

The climate crisis is real, and it is urgent. Food & Water Watch is working for policies that move us away from polluting fossil fuels that worsen climate change, and shifting our energy use to 100 percent clean, renewable energy by 2035.

Why We Need a Clean Energy Revolution

We can't leave political decisions about our energy future to a cartel of multinational companies and their Wall Street backers who favor fossil fuels. We need strong government policies backed by the political will to see them through.

As climate pollution accumulates, and as global warming increases, we risk reaching so-called "tipping points," beyond which a certain climate change effect is expected to be abrupt and potentially irreversible.

Already we have already seen dramatic changes across the planet. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has noted that "recent climate changes have had widespread impacts on human and natural systems," including violent storms, droughts, floods, acidifying and rapidly warming oceans, and altered growing seasons.

Staying below 1.5°C of warming, and well below 2.0°C of warming, will require aggressive action ^[1] to undo our dependence on fossil fuels and achieve 100 percent clean energy worldwide.

Electricity generated by wind and solar power can and must immediately lead the way. We must make enormous investments now to deploy existing technologies and solutions for harnessing wind and solar power and for maximizing energy efficiency and conservation.

This can all be done, and we only have about twenty years to do it. [Help us achieve clean energy: join the clean energy revolution.](#) ^[2]

How We Can Achieve Clean Energy

We already have the technologies needed to make the Clean Energy Revolution a reality. What we lack is the political will to implement the robust policies that will get us there.

We cannot allow ourselves to be sidetracked by false choices between lesser-evil fossil fuels, but instead must demand a ban on fracking ^[3] and policies that keep all fossil fuels in the ground. We must push for government policies that promote renewable energy and energy efficiency, including:

Reform Renewable Portfolio Standards: Since 2000, 60 percent of the growth in renewable electricity generation has come from state Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) requirements, in which a state mandates that a certain amount of the electricity sold in the state come from "renewable" sources. The utilities selling the electricity can meet the requirement by constructing new renewable electricity generation or buying renewable energy credits from another electricity producer. RPS programs often contain sources that are not truly clean, such as ^[4]incinerating

animal waste or municipal solid waste.^[4] States need to reform their RPS programs by eliminating dirty sources of energy, by increasing the amount of renewable electricity generation required, and by incentivizing building new renewable generation within the state.

Improve Net Metering Programs: Net metering is a billing arrangement where the owner of a distributed system, like home solar panels, can export excess electricity into the grid and receive credit for it on their electricity bill. While costs of solar have been coming down, it is still the case that solar installation requires upfront costs many homeowners cannot afford, and net metering with distributed systems can help reclaim those costs over time in the amount saved on monthly bills. A well-structured net metering program is essential to the continued growth of rooftop solar, but it must be designed in a way that actually reduces the costs to owners and makes rooftop solar cost-effective.^[5] Net metering programs should credit customers at retail electricity rates without unnecessary surcharges. Additionally, states should remove caps that limit the expansion of net metering programs.

Increase Energy Efficiency: Energy efficiency can help the transition to renewables by lessening our electricity needs. More efficient homes will demand less energy for heating or cooling, reducing peak load needs that may tax an electric system with high levels of renewable energy. Energy efficiency should also play a major role in our clean energy future because it is the cheapest way to “generate” a kilowatt, and it creates domestic jobs. A \$1 million investment in energy efficiency retrofits produces 20 jobs throughout the economy, double what is typical from investment in traditional energy generation.

Expand Community Choice Aggregation: Community Choice Aggregation (CCA) allows residents in a community to take control of the electricity purchased by their local utility, while leaving ownership of power plants and the grid in the hands of utilities. If adopted nationally, they could provide a powerful impetus for the installation of more renewable electric power generation. Unlike programs that simply allow an individual ratepayer to arrange to buy renewable electricity from a provider or more traditional green purchasing programs run by utilities, CCAs can supply renewable electricity to a large majority of a municipality’s citizens. Only a handful of states currently have laws governing CCA. States should adopt CCA across the country and require that CCAs purchases must be from new renewable sources.

Support Community Solar: According to the Department of Energy, less than one-third of American rooftop space is suitable for solar installation. Further, half of all households cannot install a solar system because of issues ranging from ownership, to shading, to lack of adequate roof space. Community solar is a way that households that cannot install their own rooftop solar can get the benefits of distributed solar. It allows households to buy a share of the solar electricity generated at a larger-scale solar garden built in their community. The participants in the project receive a share of utility bill credits, tax incentives, and production incentives. When implemented in a way that ensures low-income household participation, community solar programs can spread the use of renewables into communities that may not otherwise be able to afford distributed renewable energy.

Sustainable Transportation: We must immediately increase investment in our public transportation system to increase the usefulness of public transit for all residents and to power it with 100% renewable energy. In conjunction with requiring 100% renewable electricity, we must support the development of emission free vehicles for personal transportation and shipping and the infrastructure necessary to fuel these vehicles.

Join the revolution for transitioning to 100 percent clean, renewable energy: take action!^[6]

Source URL: <https://www.foodandwaterwatch.org/campaign/clean-energy-revolution>

Links

- [1] <http://www.foodandwaterwatch.org/insight/five-more-years-business-usual-fracking-will-bust-carbon-budget>
- [2] <https://secure.foodandwaterwatch.org/site/Advocacy?cmd=display&page=UserAction&id=2720>
- [3] <http://www.foodandwaterwatch.org/campaign/ban-fracking-everywhere>
- [4] <http://thinkprogress.org/climate/2015/11/18/3722590/maryland-chicken-manure-clean-energy/>
- [5] <http://www.foodandwaterwatch.org/insight/alec-attack-solar-power>
- [6] <https://www.foodandwateractionfund.org/content/fossil-fuels>