

Watt's Happening? #129

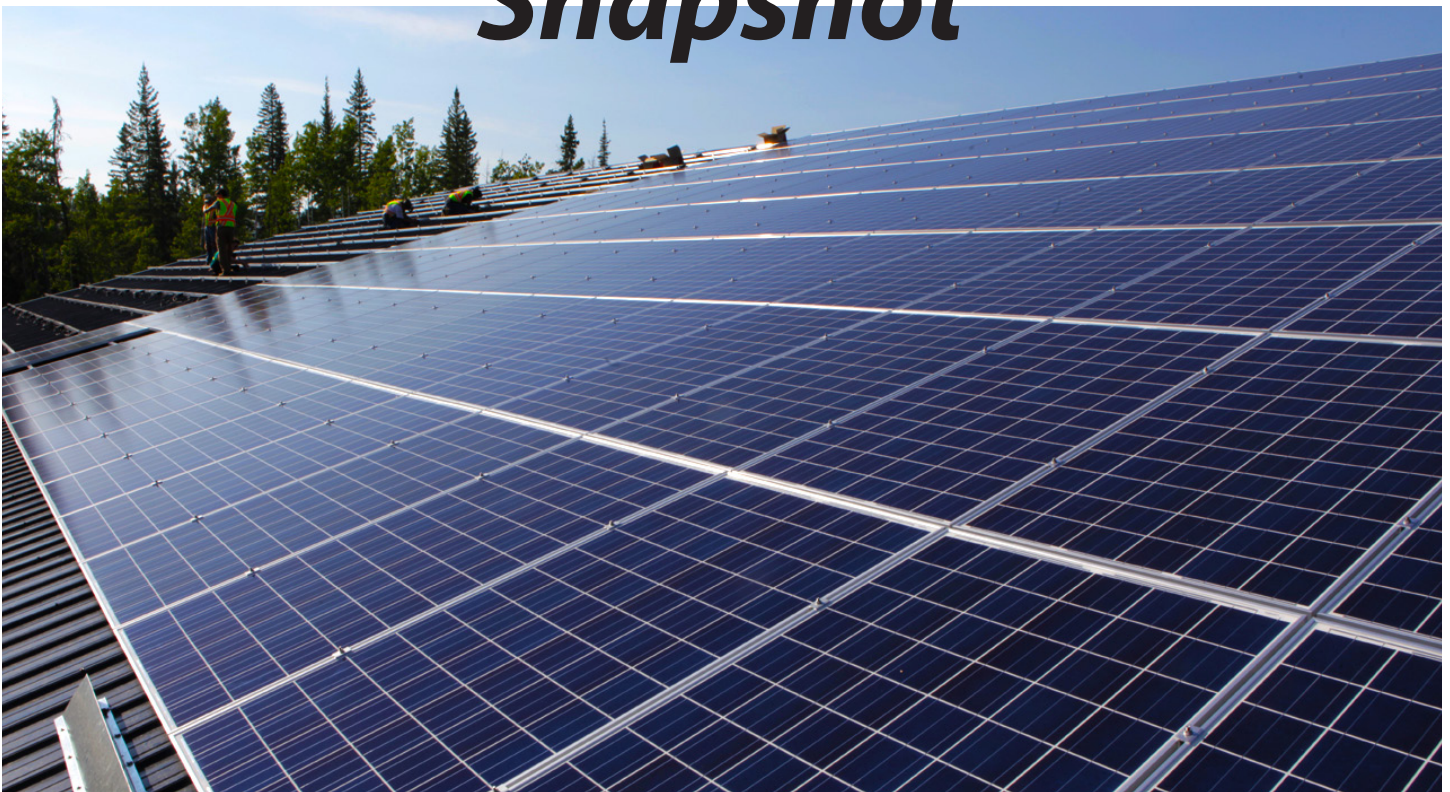
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Global Clean Energy Snapshot



China continues to set world records for clean energy adoption. The first quarter of this year saw them install about 350,000 solar panels (like those shown here being installed on the Hudson's Hope District Shop), or the equivalent of about 14,000 home-sized solar roofs EVERY DAY!

Regular readers of Watt's Happening will know that global investment in the clean energies of wind and solar has exceeded investments in fossil fuels and nuclear combined for the third year in a row. Well, that differential just keeps on growing.

The clean energy industry in the U.S. alone is now worth an amazing US \$200 billion a year, which is about the same size as America's pharmaceutical

manufacturing industry. Big.

A new report from the International Energy Agency says that renewables have now overtaken coal as the world's largest installed power source, a truly historic milestone.

Across the clean energy spectrum, it's the same story. Clean energy is a US\$1.4 trillion industry globally, well ahead of air travel, for instance. The growth rate of the global economy is about 3 percent

per year, while the growth rate of the clean energy sector is close to 7 percent annually.

SOLAR CHINA

While Canada seems obsessed with fighting over pipelines and tar sands expansion, the rest of the world is moving on, with China in the lead.

Last year China either halted construction of, announced the closure of, or outright shut down

more than 100 coal plants. This year China is breaking all records for installed solar.

In the first quarter of 2018, they fired up just under 10 Gigawatts (GW) of new solar, or about 32 million standard-sized solar panels. That's a record 356,000 solar panels installed in China each and every day! up 22% over last year's record.

BC's SOLAR

Just for fun, lets compare China's adoption of solar energy to British Columbia's.

Although BC Hydro is to be credited with a good, easy-to-use net metering policy that makes it quick to connect your home solar array to the grid, there has been a total indifference to both wind and solar from the BC government. No incentives, no encouragement, no information for decades.

So in the last 15 years, since their grid-tie system has been in place, less than 2000 solar roofs have been connected to the BC Hydro grid. In spite of this indifference, solar is growing in the province, but at a slower than glacial rate.

Looking at the most recent figures, we might see 500 to 1000 new solar roofs in BC this year, while in China they're installing the equivalent of 14,000 solar roofs EVERY DAY. Apples and oranges, I know, but still . . .

We have an excellent solar resource in this province, and therefore a potential thriving new solar industry. Not letting it happen could be one of the biggest energy mistakes BC has ever made.

US CLEAN ENERGY

Last year was a tipping point in the US: for the first

time, more people held jobs in clean energy than in fossil fuels.

Coal, for instance, has steadily declined to about 50,000 jobs from a peak of 178,000 in 1985, while jobs in wind and solar now account for 769,000 in the US, increasing 12 times faster than the US economy.

Energy efficiency jobs (mostly small businesses involved in the construction and installation of efficient energy systems), now total roughly 2.2 million in the US. Another 174,000 are busy building electric cars.

EV REVOLUTION

Figures vary, but about 1/3 of the world's air pollution, including carbon dioxide, comes from the transportation sector. To beat climate change, we are going to have to phase out the internal combustion engine (ICE).

It began in the Netherlands in 2016, which will ban ICE vehicles by 2025. Then Norway, France and the UK announced bans by 2040.

That was a warning bell, but nothing like the clanging alarms set off when China announced it's intention to follow suite last year.

China is not only the world's largest automobile market, but also the largest manufacturer, making nearly one third of all the cars made in

the world. If China is going electric, then, suddenly, by golly, so are Ford, Renault-Nissan, GM and Volvo. Quickly, before they all go the way of Kodak.

So don't let anybody tell you that renewable energies like wind and solar or EV's are a niche market or a passing fad. Hardly. They're comin', and they're comin' on strong.

And not some time in the distant future. It's Watt's Happening right now.

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