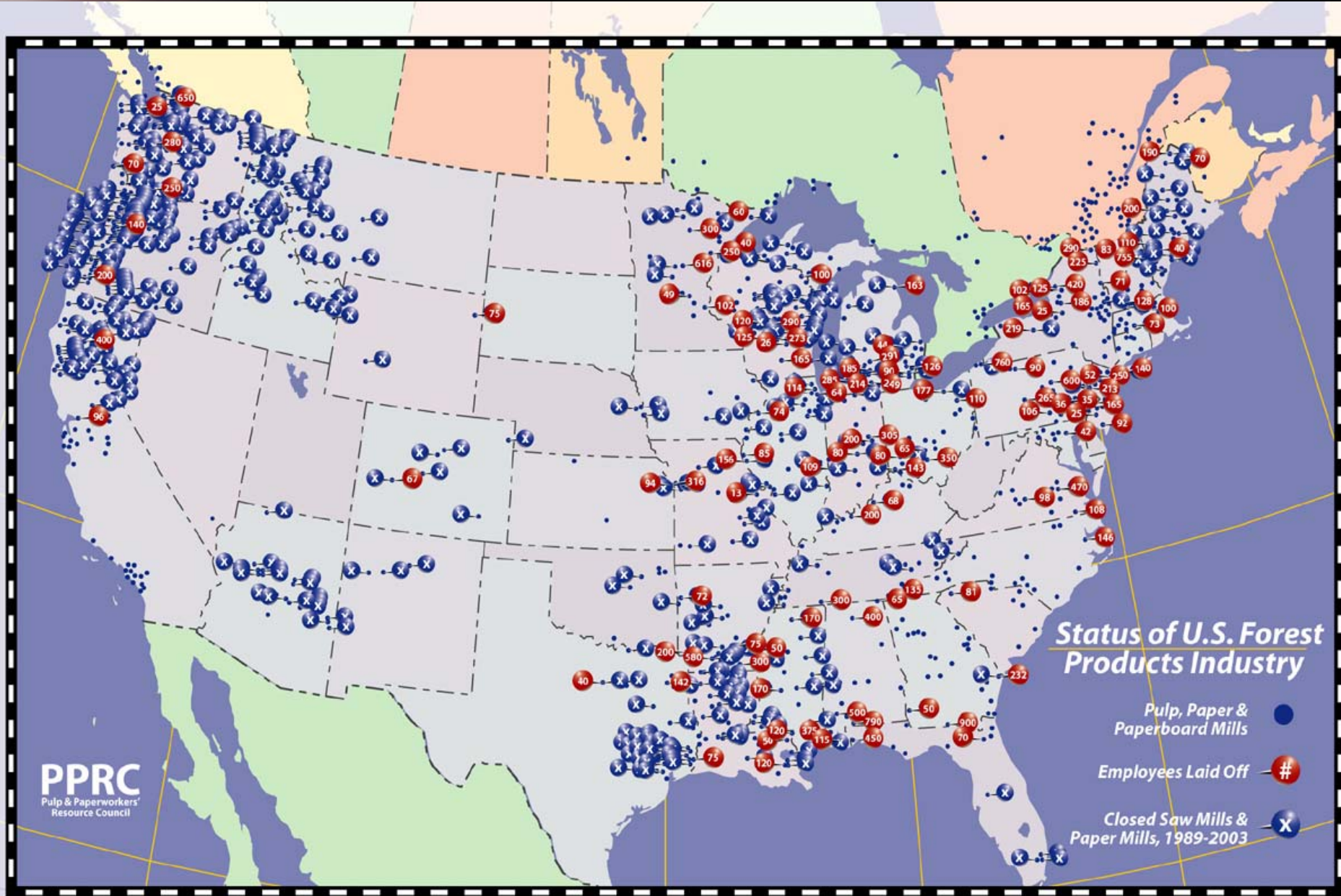


**Ethanol Cost Target = \$1.07/gal**

**Syngas Platform**

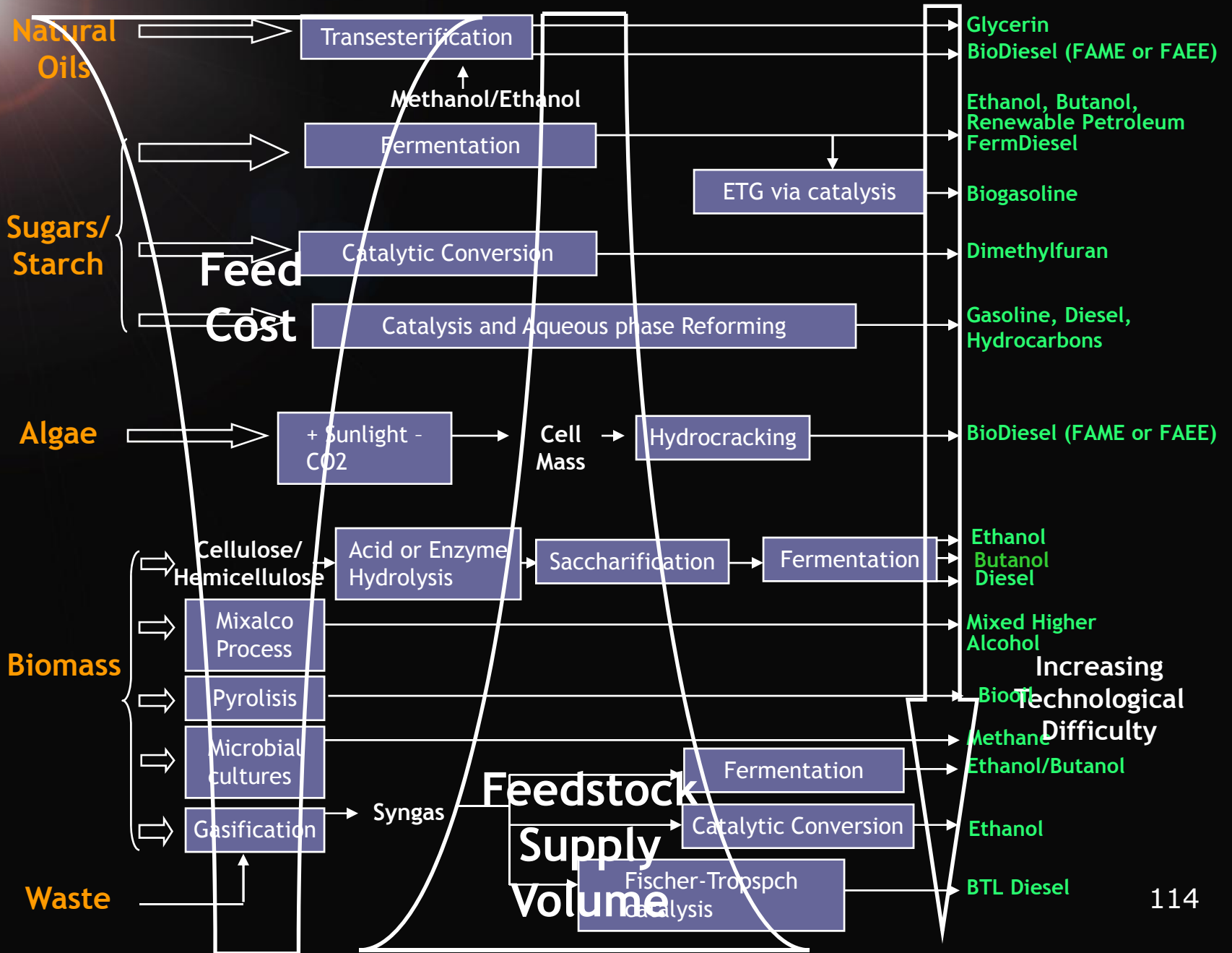


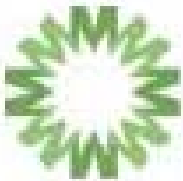
# adoption risk: U.S. mill closures



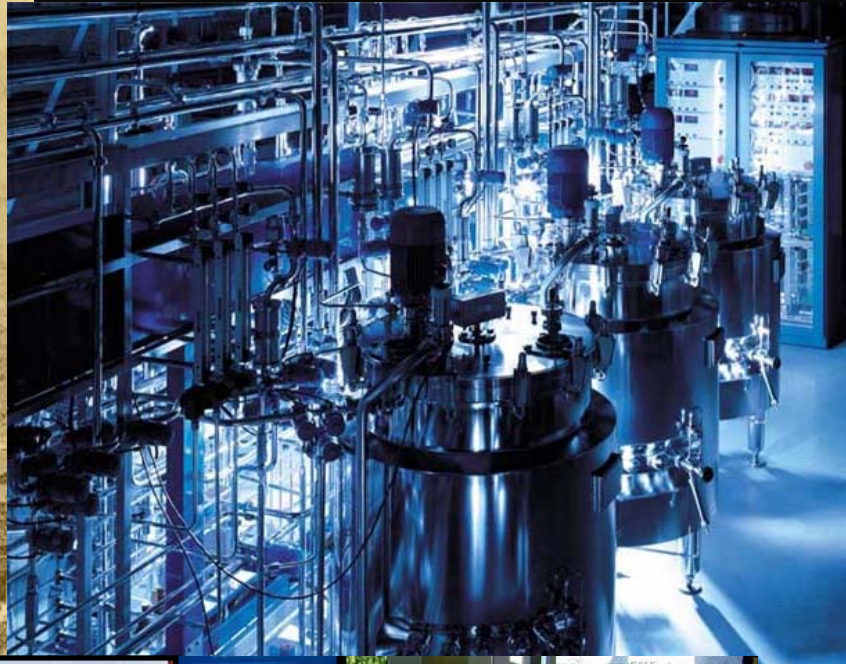
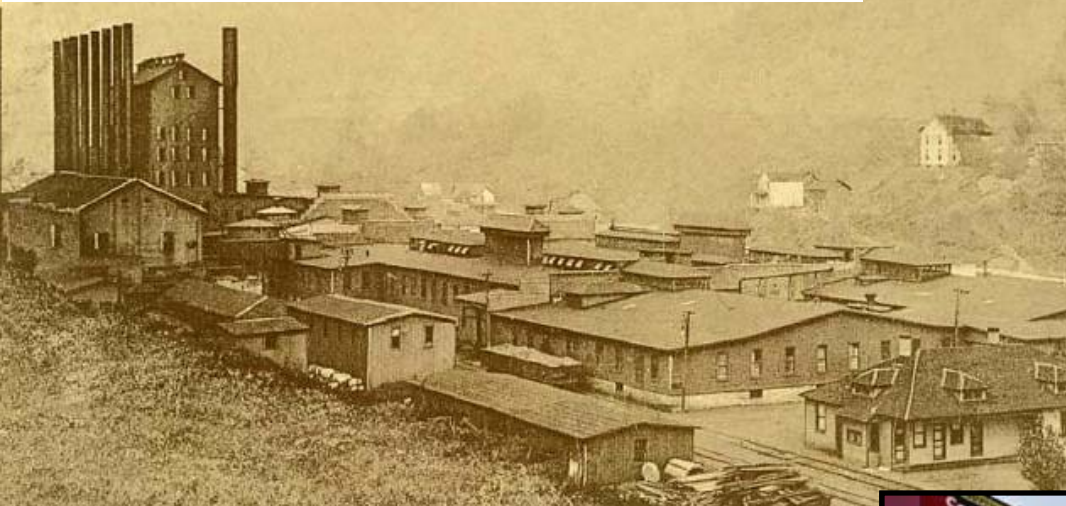


# optionality: biofuels feedstocks & pathways ...





# MASCOMA

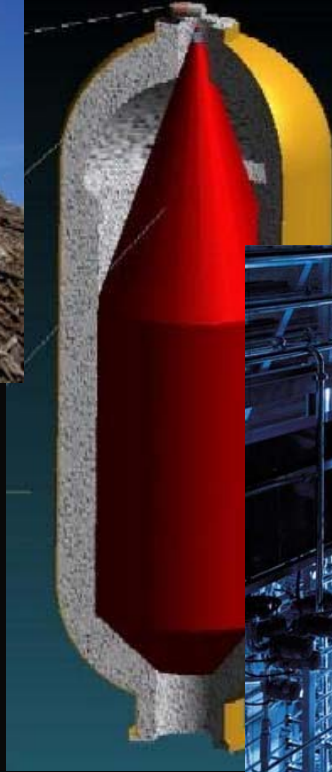


© 2014 Mascoma Corporation. www.E85Fuel.com. Renewable.



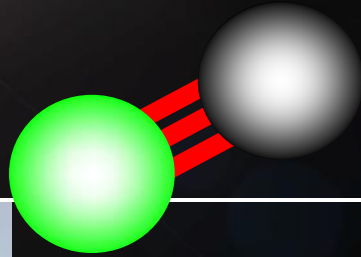


Gasifier



Fermenter





Carbon monoxide gas



Steel mill waste gas

OR



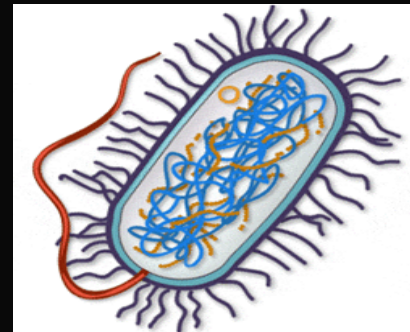
Biomass syngas

+

LanzaTech Process



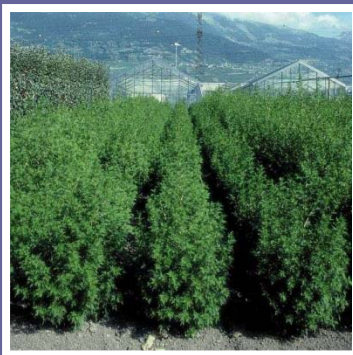
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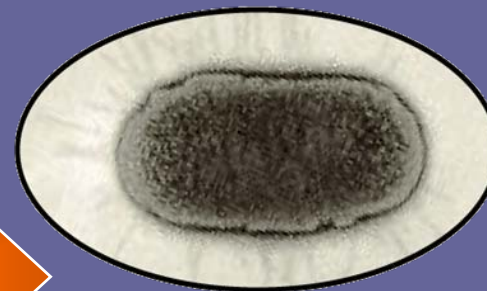
Ethanol & Butanol fuels

Synthetic Biology

Anti-Malarial



Gene 1



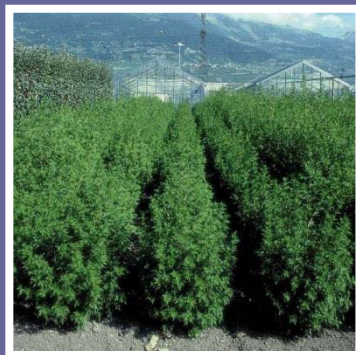
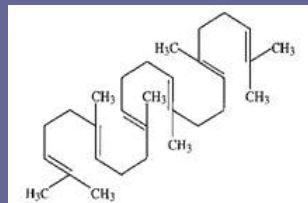
Source of genes

Custom-Built Microbe

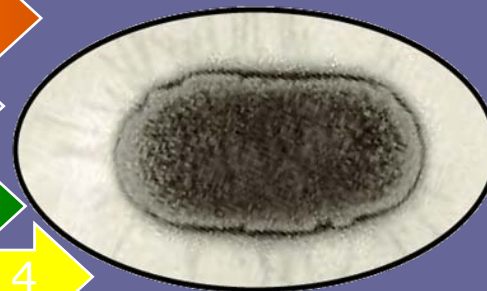
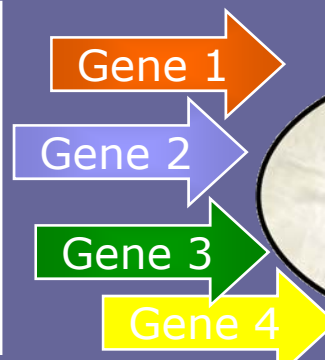
Artemisinin

Recombinant Small Molecule Bio-Synthetic Pathway 119

## Synthetic Biology = Fermentation Diesel<sup>X</sup>



Source of genes



Custom-Built Microbe

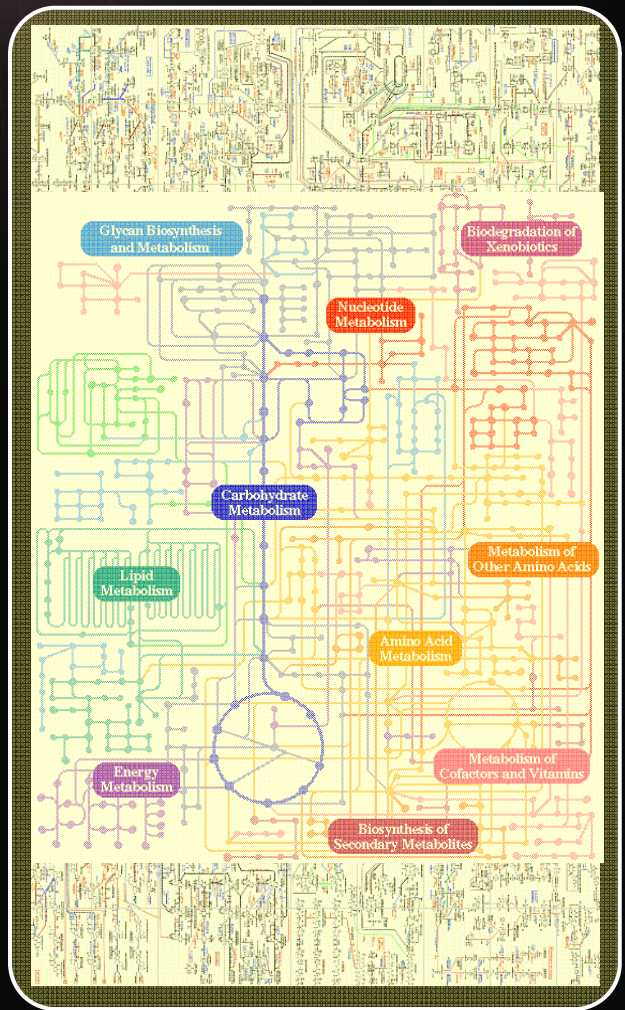
### Artemisinin

Recombinant Small Molecule Bio-Synthetic Pathway <sup>120</sup>

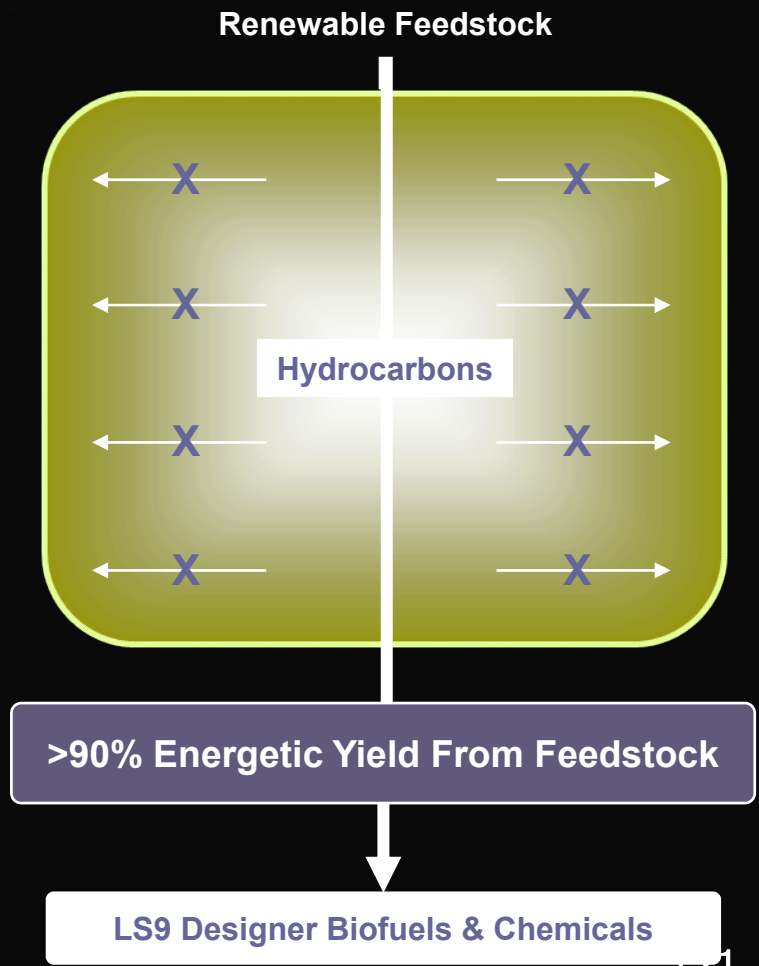
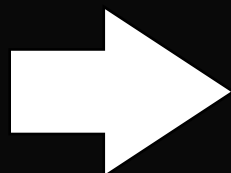


**LS9, INC.**  
the renewable petroleum company™

# Hydrocarbon Biosynthesis Nature's Energy Storage

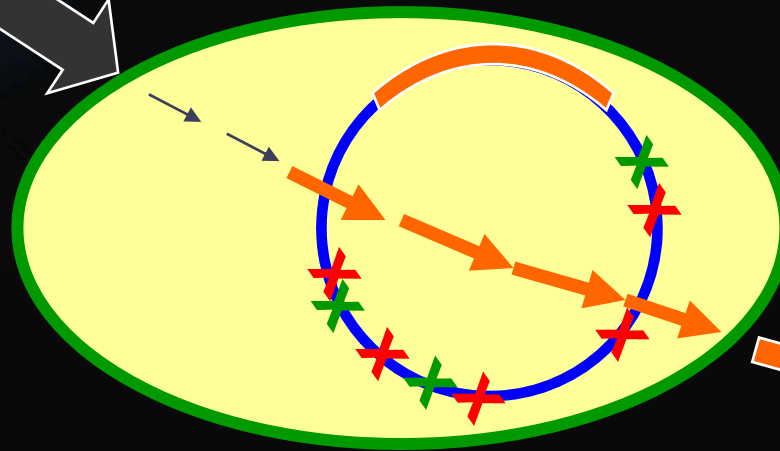


Metabolic modeling  
+  
Synthetic biology





**Biomass  
Hydrolysate**



**BUTANOL**

Classical and genetic techniques are used to improve **butanol** tolerance.

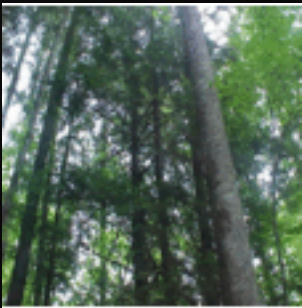
# “biocrude” replaces crude



Crude oil



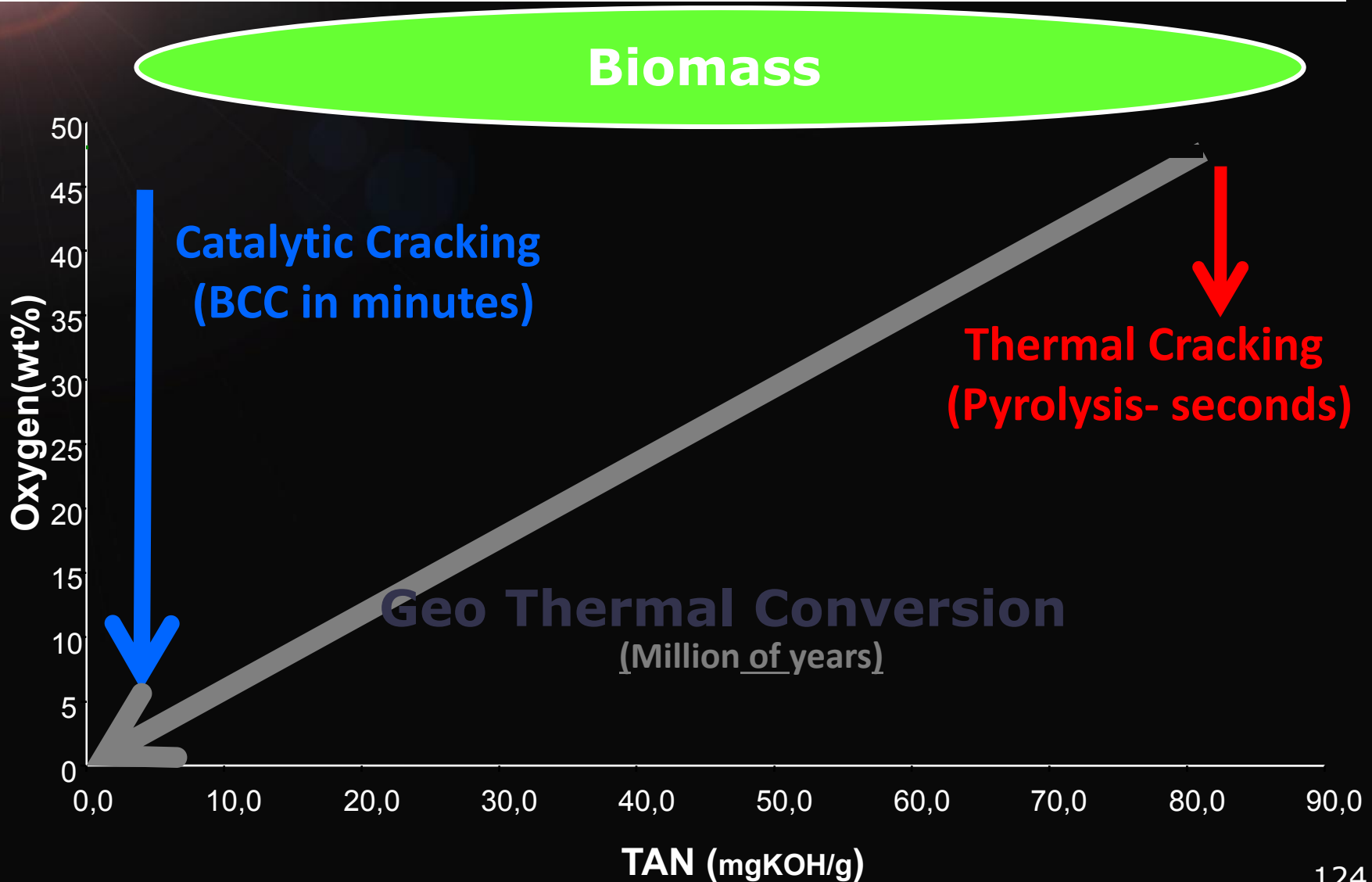
Refinery



  
Biocrude



**Kior:** millions of years → minutes!

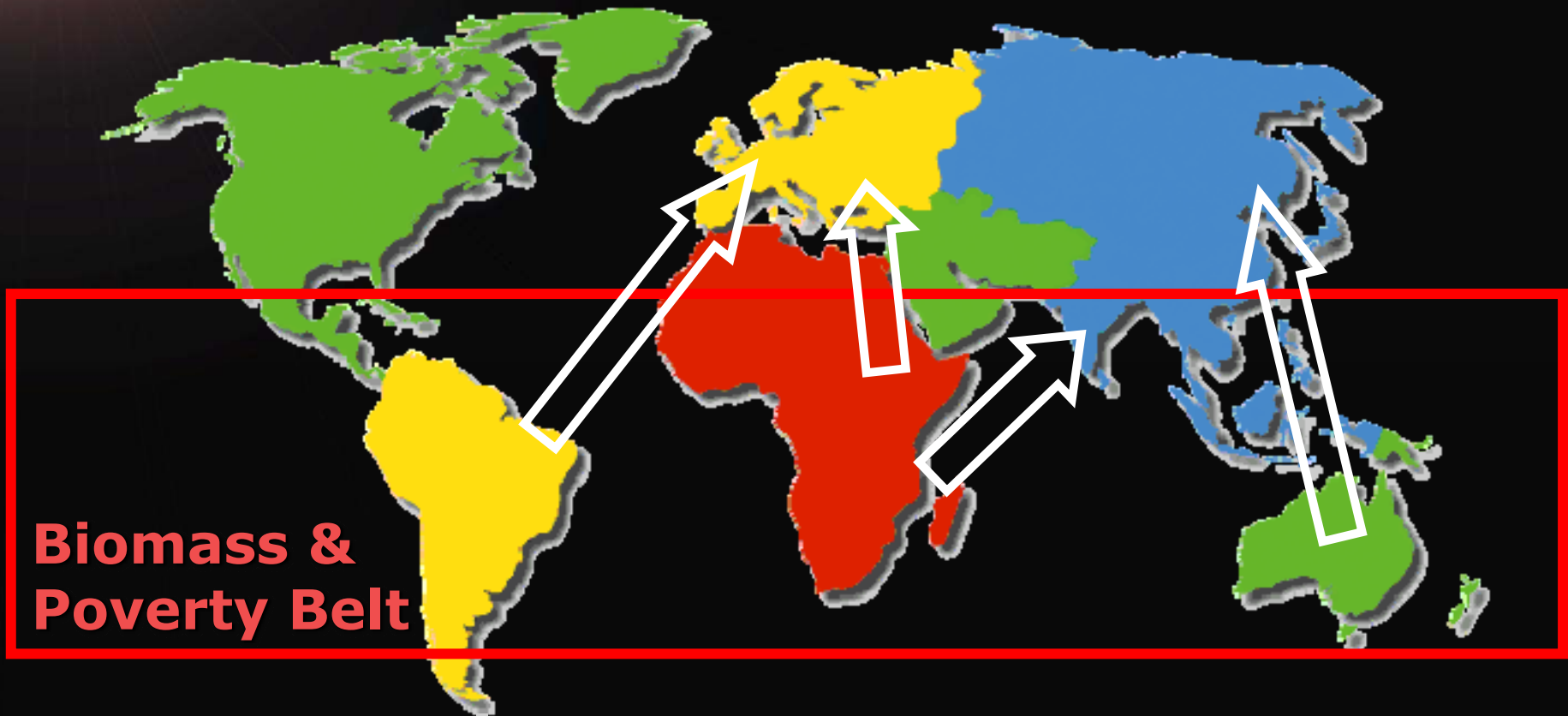


# the “salve” for Africa?

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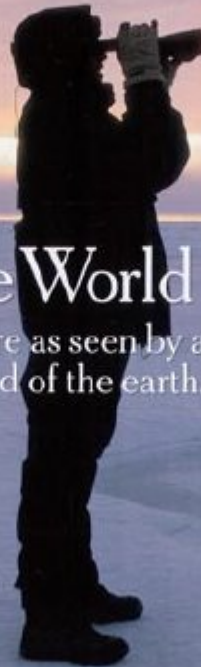
- > Carbon Price (\$100's billion per year?)
- > Biomass based Energy (\$500 billion a year?)
- > Opportunities for “resource poor” (Solar & Biomass?)
- > vs. Aid, Debt Forgiveness, Trade Treaties ...

# biomass, geopolitics, and poverty



The New York Times Magazine

JANUARY 4, 2009 / \$10 US



# Watching the World Melt Away

The future as seen by a lonely  
scientist at the end of the earth. By Darcy Frey

Beverly Sills's Frustrating Last Act, by Frank Bruni • America's Go-To Warlord, by Peter Maass

|...or get to **work**

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