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There is much to learn about hydrogen before it can be developed as a fossil fuel alternative.

One common misconception is that it is a direct replacement to fossil fuels. Producing hydrogen from green energy is essentially a storage of green renewable energy, which gives unlimited storage capacity compared to batteries and, in that respect, it's a very good option. The challenge, however, is that the technology is expensive and there are also significant safety concerns compared to natural gas that need to be addressed. The other hurdle is scaling it up to make it a real contender for fossil fuel usage.

R&D in tech critical for progress

Fossil fuel operators are probably in the best position to support the move to hydrogen, armed with the experience and knowledge of producing conventional resources. But a significant amount of investment in technology and R&D is required to get to that point. Just as we did by making gas and electricity systems efficient and safe, we now need to do the same for hydrogen – for its production, compression, transportation, storage, liquefaction and utilization.

Blue vs green?

Green hydrogen cannot replace fossil fuels today because we simply can't yet make enough of it. However, blue hydrogen can be scaled up because the technology, the gas and the resources are all there. Blue hydrogen is going to be the clean energy savior for the next 40 years. In parallel, green hydrogen should continue to be developed as new technologies are discovered. To say we should forget about blue hydrogen and go direct to green will lead us into a losing battle.

Pick up the pace

A recent DNV report stated that if we stay on our current trajectory, hydrogen will only make 5% of the total energy landscape by 2050. We need to invest more and faster in the hydrogen full value chain, as well as encourage greater government regulation. We've seen examples of how fast solar energy has developed because of initial government subsidies. Governments can also make it more expensive to emit carbon via carbon taxes, support carbon credits, etc. The developed world also must take more responsibility in helping poorer nations to drive the environmental agenda by financially supporting their green energy projects. ■

**Paraphrased comments*

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