

# Watt's Happening? #274

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## Good News for 2026 *Well, fairly good...*



**T**hanks to the growth of renewables, carbon emissions worldwide are plateauing.

Global carbon emissions have slowed dramatically over the last decade, appearing to plateau now due mostly to the increased use of renewable energy and electric vehicles.

China continues to lead the way in renewables by far, deploying roughly the equivalent of 100 large nuclear power stations in renewables over just the

last six months! China now has enough renewable installed capacity (mostly solar and wind) to power the United States. They regularly sell over one million electric vehicles per month.

### **MASSIVE GROWTH IN RENEWABLES**

This record breaking, almost unbelievable growth shows no signs of letting up, but in fact quite the opposite: it is expected to increase even more this year. China has been responsible for most of the world's increasing carbon emissions for some time, but that is changing rapidly now, and their carbon output will peak this year, and then, we hope, decline.

India and most of Europe are following China's lead. The U.S., unfortunately (to their own demise) is in full reverse, heading rapidly back into the dirty and expensive fossil energy of the past.

Canada is in a confused limbo with an uncertain energy future, but it could easily fall into lock step with the energy ignorance south of the border. Truly a shame, since we are rich in all the renewables: hydro of course, but also solar, wind and the almost untapped but unlimited energies created by the very heat of the planet itself, geothermal.

### **GEO THERMAL**

A quick note on geothermal. Dig down just a few meters and you find warmth. There is geothermal energy everywhere – everyone has some, and it is continuous, base-load energy. For industrial-grade geothermal, however, you have to go down a few thousand meters, but there it is, almost unlimited energy.

And here is the cool thing about this heat: the best way to unlock it may well be hydraulic fracturing! We should not be hesitant to take advantage of the

geological expertise and extraordinary technology developed by the oil industry. To solve the climate crisis, we will need all the help we can get!

This massive shift to renewables is the most important and radical energy transition since the coal-fired industrial revolution, and those left behind will pay the price. But emissions must not just plateau; they must then begin to decline, and quickly, if we are to avoid the dreaded 2.0 degrees in average atmospheric temperature. This will take truly heroic efforts.

Yes, it looks like we have sailed past 1.5 degrees above the pre-industrial levels benchmark, and as we move closer to 2.0, there will be more and more hell to pay. Surpassing 2.0 degrees will be catastrophic for everyone: all nations, all people and all life forms. Dangerous feedback loops may be kicking in already: the wildfires in Canada last year released more carbon dioxide than all of our industrial activities.

### **WHAT WE DO BEST**

Today, humanity produces more carbon dioxide than all other substances we produce, combined! Release carbon into the world: it's what we do best. It is as if, from a planetary perspective, our purpose has become the moving of the 300 million year old stores of underground carbon (coal, oil and gas) up and out into the atmosphere.

We do it to make energy, lots and lots of energy. And this energy has been the most remarkable gift to our species imaginable: even while we have added billions of people, malnourishment has dropped by 40 percent, literacy is up 70 percent, and lifespan

has moved from 40 years to over 70. Unbelievably abundant energy, in all of its forms, has made this possible.

Well, thanks to human ingenuity and advanced science and tech, we know now how to make energy in lots of other ways. Clean, renewable ways. Not perfect by any means, but better, much better.

### **A GLOBAL NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION**

Can we do it, and do it in time? Maybe. Just maybe. We are well on our way, and unlike so many other global threats (like the collective insanity of war), we can all take actions every day that will make a difference. And every bit of carbon emitted matters now more than ever, since every bit will stay in the atmosphere for thousands of years.

Needing a new vehicle? Consider electric. Wanting to save money on electrical bills? Consider solar for your home, business or municipality. Fly

less, try a local vacation. Recycle. Walk and bicycle more. Install a heat pump. Upgrade your windows. Grow food and buy local. Vote for leaders who get it, and tell those who don't that you are NOT HAPPY! Conserve water. Compost food waste. Support environmental organizations. Help preserve wildlife habitat. Bicycle and walk more. Turn off lights when you are not using them... and so much more.

Want a New Year's resolution that will actually make a big difference, for you and me and all future generations of humans, plants and animals? Reduce your carbon energy footprint. Pick any one of the above and go for it!

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