

Why We Need to End Fossil Fuel Production

We can't solve the climate crisis without ending fossil fuel production.

Context

The climate emergency runs on coal, oil and gas. Nearly 80% of the greenhouse gas emissions that are driving the climate crisis come from burning fossil fuels. Yet many people are unwilling to talk about the idea of ending fossil fuel production as a key climate solution. That's because for years the fossil fuel industry has fed the public a steady stream of lies about how they are "key to prosperity," "essential for jobs," and "part of the climate solution." In reality, ending fossil fuel production will improve public health, address racial injustice, accelerate the transition to a clean energy economy, and help us avoid catastrophic global warming. It's time to get to work.

Fossil fuels are driving the climate crisis

- [Nearly 80%](#) of the greenhouse gas emissions that are driving the climate crisis come from burning fossil fuels.
- [As of 2017](#), oil was responsible for 45% of greenhouse gas emissions in the United States, coal was responsible for 32%, and natural gas was responsible for 29%.
- Since 1970, when scientists were already sounding the alarm about the climate crisis, CO2 emissions have [increased by about 90%](#).
- [Just 90 companies](#) and state owned enterprises are responsible for 2/3rds of manmade carbon emissions since the industrial revolution.

- All but seven of these companies are fossil fuel related, the others are in cement production.
- 50 of these companies are investor owned fossil fuel firms, like Exxon, Chevron, Shell, and BP.
- Nearly 30% of the emissions were produced just by the top 20 companies.

There is far more coal, oil and gas ready for production than we can safely burn

- The fossil fuel industry's current coal, oil and gas reserves contain over [5x more carbon](#) than we can safely burn and keep global warming below 1.5°C.
- Not just that: there's already more oil, gas and coal currently [under production](#) than we can safely burn and keep global warming below 2.0°C -- just burning the oil and gas alone would take us past 1.5°C.
- But everyday the fossil fuel industry is spending millions of dollars to expand production.
- Over the next twenty years, the industry is expected to spend [\\$14 trillion](#) on new fields, mines and transportation infrastructure -- a lethal capital injection.
- It doesn't matter how many solar panels and wind turbines we build -- if we burn through these fossil fuels, it's game over for the climate.

These fossil fuel reserves are creating a massive "Carbon Bubble" that could threaten the entire economy

- The value of many fossil fuel companies is directly tied to the value of their coal, oil and gas reserves. But if those reserves cannot be safely burned, their value is worthless. That means these fossil fuel companies are dramatically overvalued.
- Not only that: the fossil fuel industry and their backers have invested billions of dollars into new pipelines, export facilities, power plants, and other infrastructure that will become "stranded assets" when we make the transition to clean energy.
- By ignoring the science and refusing to invest in the transition to clean energy, the fossil fuel industry has inflated a massive "carbon bubble" that could [threaten the](#)

[entire economy.](#)

- In 2020, oil companies like Total, Shell, and BP have [written off billions of dollars](#) of assets that they can no longer afford to produce.
- Without a “managed decline” of the fossil fuel industry, the collapse of oil, gas and coal companies could threaten workers, communities, shareholders, and the wider economy.

Stopping production is a key climate solution

- Ending fossil fuel production is a key climate solution.
- We need to stop all new fossil fuel projects and rapidly phase down production in line with the goal of limiting global warming below 1.5°C.
- There are a number of straightforward reasons of why we have to stop the supply of fossil fuels as well as reduce demand:
 - **First, just working on demand side solutions isn’t fast enough.** We need to go after both supply and demand to drive change quickly enough to prevent catastrophe.
 - **Second, the fossil fuel industry does daily damage to the environment and public health.** We can’t let refineries continue to pollute communities of color for another decade. We can’t allow coal mines and drilling wells to keep poisoning our air and waterways while we wait for a transition to clean energy.
 - **Third, a plan to end fossil fuel production will create jobs, save money, and help communities make a “just transition” to a clean energy future.** Left alone, the industry will resist progress and then crash and burn, hurting workers and communities in the process. We can keep fossil fuel workers employed shutting down production, cleaning up old infrastructure, and making the transition to a clean energy economy. This will save consumers money: without a plan, we’re going to be left paying the bills for all the unnecessary fossil fuel projects the industry and utilities are pushing.
- When you stop new fossil fuel projects or fossil fuel production, it accelerates the demand for clean energy. We see this in places like New York State, where opposition to new natural gas projects has forced the state’s utility to [ramp up plans](#) for renewable energy.

- The US continues to provide over [\\$20 billion](#) a year in direct subsidies to the fossil fuel industry -- that doesn't include the cost of letting them pollute our atmosphere for free. That's money that could be going to a clean energy economy.

The industry remains the largest barrier to climate progress

- For decades, the fossil fuel industry spent millions of dollars to convince the public that climate change was a hoax. Then they lied about the connection to coal, oil and gas. Now, they're lying about how they're "part of the solution."
- Big Oil companies still spend hundreds of millions a year on lobbying and ads designed to mislead the public about their role in driving the climate crisis.
- Every year the top oil companies spend roughly \$200 million on lobbying designed to control, delay or block climate action. They spend another \$195 million on ads designed to make the public *think* that they're addressing the problem.
- The reality is that oil and gas companies spent just [1% of their](#) budgets on clean energy in 2018.
- Fossil fuel companies will fight tooth-and-nail against bold climate action, all while trying to carve out billions in subsidies and handouts.

Burning fossil fuels makes everything worse

- Our ongoing addiction to fossil fuels isn't just a threat to the climate: it's also one of the greatest threats to public health, racial justice, our environment, and our economy.
- Burning fossil fuels creates pollution that can lead to early death, heart attacks, respiratory diseases, strokes, asthma, and other negative health impacts.
 - According to the [American Lung Association](#), nearly 50% of Americans are breathing toxic air.
 - [A 2013 study](#) by MIT found that air pollution leads to 200,000 premature deaths a year.
 - [90 million Americans](#) live within 30 miles of at least one oil and gas refinery.

- Burning fossil fuels disproportionately harms Black, Brown, and Indigenous peoples and other low-income, communities of color.
 - The industry perpetuates environmental racism by placing polluting facilities in low-income communities of color.
 - Black Americans are exposed to [38% more polluted air](#) than White Americans.
 - Black Americans are [75% more likely](#) to live near toxic oil and gas facilities than the average American.
 - In the United States, Native American reservations [represent only 2 percent of the land](#) but hold approximately 20 percent of the country's fossil fuel reserves. That puts these communities on the frontlines of mining, drilling, and other dangerous fossil fuel projects.
- Fossil fuel production poisons our air, water and climate.
 - The production and use of fossil fuels are the leading cause of pollution.
 - Fossil fuel production is inherently damaging the environment -- especially when you add in the many spills and disasters.
 - Major disasters -- like the BP spill in the Gulf of Mexico -- are a reminder of the huge risks we're taking with our ongoing addiction.

We have the solutions we need

- We already have the solutions we need to power our lives with 100% renewable energy.
- Clean energy is cleaner, cheaper, creates more jobs, and is better for consumers.
- Clean energy is now [cheaper than fossil fuels](#) in most places around the world.
- Building *new* clean energy is [cheaper](#) than running existing coal plants.
- Over 3.3 million Americans work in clean energy, outnumbering fossil fuel workers by a 3-1 margin.
- The [fastest growing jobs](#) across 12 states in 2018 were in renewable energy.

- In 2020, Britain, the home of the industrial revolution, has [gone months](#) running its economy 100% coal free.
- A [new report](#) shows that the United States can achieve 90% clean, carbon-free electricity nationwide by 2035 at no additional cost to consumers.
- [BloombergNEF](#) predicts that by 2040, electric vehicles will account for more than half of all passenger and light commercial vehicles sales -- many think it will be even more than that.