

Watt's Happening?

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Global energy update



This artist's conception shows what off-shore wind power may look like in the near future. Innovative ideas abound, but the fact remains: wind power has become the least expensive method of generating

electricity ever invented, and global installed capacity is increasing at a staggering pace, doubling every four years. At this rate, wind will generate half of the world's power in 25 years.

Congratulations Canadians! Excellent voter turnout, and a bold 180-degree turn around (at least in theory). The Liberal, NDP and Green platforms all contain encouraging renewable energy initiatives, but only time will tell how well our new government will be able to implement them.

Meanwhile, the rest of the world isn't waiting for Canada. Here's a taste of *Watt's Happening* with energy around the world:

SWEDEN GOES FOSSIL-FREE

Sweden will invest the equivalent of CAD\$727

million in climate-protection measures in the coming year as a first step towards becoming one of the first fossil-free nations. The government will dramatically boost support for solar, wind, energy storage, smart grids and electric vehicles.

END OF INTERNAL COMBUSTION?

The Globe and Mail's car columnist: "Until a few years ago, I thought EVs were a gimmick, and that there was no chance of them displacing gas. I've changed my mind. Electricity is the future of transportation, and the internal combustion engine is

living out its final years.”

Fortune magazine agrees. Investors’ reactions to the emissions test deception at Volkswagen shows us a glimpse of “an era of cataclysmic innovation that will force many automakers out of business and others to abandon their incremental tweaking of technologies like the diesel engine.”

Some one million electric plug-in vehicles now roam the planet, up from half that about one year ago. If the trend continues as expected (doubling every year or so), there will be one BILLION EVs in just 10 years.

Quebec is leading the way in Canada. That province will invest \$420 million to put 100,000 battery-electric and hybrid vehicles on the province’s roads within five years. The new plan will create 5000 jobs and trigger more than \$500 million in private investments, says the province.

FOSSIL DIVESTMENT

Big money continues to move away from fossils. According to the Global Divest-Invest Coalition it has grown fifty-fold over the last year, now totaling an amazing \$2.6 trillion. Most of this is moving directly into renewables, which are experiencing unprecedented growth.

PARIS OPTIMISM

A wave of optimism is fueling the upcoming Paris climate talks. As a lead up to the talks, China has committed to implementing a cap-and-trade carbon market by 2017. The plan will cover electricity generation, iron and steel, chemicals, building materials, papermaking and non-ferrous metals.

Glaciers are melting and the snow up there is disappearing too. The climate advocacy group Protect Our Winters has received support from two major snowsport and ski-resort industry associations in appealing for strong action at the Paris meeting.

Hundreds of leading winter sports brands, resorts, athletes and associations signed on to a letter to President Obama.

Pope Francis will be in Paris too, encouraging and blessing this groundswell of hope and urgency. Prime Minister Trudeau is taking along a group of leaders from other parties (including the Green Party’s Elizabeth May!) and provincial premiers in an attempt to restore our badly tarnished global reputation.

Maybe, just maybe . . . a significant deal will finally be reached and Canada, for a change, won’t stand in the way.

WIND POWER GROWS . . . AND GROWS

Wind power has now become the least expensive source of electricity on the planet, even beating out coal power. It continues to grow at a staggering rate around the world, doubling roughly every four years.

Rated total output of all wind turbines everywhere on earth reached 392 GW (392 thousand megawatts) by mid 2015. That’s about a quarter of a million standard commercial turbines, or for those in the Dawson Creek area, about 4000 Bear Mountain Wind projects.

At this rate of growth, (expected to remain steady, if not increase) wind will be supplying half of all electricity used on planet earth in about twenty-five years.

FINALLY

The world is beginning, just beginning to respond to our climate and pollution emergency. Doom and gloom is no longer appropriate. This change is providing nothing but opportunity, and with public will and a dash of enlightened leadership, we can move very quickly, expanding the economy and creating quality jobs while solving some really big problems. Here’s hoping we do.