



SIERRA CLUB BEYOND COAL CAMPAIGN

Moving America Off Dirty, Expensive, Coal-Burning Energy

MOVING AMERICA BEYOND COAL

The Beyond Coal Campaign's goal is to replace dirty coal with clean energy by helping local communities advocate for the retirement of old and outdated coal plants and by working to prevent new coal plants from being built.

Specifically, the Beyond Coal Campaign aims to:

- Retire half of the nation's more than 500 coal plants.
- Replace the retired coal plants with energy efficiency and clean energy solutions like wind, solar, and geothermal.
- Keep coal in the ground in places like Appalachia and Wyoming's massive Powder River Basin, so that it isn't exported and burned overseas.

STOPPING COAL IN ITS TRACKS

The Beyond Coal Campaign started in 2002 as a small, dedicated group of volunteers and staff in response to a closed-door meeting between the Bush administration and the coal industry. At that meeting, a plan had been outlined to quickly construct 150 new coal-fired power plants across the country, a "coal rush" that would have locked the nation into using 19th-century dirty fuels for the foreseeable future.

Working with allies, students on university campuses, and local groups in neighborhoods across the country, Sierra Club volunteers began fighting the coal industry's efforts to build these plants. The campaign quickly grew as more people spoke up to bring cleaner sources of energy to their communities. Together, volunteers have achieved one victory after another and have fundamentally shifted the country's energy future toward a cleaner, more sustainable path.

Among the major supporters of the campaign are Michael R. Bloomberg, former Mayor of New York City, and

Bloomberg Philanthropies, which has committed \$80 million to the campaign.

COAL MAKES US SICK

Not only is coal burning responsible for nearly one-third of U.S. carbon emissions — the main contributor to climate disruption — but it is also making us sick. In the U.S., nearly 1 out of 10 children suffers from asthma — it is the number-one illness that causes kids to miss school. Half of U.S. families live in places with unsafe air. Pollution from coal-fired power plants leads to smog, which can cause chest pain, coughing, and breathing difficulties. Smog can make conditions like bronchitis, emphysema, and asthma worse or even fatal.

Coal pollution is responsible for:

- 13,200 premature deaths every year;
- More than \$100 billion in annual health costs; and
- Over 217,000 asthma attacks annually.

Burning coal also releases toxic mercury that rains down onto rivers and streams and contaminates the fish that we eat. Mercury is especially dangerous to pregnant women and young children because it's a powerful neurotoxin that can damage the brain and nervous system.

Finally, coal mining has devastating consequences for our natural resources. For example, mountaintop-removal mining has damaged or destroyed nearly 2,000 miles

“Coal is a self-inflicted public health risk, polluting the air we breathe, adding mercury to our water, and the leading cause of climate disruption.”

—MICHAEL R. BLOOMBERG, PHILANTHROPIST
AND FORMER MAYOR OF NEW YORK CITY



of streams and threatens to destroy 1.4 million acres of mountaintops and forests by 2020. The mining poisons drinking water, destroys beautiful forests and wildlife habitat, increases the risk of flooding, and wipes out entire communities.

CLEAN ENERGY

As America's largest grassroots environmental organization, the Sierra Club is working to move America beyond coal— not just by retiring dirty, dangerous, and increasingly expensive coal-fired power plants, but also by making sure job-creating and money-saving clean energy solutions are installed in its place. Clean and renewable energy—including wind, solar, geothermal, and energy efficiency—presents an opportunity for America to become more energy independent and economically secure.

WIND

- The U.S. is a world leader in installed wind capacity. Iowa, South Dakota, and Kansas already get over 20 percent of their energy from wind power.
- The cost of wind has dropped 30% since 2013, and 59% since 2010.

SOLAR

- In 2014, the solar industry provided opportunities for nearly 174,000 solar workers in all 50 states and is creating jobs at a rate nearly 20 times higher than employment growth in the overall economy.
- Over the past 5 years, solar employment has grown by 86%.
- Since 2010, the cost of utility solar has dropped by 58%, and 21% since 2013.

GEOTHERMAL

- Geothermal resources generate reliable power.
- The Geothermal Energy Association projects that geothermal production could exceed 15,000 MW by 2025.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY

- The cleanest way to meet our electricity needs is to get the most out of the energy we already use. By planning well and upgrading our buildings, we can cut electricity consumption and save homeowners and businesses money.

The Sierra Club has also taken the lead in advocating for stronger federal safeguards to protect people from health problems caused by coal plants.

On June 2, 2014, as part of the President's Climate Action Plan, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency proposed the Clean Power Plan, our nation's first protections from carbon pollution from power plants. The Plan puts states in the driver's seat to hasten their shift to clean energy and reduce carbon pollution. It will also help reduce other forms of dangerous air pollution, helping to keep our children healthier.

EARLY SUCCESSES OF THE CAMPAIGN

- Stopping more than 184 new coal-fired power plants from being built, preserving market space for clean energy.
- Prevented more than 642 million metric tons of carbon pollution from being released into the atmosphere.
- Announced retirement of 190 coal-burning power plants. The 79 GW of coal capacity currently retired and announced for retirement emitted over 295 million metric tons of CO₂ in 2009.
- Reduced number of new permit approvals for mountaintop-removal mining.
- Secured retirement plans for campus-based coal plants at over 30 colleges and universities.
- Mobilized hundreds of thousands of people in support of strong protections for clean air and water.
- Brokered the biggest clean air agreement in the history of the American Southeast, with the Tennessee Valley Authority agreeing to retire 18 coal-fired units.

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