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Energy surcharges proposed

Cambridge, Mass. — (AP) — The country's economists and policy advisers are blundering badly in their ideas for handling the energy crisis, according to a Massachusetts Institute of Technology professor of mechanical engineering.

David Gordon Wilson says the proposed rationing and fuel tax plans are unwieldy and would slow the economy.

Wilson contends a surcharge on energy that would return the cash collected as a uniform payment to each adult in the United States is one foolproof solution.

"If we want to cut oil consumption by 25 per cent," says Wilson, "we need to put on a surcharge of about 50 cents per gallon.

"Consumption should then drop from about 18 million to 13.5 million barrels per day. This would come about because a great many individual users — homeowners, au-

tomobile drivers, manufacturers — would have a powerful incentive to find ways of simultaneously saving money and oil."

Wilson estimated the surcharge refund would amount to \$783 per year for every citizen 18-years-old and over.

Most individuals and businesses, Wilson argues, would decide they could function with less energy and would spend their refunds in other areas of the economy — areas involving lower fuel use.

He said the refunds would either take the form of income tax deductions or checks.

Wilson stressed that his plan could be implemented through existing government channels. The surcharge could be handled as if it were a larger tax than the federal tax already imposed on fuel.

The return of energy refunds would only require the hiring of more clerks in the

Internal Revenue Service if provisions were made to have the refund checks mailed monthly," he said.