
Utilities Falling Short on Promises to Reduce Carbon Emissions

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By Ryan Hidden, Sierra Club Beyond Coal, [@rthidden](#)

Hey there, eco-conscious readers!

I have some not-so-great news to share with you today. The Sierra Club recently released its updated [Dirty Truth Report](#), and it looks like utilities have made little progress in the fight against climate change.

Sierra Club Releases Updated Dirty Truth Report



For those unfamiliar, in 2021, the [Sierra Club analyzed](#) the plans of 77 utilities owned by the 50 companies most invested in fossil fuel generation. While most of these utilities had stated goals of significant carbon reduction, there was a massive gap between their ongoing practices and the steps needed to combat the climate crisis.

In the [new report](#), the Sierra Club checked in on the progress in retiring coal plants, stopping the construction of new gas plants, and building clean energy in the following crucial decade. Unfortunately, the results are disappointing but not surprising.

While utilities have focused on making profits and maintaining the status quo, calls for a transition to clean energy have only increased at the federal level, in states, in the financial sector, and among the public.

TVA Falls Short of Clean Energy Commitments

One example from the report is the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), which claims to be a “clean-energy leader” but actually has the second highest planned gas build-out of any parent company in the analysis, the fifth largest coal fleet, and ranks eighth in planned clean energy build-out. It’s clear that TVA is not living up to its claims.

In October, President Joe Biden signed the [Inflation Reduction Act \(IRA\)](#) into law, which includes incentives for the TVA to move towards renewable energy sources. However, the House Energy and Commerce Committee sent the TVA a letter earlier this year expressing concern over cutbacks in energy efficiency and renewable incentives, stating that many electricity users in the TVA’s seven-state region still have an undue energy burden even with lower electricity rates than most of the nation. This is especially important considering that President Biden aims for the country to produce 100% carbon pollution-free electricity by 2035.

The TVA, founded as America’s “living laboratory” utility, should lead the charge toward renewable energy. Instead, TVA’s commitment to fossil fuels will hold it back for decades.

Clean Energy Goals and the Role of Utilities

Unfortunately, TVA is not alone in its lack of progress. The Sierra Club's report includes other examples of utilities that need to catch up in their efforts to transition to clean energy. It's essential to hold these companies accountable and push for a transition to clean energy to combat the climate crisis. We cannot ignore the negative impacts of fossil fuels on communities and the environment, including air pollution and water contamination.

While they included neither Ameren Illinois nor ComEd in the report, [they and the utility regulators](#) must also improve. If we cannot transition to clean energy in time to avoid the worst impacts of climate change, we risk more frequent and severe natural disasters and adverse effects on human health and the economy. That's why it's so important that we take action now.

Challenges and Opportunities in the Transition to Clean Energy

The transition to clean energy is a global challenge that requires international cooperation and policies to support it. Countries and international organizations can be crucial in supporting clean energy initiatives and promoting their adoption. The Paris Agreement, for example, is an international agreement signed by nearly two hundred countries



aiming to limit global warming to below 2°C above preindustrial levels.

Businesses and investors also have a role to play in driving the transition to clean energy. Many companies are already adopting clean energy technologies, such as solar panels and wind turbines, and investing in renewable energy projects. They can also advocate for clean energy policies and work to educate their customers about the importance of clean energy.

Advocacy organizations and grassroots movements also play a crucial role in driving the transition to clean energy. These groups can lobby for clean energy policies and support clean energy initiatives at the local, state, and national levels. They can also raise awareness about the importance of clean energy and encourage individuals and communities to take action.

Education and public outreach are also essential in driving the transition to clean energy. By raising awareness about the dangers of climate change and the benefits of clean energy, individuals and organizations can help build support for clean energy initiatives and encourage widespread adoption.

International financial institutions also have a role to play in driving the transition to clean energy. These institutions provide funding for clean energy projects worldwide, helping to drive the adoption of renewable energy technologies and reduce our reliance on fossil fuels.

Public-private partnerships can be an effective way to drive the transition to clean energy. By bringing together the resources and expertise of both the public and private sectors, these

partnerships can support the development and deployment of clean energy technologies and initiatives.

Advocating for Clean Energy Policies at The State and Local Level

Besides the actions of utilities, businesses, and advocacy groups, state and local policies also play a critical role in driving the transition to clean energy.

One key policy at the state and local level is renewable energy standards, which set targets for the percentage of a state or local community's electricity that must come from renewable sources. These standards can help to drive the adoption of clean energy technologies and encourage utilities to invest in renewable energy projects.

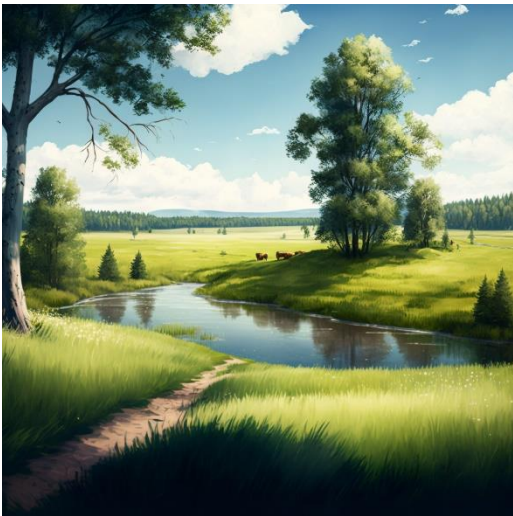
Other policies that can support the adoption of clean energy technologies include incentives for individuals and businesses to install solar panels or invest in renewable energy projects, as well as building codes and regulations that require new construction to meet specific energy efficiency standards.

By implementing these policies, states and local communities can help create a supportive environment for the transition to clean energy and encourage the adoption of clean energy technologies. This can help reduce greenhouse gas emissions, improve air quality, and protect natural resources while supporting economic development and job creation in the clean energy sector.

It's essential for individuals and communities to advocate for clean energy policies at the state and local levels and to support

initiatives that promote the adoption of clean energy technologies. By working together and taking action, we can drive the transition to clean energy and make a real difference in the fight against climate change.

The Collective Impact of Individual Actions on the Transition to Clean Energy



While the transition to clean energy requires policy and systemic changes, individual actions are also critical in driving this transition. Individual actions signal governments and businesses to move in the right direction.

A straightforward way individuals can reduce their energy consumption and support the adoption of clean energy is by using energy-efficient appliances and lighting. These appliances and lighting use less energy, which can help reduce greenhouse gas emissions and save money on energy bills.

Another way that individuals can support clean energy is by driving fuel-efficient vehicles or using alternative modes of transportation, such as public transportation, biking, or walking. This can help reduce transportation emissions, a significant source of greenhouse gas emissions.

Besides changing their own lives, individuals can also support clean energy initiatives through purchasing decisions. This can include helping companies commit to using clean energy and

reducing their carbon footprint or investing in clean energy technologies, such as solar panels or wind turbines.

These individual actions can help drive the transition to clean energy and positively impact the environment. We must do our part and take responsibility for our energy use and consumption. Together, we can make a real difference in the fight against climate change.

Encouraging Individuals and Communities to Act on Clean Energy

Education and public outreach are essential to driving the transition to clean energy. By raising awareness about the dangers of climate change and the benefits of clean energy, individuals and organizations can help build support for clean energy initiatives and encourage widespread adoption.

There are many ways that individuals and organizations can educate the public about clean energy and its importance. This can include hosting educational events or workshops, sharing information through social media or other online platforms, or partnering with schools or community organizations to offer educational resources or programming.

Besides raising awareness, education and public outreach can also help to encourage individuals and communities to take action to support clean energy. This can include promoting clean energy initiatives or campaigns, such as keeping the adoption of solar panels or advocating for clean energy policies.

Educating the public and encouraging action can help build momentum for the transition to clean energy and drive the adoption of clean energy technologies. Each of us needs to do our part in spreading the word about the importance of clean energy and encouraging others to act. Together, we can make a real difference in the fight against climate change.

The Power of Grassroots Movements in Driving the Transition to Clean Energy

Advocacy organizations and grassroots movements are vital in driving the transition to clean energy. These groups can lobby for clean energy policies and support clean energy initiatives at the local, state, and national levels. They can also raise awareness about the importance of clean energy and encourage individuals and communities to take action.



There are many ways that individuals and organizations can get involved in advocacy efforts on clean energy. This can include joining an advocacy group or supporting clean energy campaigns, such as advocating for the adoption of solar panels or supporting clean energy policies.

Individuals can also get involved in advocacy efforts by contacting their elected representatives and urging them to support clean energy initiatives. This can include writing letters, making phone

calls, or attending town halls or other events where elected representatives speak.

Grassroots movements play a powerful role in driving the transition to clean energy. By organizing events and campaigns, these movements can raise awareness about the importance of clean energy and build support for clean energy initiatives.

Individuals and organizations can play a crucial role in driving the transition to clean energy and positively impacting the environment by advocating and supporting clean energy initiatives. Each of us needs to do our part and take action to support clean energy and combat the climate crisis.

What You Can Do to Support the Transition to Clean Energy

It's clear that we have much work to do to transition to clean energy and combat the climate crisis. But we can make a real difference by working together and acting at the individual, community, and global levels. Let us get to work! Go to the [Heart of Illinois Sierra Club website](#) and volunteer today.