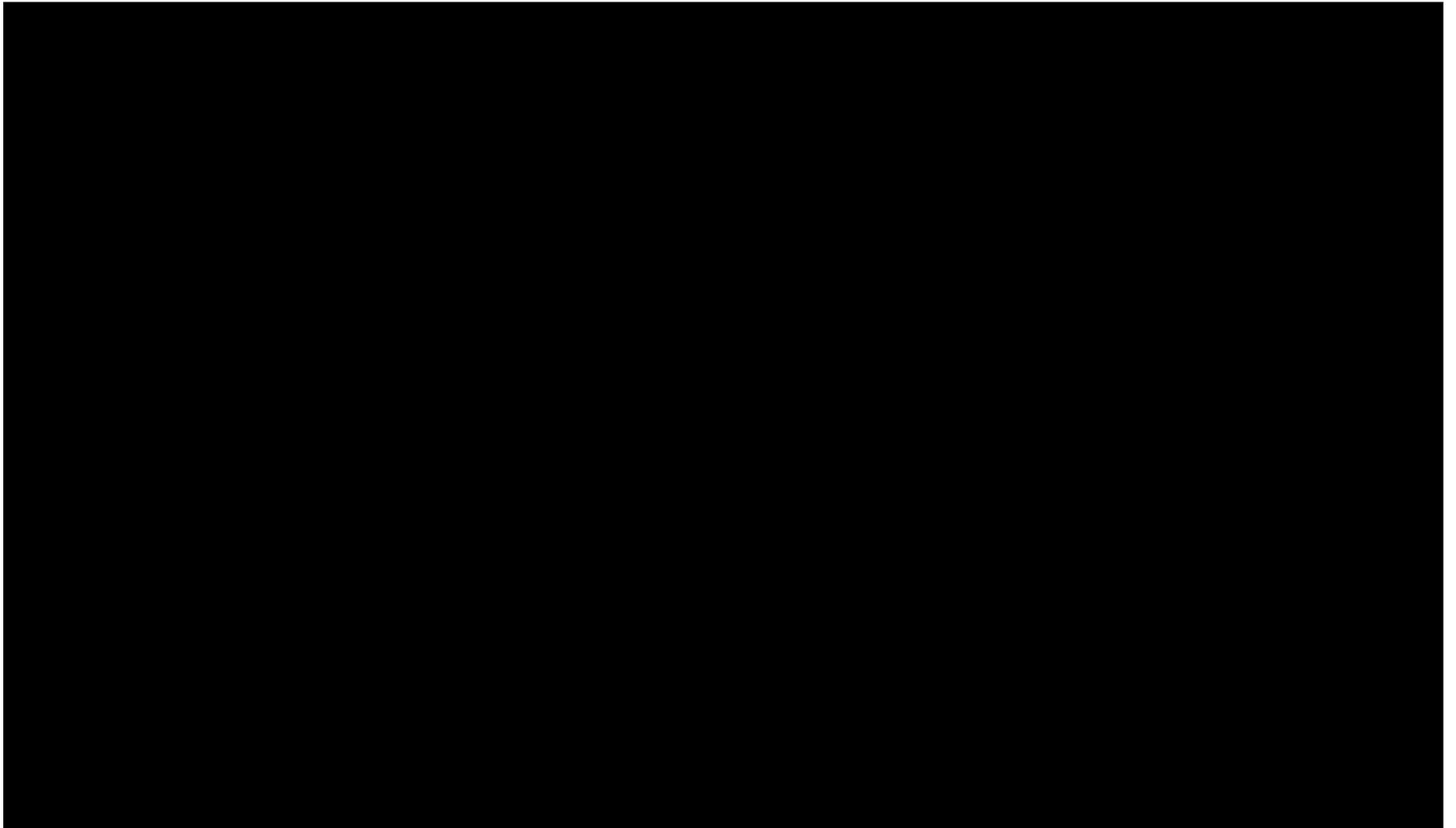


BEG director: Don't keep it in the ground

Use of fossil fuels will help reduce poverty, head of UT bureau says

By Mella McEwen, mmcewen@mrt.com Published 4:55 pm, Tuesday, May 2, 2017



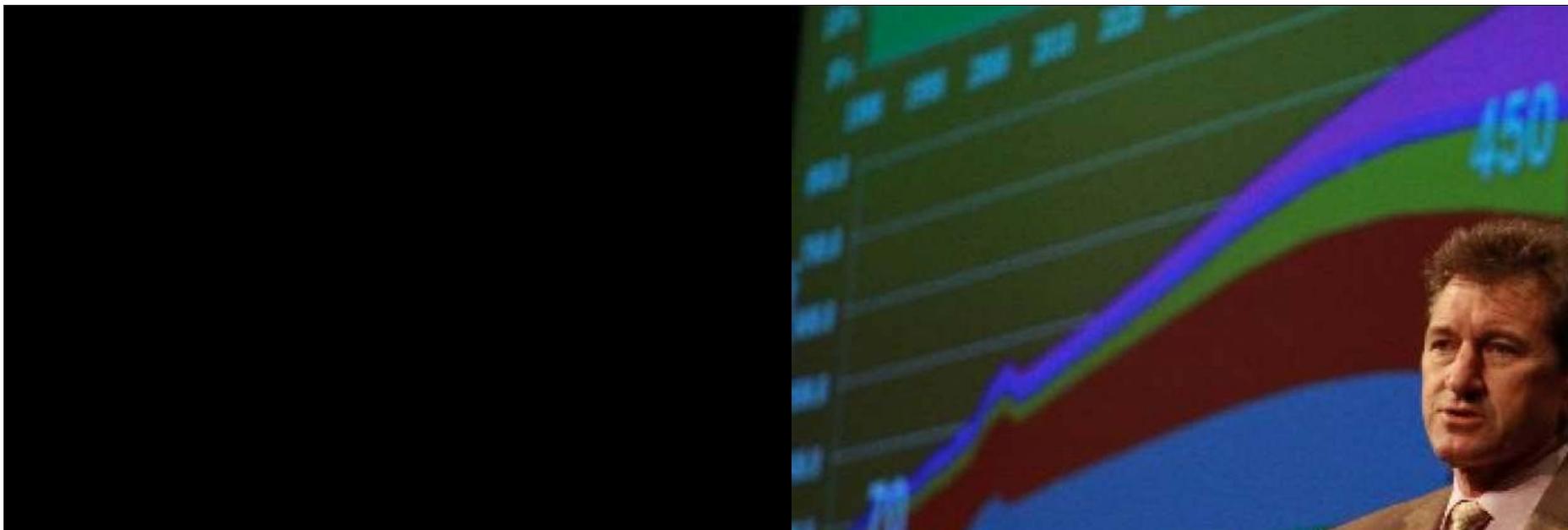


Photo: Houston Chronicle

Scott Tinker, director of the Bureau of Economic Geology at the University of Texas, spoke at the Southwest section, American Association of Petroleum Geologists' annual convention this week at the Horseshoe.

Seizing on the slogan "Keep it in the ground," Scott Tinker proceeded to explain why the globe's fossil fuel resources shouldn't be kept in the ground.

Tinker, director of the Bureau of Economic Geology at the University of Texas, opened this week's Southwest section, American Association of Petroleum Geologists' annual convention at the Horseshoe.

While renewable fuels such as biomass, solar and wind are rising, fossil fuels from coal to crude to natural gas remain the dominant energy source, Tinker said.

Leaving those resources in the ground will leave much of the globe in the dark both literally and economically, he said, showing a slide of the world, lights glowing in developed nations, and darkening the picture as energy resources remained in the ground.

"Electricity does not end poverty, but poverty cannot be ended without electricity," he said. "Limited access to electricity propagates inequality."

Tinker cited estimates that 1.2 billion people worldwide are being left behind because the economic gap between developed nations and economically stagnant nations is growing.

As importantly, lifting people out of poverty establishes the conditions for peace, he said.

Turning to the topic of climate change and the effect of fossil fuels on climate, Tinker showed several slides detailing climate history from millions of years ago to the present. He noted, for instance, that none of the more than 100 locations along both U.S. coastlines and in the Pacific showed an acceleration in the rise of sea levels.

Of the debate on whether or not human activities — and the use of fossil fuels — have caused or exacerbated climate change, he merely referenced the findings on the slides.

“You saw the data,” he said. “Some impacts are accelerating, others are flat.”

He said that secure energy — such as that offered by fossil fuels -- is required to fund investment in the environment and help address any impact from climate change.

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