


Renewable energy policies

This next interview with an organizer from the grassroots climate change movement 350.org outlines the ambiguity of California State energy policies. On the one hand, California is very progressive and ambitious about renewable energy, energy conservation, and the electrification of transport. On the other hand, the State is still expanding oil exploration and fracking. The speaker discusses the implications for movement building, resistance, building alternatives, and accelerating transition to 100% renewables. Furthermore, the need for a Green New Deal to facilitate the massive investment required is introduced, a topic we return to in Module 7.

6.4 Watch “As California Fires Worsen, Environmentalists Demand a Green New Deal.” (13:19)

<p>As California Fires Worsen, Environmentalists Demand a Gr...</p> 
<p>The Real News Network. “As California Fires Worsen, Environmentalists Demand a Green New Deal,” video, 13:19, posted by the creator to YouTube, and posted on The Real News Network with transcript, November 16 2018.</p> <p>https://therealnews.com/stories/as-california-fires-worsen-environmentalists-demand-a-green-new-deal (ht</p>

6.5 Read “Drawdown. Electricity Generation Sector Summary,” paying particular attention to the Solutions section and Figures 1, 2, 3 and 4. (22 minutes)

Drawdown.org. “Electricity Generation Sector Summary,” accessed January 25, 2019.

<https://www.drawdown.org/solutions/electricity-generation> (<https://www.drawdown.org/solutions/electricity-generation>)

In previous modules we introduced you to “Drawdown” solutions for Land Use and Food. This week we explore Energy sector solutions. For example, power generation accounts for around 40 percent of annual greenhouse gas emissions to the atmosphere, making it the highest emitting sector, followed by industry and transportation. Of total worldwide electricity generation, 67 percent is made with fossil fuels, 11 percent from nuclear, and just over 24 percent renewable energy sources (the bulk of that is large hydropower dam systems, however, that create many other social and ecological issues). In the last few years, the cost competitiveness of renewable technologies, especially solar and wind, for electricity

generation improved due to policy incentives and decreasing manufacturing costs, as well as efficiency improvements and advances in storage, including pumped hydroelectric, compressed air, and new types of batteries (For an update on global patterns see REN21 2018 in Supplemental Readings).

Familiarize yourself with the Electricity Generation Section in “Drawdown.” Centralized and decentralized solutions are covered, including onshore wind power, rooftop solar panels, community solar gardens, and micro-hydro as well as electricity storage systems that enable large-scale integration of renewable energy sources into a smart grid. Keep in mind that energy democracy is possible at all scales.