Petroleum is a refined product of crude oil, which is extracted from reservoirs within geologic formations. Oil is a hydrocarbon, made up of compacted organic material and contains high amounts of chemical potential energy. Petroleum is burned to release this energy. While not used at scale for electricity generation in the U.S., over 70 percent of petroleum consumption comes from the transportation sector, powering trains, planes, automobiles, ships, and more.
The United States has vast reserves of crude oil both onshore and offshore. These are currently accessible through conventional drilling as well as horizontal drilling and hydraulic fracturing. Over time, these reserves can actually increase, as new geologic formations are identified and as technology improves to recover previously unreachable reserves. In addition to being a vital transportation fuel and energy resource, oil is used as an input, raw material, or feedstock for thousands of household and commercial items used every day.