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Smil, Vaclav. **Energy in nature and society: general energetics of complex systems.** MIT, 2008. 480p bibl indexes afp
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Energy, humankind's most important resource, is covered comprehensively and systematically in an unparalleled, in depth, and fully documented volume. With a goal of promoting a "better understanding of energy in nature and in human societies," Smil (Univ. of Manitoba) covers a wide range of interdisciplinary topics in 13 sections, including "Planetary Energetics," "Photosynthesis," "Traditional Food Production," "Fossil Fuels," "Energy Costs," and more. An expansive appendix of physical definitions, equivalencies, and quantities of all aspects of energy systems, and a references-cited section containing more than 1550 entries are particularly useful. Well-selected illustrations augment the text. *Energy in Nature and Society* is unique in its value and its comprehensive coverage of all energy matters; it should be on the bookshelves of all professionals in science, social science, economics, and history.

Summing Up: Highly recommended. Graduate students through professionals. -- *T. L. T. Grose, emeritus, Colorado School of Mines*