



## facts

- ◆ Renewable energy sources are virtually inexhaustible. They generate energy with minimal pollution, causing no oil spills, nuclear meltdowns, nuclear wastes, smog, or acid rain.
- ◆ Renewable energy sources have no fuel costs and are freely available.
- ◆ Switching to clean, renewable energy will bring us cleaner air and water, while improving human health and increasing energy security.

# Energy Basics



Energy is integral to virtually every aspect of life - it is hard to imagine life without it. Yet many of our most serious threats to clean air, clean water, and healthy ecosystems stem from humans' energy use.

Currently, most energy is produced from coal, oil, natural gas, and uranium. These energy sources destroy fragile ecosystems and endanger human health. They pollute our air and water and destabilize our climate.

- ✧ **Acid rain and mercury pollution** from coal power plants damage forests, wildlife, and human health.
- ✧ **Oil spills and energy-related toxic wastes** destroy marine ecosystems and contaminate soil and water.
- ✧ **Nuclear power** produces radioactive wastes that will poison the environment for thousands of years.
- ✧ **The consequences of global warming** are already being felt, and in the future we can expect to see much greater impacts. The severity of climate disruption that we will face in the future may depend significantly on how much—and how soon—we reduce our fossil fuel use and switch to clean, renewable energy.

We can meet our energy needs and protect human health, our climate, and other natural systems. The key is to use energy more efficiently, and to switch to clean energy systems powered by renewable energy sources such as the sun and wind. Let's mobilize our financial and human resources now to achieve this essential energy transition sooner rather than later. This will minimize economic disruption and help us preserve a livable planet for future generations. *Be part of the solution!*



**Read on to learn  
how you can  
make a difference.**



## facts

- ◆ One third of the world's population does not have access to electricity. The cost of extending the electricity grid into remote areas is extremely high, making clean energy more cost-effective.
- ◆ Clean energy will allow developing nations to meet their energy needs without concern for the price fluctuations of global fuel markets.
- ◆ Switching to clean energy and maximizing energy efficiency will create millions of new jobs.
- ◆ Cleaner air and water will result in billions of dollars in health care savings.

## Get Involved!

### Make a Difference for Energy

When joining together, ordinary citizens are the most powerful political force in the world. Here are some ways you can take action to create a clean energy future:

- Earth Day Network's *Do Good* offers quick and easy ways you can take action for clean energy. <http://www.earthday.net/action/dogood.stm>
- Learn how much energy your country uses by browsing the International Energy Agency's *Key World Energy Statistics 2001*. <http://www.iea.org/statist/index.htm>
- Call for one day in your local community to be designated a **Car Free Day**. Educate and inspire people to take a look at their daily transportation habits and consider more Earth-friendly ways to get where they need to go. <http://www.earthday.net/goals/carfreeday.stm>
- **Special note to teachers:** Bring energy issues alive at school with Earth Day Network's K-12 teachers guide, *Renew Our Future*. <http://www.earthday.net/pdf/howto/schools/renew.pdf>
- Support local **energy efficiency and renewable energy partnerships** in the developing world. <http://www.ase.org/programs/international/index.htm>
- If you must buy a car, **buy a fuel-efficient vehicle** that gets relatively high mileage—you'll help the environment and cut your costs. Compare, choose, then save money every time you fill up. <http://www.fueleconomy.gov>
- **Cut your energy bills** by 10-20%. In the United Kingdom, the Energy Efficiency Best Practice Programme (EEBPP) offers many publications and tips on how to reduce your energy bills and conserve energy. <http://www.energy-efficiency.gov.uk>
- Make the switch to energy-efficient **compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs)**, which use one-fourth the energy of a standard bulb and last ten times as long. <http://www.energystar.gov/products/cfls>
- **Explore the Energy Pages** at Earth Day Network's website for summary information, action ideas, and links to further resources. <http://www.earthday.net/goals/energy/stm>

### ABOUT EARTH DAY NETWORK

Earth Day Network works for a peaceful, just, and sustainable world through education, campaigns, events, and publications. In addition to its year-round programs, Earth Day Network is a focal point for worldwide Earth Day organizing that culminates on Earth Day, April 22.



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