Petroleum production has remained steady since 2004, despite continuing record-high prices in nominal and real (inflation-adjusted) terms. Moreover, returns-on-investment in petroleum have been declining steadily throughout this period, implying significant rises in production costs. These developments cast serious doubts on the ability of producers to satiate demand. Since the collapse of the petroleum bubble in mid-2008, there have been two price plateaus which have been characterized by unprecedented volatility. This volatility may be indicative of the market reaching hard limits in the elasticity of supply and demand. The first plateau, from Q2/2009 to Q3/2010, occurred when producers faced enormous economic and political pressure to lower prices due to global recession. The transition to the second plateau was in response to widespread economic recovery, which is stymied significantly by resultant high oil prices. The second plateau started Q2/2011 and continues as of the time of publication. Current trends elicit the onset of supply shocks in the short-to-medium term, as the production price floor exceeds the economic price ceiling.