Why have U.S. government programs to create alternative energy technologies always failed? Because they have been based on the mistaken belief that—like the Apollo moon landing—creating a viable alternative energy technology is only an engineering problem. In fact, substitution of energy technologies involves commercial and social questions that engineering alone cannot solve. Peter Grossman contends that policymakers are confused about the way innovation occurs and how new products succeed in the market. Although the promise of a grand engineering feat has political traction, U.S. energy policy with respect to alternatives has inevitably failed, and current programs will almost surely continue that historical record.