Gas depletion here is the amount of natural gas used between 1965 and 2004. This is seen as depletion because gas is burned much more quickly than it is formed. There are limited natural gas reserves. During this 40 year period, the gas equivalent of almost 60 billion tonnes of oil was used up.

The territories that used the most gas over this period were the United States, the Russian Federation, the Ukraine and Canada. Almost all the natural gas that has been burnt as fuel was burnt during these forty years, and the years since. Until about 1965 natural gas from oilfields was often considered useless, so was disposed of by flaring. It has since been used extensively, as a fuel.

“No one likes talking about depletion; it is the crazy aunt in the attic, the emperor without clothes, the wolf at the door.”

Randy Udall, 2001