Negative: Export-Import Bank Fossil Fuel Projects – not a problem

By “Coach Vance” Trefethen

Affirmative plan cancels Export-Import Bank lending for fossil fuel projects overseas. This brief argues that these projects are good for the US and global economy and good for the countries where the projects are being done. Canceling fossil fuel projects in poor places like Africa will doom them to poverty because fossil fuels are the quickest path to economic development.

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Negative: Export-Import Bank Fossil Fuel Projects – not a problem

INHERENCY

Ex-Im Bank promotes renewable energy

Export-Import Bank 2018 Annual Report. Published by the Export-Import Bank Nov 2018 <https://www.exim.gov/sites/default/files/reports/annual/2018/EXIM-AnnualReport-2018.pdf> (accessed 11 July 2022)

Since 1992, EXIM has fulfilled a congressional mandate to promote the use of its financing tools for U.S. exports that benefit the environment, including exports related to the production of energy by renewable sources. In FY 2018, EXIM authorized $83.1 million (including $5.3 million for exports related to renewable energy) to support approximately $165.2 million of U.S. exports of environmentally beneficial goods and services.

Bank support environmentally beneficial exports, tracks CO2 emissions, and had zero CO2 emissions to report in 2018

Export-Import Bank 2018 Annual Report. Published by the Export-Import Bank Nov 2018 <https://www.exim.gov/sites/default/files/reports/annual/2018/EXIM-AnnualReport-2018.pdf> (accessed 11 July 2022)

In addition to financing environmentally beneficial exports, EXIM is committed to transparency about Bank-financed projects that produce greenhouse-gas emissions. The Bank reports the estimated yearly levels of CO2 emissions associated with approved projects in its annual report and those associated with pending projects on its website (www.exim.gov/policies/eximbank-and-the-environment). The Bank tracks and reports all fossil-fuel-related projects in which CO2 production is expected to exceed more than 25,000 tons per year. In FY 2018, EXIM approved no long-term authorizations and provided no new financing of fossil-fuel projects that produce greenhouse gases such as gas- or coalfired power plants, refineries, petrochemical plants, or oil- and gas-field exploration and development. Therefore, the Bank has no additional project-related CO2 emissions to report for the fiscal year.

HARMS / SIGNIFICANCE

1. Environmental benefit

Fossil fuels, by improving economic growth, give us better capacity to improve the environment long-term

Alex Epstein 2013 (Founder, Center for Industrial Progress) “The Moral Case for Fossil Fuels The Key to Winning Hearts and Minds” <https://industrialprogress.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/The-Moral-Case-for-Fossil-Fuels.pdf> (accessed 11 July 2022)

By that standard, is the fossil fuel industry moral? The answer to that question is a resounding yes. By producing the most abundant, affordable, reliable energy in the world, the fossil fuel industry makes every other industry more productive—and it makes every individual more productive and thus more prosperous, giving him a level of opportunity to pursue happiness that previous generations couldn’t even dream of. Energy, the fuel of technology, is opportunity—the opportunity to use technology to improve every aspect of life. Including our environment.

2. No Climate Threat

Fossil fuels protect us from the impacts of climate change and save lives

Alex Epstein 2013 (Founder, Center for Industrial Progress) “The Moral Case for Fossil Fuels The Key to Winning Hearts and Minds” <https://industrialprogress.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/The-Moral-Case-for-Fossil-Fuels.pdf> (accessed 11 July 2022)

The energy we get from fossil fuels is particularly valuable for protecting ourselves from the climate. The climate is inherently dangerous (and it is always changing, whether we influence the change or not). Energy and technology have made us far safer from it. The data here are unambiguous. In the last 80 years, as CO2 emissions have risen from an atmospheric concentration of .03% to .04%, climate-related deaths have declined 98%. Take drought-related deaths, which have declined by 99.98%. This has nothing to do with a friendly or unfriendly climate, it has to do with the oil and gas industry, which fuels high-energy agriculture as well as natural gas-produced fertilizer, and which fuels drought relief convoys. Fossil fuels make the planet dramatically safer.

CO2 growth is insignificant and so are its impacts. And fossil fuels are better for protecting us from its impacts anyway

Alex Epstein 2013 (Founder, Center for Industrial Progress) “The Moral Case for Fossil Fuels The Key to Winning Hearts and Minds” <https://industrialprogress.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/The-Moral-Case-for-Fossil-Fuels.pdf> (accessed 11 July 2022)

And while fossil fuel opponents tend to exaggerate the scale of CO2 emissions—in the last 150 years, CO2 has gone from .03% of the atmosphere to .04%—when consumers use our products it does have some impact on the atmosphere and thus the climate system. Although the average temperature around the world has only increased by a historically unremarkable 1 degree Celsius over the past 150 years, CO2 emissions likely contributed some of that (mild) warming. Is this a significant problem—let alone the epic scale problem that would justify restricting peoples’ ability to use cheap, plentiful, reliable energy? We believe that while doomsday speculation says yes, the evidence says: no. It is an empirical fact that the climate has becoming safer—in large part thanks to increased energy production. According to the EM-DAT (the authoritative International Disaster Database), overall climate-related deaths are down 98% in the last 80 years. This is due to the proliferation of climate-protection technology (climate control, sturdy homes, weather satellites, drought relief convoys, modern agriculture), which are made possible by fossil fuels, especially oil.

SOLVENCY

1. Must have fossil fuel backup for renewables

Reliable electricity generation requires natural gas backup for when the sun doesn’t shine or wind doesn’t blow

Robert Rapier 2018 (chemical engineer in the energy industry. Robert has 25 years of international engineering experience in the chemicals, oil and gas, and renewable energy industries) Natural Gas Is Already A Bridge Fuel 2 Sept 2018 <https://www.forbes.com/sites/rrapier/2018/09/02/natural-gas-is-already-a-bridge-fuel/#4fcaa8af975f> (accessed 11 July 2022)

Coal is a source of firm power, which means power that is guaranteed to be available when needed. This contrasts to wind and solar power, which are intermittent. They are available when the sun shines and the wind blows. [**END QUOTE]** That means that intermittent power sources require much more installed capacity than do firm power sources to produce the same amount of electricity over time. The capacity factor -- that is the amount of power produced divided by the power that would be produced if the power source was producing at full capacity at all times -- is around 90% for nuclear power, 70% for geothermal power, and 50-60% for coal-fired and natural gas-fired power. But annual power factors for wind and solar power are in the [25% to 35% range](https://www.eia.gov/electricity/monthly/epm_table_grapher.php?t=epmt_6_07_b). This has two implications. One is that wind and solar power must have around double the installed capacity of firm power sources like coal to produce the same amount of electricity over time**. [HE CONTINUES LATER IN THE CONTEXT QUOTE:**] But because these intermittent sources can sometimes see output fall dramatically, they must also have significant backup power supplies available. Opponents of using natural gas as a bridge to a renewable future argue that batteries can fulfill this backup role. They see the role of natural gas as simply filling a balancing role for renewables in times of extreme mismatches between supply and demand. It is probably true that this is the long-term solution, but cost-effective battery technology isn't quite ready to assume this role on a massive scale.

2. Energy projects are demand driven

**This means the Bank isn’t deciding what these countries want or telling them what to do. It’s up to them as to what kind of energy projects they want. We can’t fiat that poor countries will want renewable energy.**

Ex-Im Bank promotes renewable energy, but ultimately it depends on what countries want (demand-driven)

Congressional Research Service 2019 (non-partisan research agency of Congress) “Export-Import Bank: Overview and Reauthorization Issues, August 2019 <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/R43581.pdf> (accessed 11 July 2022)

The charter also directs Ex-Im Bank to promote renewable energy-related exports and exports to sub-Saharan Africa. While the Bank seeks to support these export goals, it is demand-driven and its activity depends on alignment with commercial opportunities.

DISADVANTAGES

1. Power Africa

Link: AFF cancels Ex-Im Bank fossil fuel power projects

It’s in their mandate

Link: Ex-Im Bank is a participant in “Power Africa” project

Export-Import Bank 2021 Annual Report. “Building a better America” Published by the Export-Import Bank https://img.exim.gov/s3fs-public/reports/annual/2021/EXIM\_2021\_AnnualReport\_web.pdf (accessed 11 July 2022)

To advance clean energy access on the continent, EXIM is part of the Power Africa initiative which is working towards the goal of adding more than 30,000 megawatts (MW) of new, cleaner and more reliable electricity generation capacity and 60 million new electricity connections for homes and businesses by 2030. EXIM is a member of the Power Africa Working Group and regularly shares its expertise in financing for Africa’s power sector.

Link: 60% of the electricity in Power Africa is from natural gas

US Agency for International Development 2017 (foreign aid agency of the US State Department) POWER AFRICA FACT SHEET 12/2017 <https://www.usaid.gov/documents/1860/power-africa-fact-sheet-122017> (accessed 11 July 2022)

To date, Power Africa and its partners have helped 84 power projects comprising more than 7,300 megawatts (MW) reach financial close with a total investment of more than $14 billion. Nearly three-quarters of the 84 projects use renewables. 60% of the MW achieved are from natural gas. Over 2,000 MW are already operational. Power Africa has helped add 10.6 million connections to off-grid, micro-grid, and central grid solutions, which has enabled tens of millions of people gain access to electricity for the very first time.

Link: 88 million Africans got electric power for the first time in their lives, and millions more to come

US Agency for International Development 2020 (foreign aid agency of the US State Department) Oct 2019 “POWER AFRICA ANNUAL REPORT 2020” <https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Power-Africa-2020-Annual-Report-English.pdf> (accessed 11 July 2022)

Since our launch in 2013, more than 88 million people in sub-Saharan Africa have first-time electricity access. Significant work remains, with a staggering 580 million, or nearly two-thirds of the population, still without electricity, and the economic effects of COVID-19 yet to be fully realized.

Link: Lack of electricity limits key growth factors that block economic and social well-being in Africa.

[Nirav Patel](https://www.brookings.edu/author/nirav-patel/) 2019 (Former Research Analyst - Global Economy and Development, Brookings Institution) <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/africa-in-focus/2019/03/29/figure-of-the-week-electricity-access-in-africa/> (accessed 11 July 2022)

The lack of access to electricity primarily constrains modern economic activities, provision of public services, and quality of life. In addition, it severely limits adoption of emerging technologies in sectors such as banking, education, agriculture, and finance that could otherwise alleviate some of the core challenges facing Africans, such as low productive employment opportunities and limited healthcare.

Impact: Children suffer and die. African children will suffer and die in poverty if it’s not solved

Kate Hodal 2016 (journalist) 4 Oct 2016 THE GUARDIAN “Nearly half all children in sub-Saharan Africa in extreme poverty, report warns” <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2016/oct/05/nearly-half-all-children-sub-saharan-africa-extreme-poverty-unicef-world-bank-report-warns> (accessed 11 July 2022)

Nearly half of all children in sub-Saharan Africa are living in extreme poverty, according to a joint [Unicef-World Bank report released on Tuesday](http://blogs.worldbank.org/opendata/chart-half-worlds-extremely-poor-are-children), with figures showing that almost 385 million children worldwide survive on less than $1.90 (£1.50) a day, the World Bank international poverty line. [**END QUOTE**] Extreme poverty leads to stunted development, limited future productivity as adults, and intergenerational transmission of poverty, the [report](http://www.unicef.org/publications/files/Ending_Extreme_Poverty_A_Focus_on_Children_Oct_2016.pdf) (pdf) says. The figures – based on data from 89 countries, and representing 84% of the developing world’s population – indicate that much work will be needed to meet the sustainable development goal of [eradicating extreme poverty by 2030](http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/poverty/). [Children](https://www.theguardian.com/society/children) are disproportionately affected by extreme poverty – they make up just a third of the population studied, but comprise half of the extreme poor. They are twice as likely as adults to be living on less than $1.90 a day, the report claims, with 19.5% of children in developing countries living in extremely poor households, compared to just 9.2% of adults. [**SHE GOES ON LATER IN THE CONTEXT TO WRITE QUOTE**:] “It’s almost a double blow – firstly, that children are twice as likely as an adult to live in extreme poverty, but also that children are much less likely than an adult to be able to cope with extreme poverty because of stunting, infant mortality, and early childhood development,” said Unicef’s deputy executive director, Justin Forsyth. “Extreme poverty can either kill you, or ruin your potential for the rest of your life.”

2. Global poverty without fossil fuel development

Link: AFF plan tries to reduce consumption of fossil fuels

If not, the plan fails on Solvency. But that’s bad because…

Link: The world desperately needs energy growth and fossil fuels are key to providing it

Alex Epstein 2013 (Founder, Center for Industrial Progress) “The Moral Case for Fossil Fuels The Key to Winning Hearts and Minds” <https://industrialprogress.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/The-Moral-Case-for-Fossil-Fuels.pdf> (accessed 11 July 2022)

We live in a world that desperately needs energy growth. Over a billion people lack any electricity—not coincidentally, they live in the most dangerous environments. For everyone in the world to have the same amount of energy as the average German we would need a doubling of energy production. Over 80% of the energy that the citizens of the world use to survive and flourish comes from fossil fuels— because that is the cheapest, most plentiful, most reliable source ever developed. Many environmental groups say at least 80% of it should be illegal.

Impact: Cheap fossil fuels drive global economic success and solve human poverty and suffering

Investors Business Daily, 2018 November 26th, 2018 “Global Warming: Fake Science Again Serves Far-Left Political Agenda” <https://www.investors.com/politics/editorials/global-warming-fake-science-agenda/> (accessed 11 July 2022)

The fact is, access to fossil fuels has been the [key driver of global economic success since the industrial age began.](http://www.moralcaseforfossilfuels.com/) Cheap, plentiful fossil fuels during the last 175 years led to the greatest economic surge in human history. Carbon-based fuels moved literally billions of people around the world out of lives of grinding poverty and hard physical labor and into unparalleled wealth and comfort.

3. Harms the poor in America

Link: Plan claims to reduce development of oil resources worldwide

If not, the plan doesn’t work and you should vote Negative on Solvency.

Link: Global oil supply affects prices within the US.

Amy M. Jaffe 2019 (Senior Fellow for Energy and the Environment and Director of the Program on Energy Security and Climate Change at the Council on Foreign Relations) 8 Oct 2019 “1970s Oil Crisis Redux or Oil Price Rout?” <https://www.cfr.org/blog/1970s-oil-crisis-redux-or-oil-price-rout> (accessed 11 July 2022)

Oil is a global commodity and its pricing is determined by global supply and demand. Since the United States is part of the global market and imports crude oil from abroad, U.S. crude oil prices are influenced by global pricing trends. The easiest way to explain this phenomenon is to consider water in a swimming pool. If someone comes with a giant bucket and takes water out of the shallow end of the pool, the water level goes down not just in the shallow end of the pool but for the entire pool equally. By the same token, if more water is put in the pool by a water hose, the water level goes up throughout the pool and not just on the side where the hose pours in. The oil market is the same. If the oil market loses Saudi or Iranian or Iraqi oil, all oil commodity prices are affected for all users of oil, not just users of the disrupted oil.

Link: Reduced global oil supplies (or even the threat of reduced oil supplies) raises US oil prices

Amy M. Jaffe 2019 (Senior Fellow for Energy and the Environment and Director of the Program on Energy Security and Climate Change at the Council on Foreign Relations) 8 Oct 2019 “1970s Oil Crisis Redux or Oil Price Rout?” <https://www.cfr.org/blog/1970s-oil-crisis-redux-or-oil-price-rout> (accessed 11 July 2022)

Still, on September 14 when Saudi Arabia’s oil facilities were attacked, U.S. oil prices went [up 15 percent in one day](https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-09-15/oil-prices-jump-19-after-attack-cuts-saudi-arabian-supplies). Traders who were betting the price of oil would continue to go down had to adjust their bets and that created a large price increase. The problem with Iran has not, in fact, been resolved and markets could see a similar black swan event. Any global event will affect U.S. markets, regardless of how much oil we have at home.

Impact: Harms the poor. Higher cost energy hurts the health and well-being of the poor

Jude Clemente 2015 (principal at JTC Energy Research Associates, LLC. B.A. in International Relations from Penn State Univ; M.S. in Homeland Security from San Diego State Univ; writer and editor for reports commissioned by the U.S. Dept of Energy, International Energy Agency) “Higher Cost Energy Worsens The Shameful Rise In American Poverty” 21 Sept 2015 <https://www.forbes.com/sites/judeclemente/2015/09/21/higher-cost-energy-worsens-the-shameful-rise-in-american-poverty/#264ab15c62c4> (accessed 11 July 2022)

Policies that [**admittedly**](http://dailycaller.com/2014/06/02/epa-admits-climate-rule-will-raise-electricity-prices/) increase the cost of energy in the name of "improving health" must always be challenged. That's because wealth is the root of our health, and higher cost energy takes money away from us, [**disproportionately hurting those that can least afford it**](http://www.spectator.co.uk/features/9176251/let-them-eat-carbon-credits/). Simply put, there's nothing better that we can do to allow Americans to live healthier, better, and longer lives than increase their earning potential and disposable income. Because energy is a necessity, affordable energy is fundamental to our progress and frees up money to be spent to grow our consumer-based economy.

Impact: Poor families in America go hungry or without medical care if energy costs more

Dr. Robert Bradley Jr. 2016 (PhD in political economy; founder and CEO of the Institute for Energy Research) Fossil Fuel Divestment: A Fool's Errand FORBES 7 July 2016 (accessed 11 July 2022 <https://www.forbes.com/sites/robertbradley/2016/07/07/fossil-fuel-divestment-a-fools-errand/#1d8c341e2920>

Fossil fuels also power the American family. Low and middle-income households spend [14 percent or more of their after-tax income on energy](http://americaspower.org/sites/default/files/Trisko-National-Family-Energy-Costs-June-2015-FINAL.PDF) -- some spend over 20 percent. These families rely on energy affordability for their livelihoods. Nearly [25 percent of low-income families](http://americaspower.org/sites/default/files/Trisko-National-Family-Energy-Costs-June-2015-FINAL.PDF) with high energy bills forwent food for a day or more -- almost 40 percent turned down medical care.

4. CO2 and world hunger

Link: AFF claims to reduce atmospheric CO2

We don’t think they will, but they keep insisting, so they’ll have to accept this disadvantage.

Link: Increased CO2 would grow more crops that could feed more of the growing world population

Alex Nicolson and Dr. Lars Schernikau 2017. (Alex Nicolson M.Sc. Mech Eng., MBA, P.E Technical Writer, Burbank, CA. Dr. Lars Shernikau, MBA, BSc Finance Entrepreneur, Commodities Trader, Switzerland) CO2 Beneficial to Earth, Impact on Global Warming Vastly Exaggerated, Apr 2017 (accessed 11 July 2022) <http://www.dialogi.su/storage/b/2017/06/05/2017-05-Nicolson-Schernikau-Benefits-of-CO2-Coal-Asia-mail.pdf>

The rising stars of tomorrow’s industrial world are now being forced to comply with unrealistic targets and spend their money on CO2 mitigation – while in fact it would be urgently needed to develop their country’s infrastructure, improve the health system and reduce environmental pollution of the air, water and soil. At the same time, higher CO2 level will increase crop output and help feeding growing human and animal population.

Link/Brink: Hundreds of millions are on the brink of starving globally if we don’t dramatically increase food production

Dr Tammy Beckham 2015 (DVM, Ph.D., Dean of the Kansas State University College of Veterinary Medicine) testimony before the House Committee on Agriculture 4 Nov 2015 <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CHRG-114hhrg97543/html/CHRG-114hhrg97543.htm> (accessed 11 July 2022)

In addition to understanding the importance of the agricultural industry in the U.S. and its role in supporting national security, it is also important and critical that we understand the role of global food security in securing the homeland. Currently, 870 million people around the world do not have access to safe and nutritious food in a sufficient supply. By the year 2050, the global population is expected to exceed 9 billion people. Nearly all of the growth is expected to occur in developing countries. Feeding 9 billion people will demand that food production is increased by 70% and more specifically, that food production in the developing world double.

Impact: Food shortages, political instability, social unrest, extremism, conflict.

Dr Tammy Beckham 2015 (DVM, Ph.D., Dean of the Kansas State Univ College of Veterinary Medicine) testimony before the House Committee on Agriculture 4 Nov 2015 <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CHRG-114hhrg97543/html/CHRG-114hhrg97543.htm> (accessed 11 July 2022)

Meeting these growing demands will be critical if we hope to maintain political stability in increasingly volatile regions across the globe. Food insecurity and scarcity is well known to be one of the most potent drivers of political instability and social unrest. In fact, according to the Lugar Center, “global food security has both foreign policy and national security implications for the U.S. Diplomatic efforts to maintain peace and stability are much more difficult whenever there are food shortages contributing to extremism and conflict”. Perfect examples of this have been seen throughout the Middle East and North Africa, where countries import over half of their food.

5. Sets back natural gas bridge to decarbonization

Link: AFF plan bans natural gas development

Natural gas is a fossil fuel, so their plan prohibits it.

Link: Natural gas is a low-polluting bridge from hi-polluting fossil fuels to total decarbonization

Dr. Jim Krane 2016 (PhD; Wallace S. Wilson Fellow in Energy Studies, Rice University’s Baker Institute for Public Policy) Climate Risk and the Fossil Fuel Industry: Two Feet High and Rising (accessed 11 July 2022) <https://www.bakerinstitute.org/media/files/research_document/6b58fc69/WorkingPaper-ClimateRisk-072116.pdf>

While much of the focus has been on oil companies and countries harboring large crude oil reserves, the most damaging effects have fallen upon businesses based on coal, the most polluting and carbon-intense of the fossil fuels. At the other end of the spectrum, the natural gas industry has benefited from climate action. Lower-carbon gas is widely accepted as a preferential replacement for coal and a “bridge” toward decarbonized electricity markets.  
  
**END QUOTE. He goes on later in the same article to write QUOTE:**  
Due to its lower carbon content, gas is classified as a “bridge fuel” for a decarbonizing world. Gas turbine power plants can start up quickly in a way that works well with intermittent renewables. The United States and Britain have both reduced their carbon footprints in recent years by switching from coal to gas.

Link: Natural gas produces less CO2 emissions than coal

Robert Rapier 2018 (chemical engineer in the energy industry. Robert has 25 years of international engineering experience in the chemicals, oil and gas, and renewable energy industries) Natural Gas Is Already A Bridge Fuel 2 Sept 2018 <https://www.forbes.com/sites/rrapier/2018/09/02/natural-gas-is-already-a-bridge-fuel/#4fcaa8af975f> (accessed 11 July 2022)

First, let me explain why coal has higher associated carbon dioxide emissions. Fossil fuels contain two different elements that produce energy: carbon and hydrogen. When carbon burns, it forms carbon dioxide. When hydrogen burns, it forms water vapor. Coal has a much higher concentration of carbon, whereas natural gas has much more hydrogen. Thus, when natural gas is burned, it produces relatively fewer carbon dioxide emissions.

Link: Renewables don’t grow as fast as gas to replace CO2 emissions from coal

Robert Rapier 2018 (chemical engineer in the energy industry. Robert has 25 years of international engineering experience in the chemicals, oil and gas, and renewable energy industries) Natural Gas Is Already A Bridge Fuel 2 Sept 2018 <https://www.forbes.com/sites/rrapier/2018/09/02/natural-gas-is-already-a-bridge-fuel/#4fcaa8af975f> (accessed 11 July 2022)

Coal's share of U.S. electricity generation between 2000 and 2017 fell from 51% to 30%. Renewables get a lot of credit for this decline, but the truth is that natural gas took most of coal's market share. [**END QUOTE]** Over the past 17 years, the natural gas share of power production doubled from 16% to 32%. Natural gas is now the largest source of power in the U.S. Renewables have grown as well. The total renewable share rose from 9.5% to 17%, but hydropower has always been responsible for the largest renewable contribution. In 2000 hydropower accounted for 275 billion kilowatt-hours (kWh) of electricity. By 2017, that was just a bit higher at 300 billion kWh. But modern renewables like wind and solar power soared from nearly nothing in 2000 to 300 billion kWh in 2017. Still, that is less than half the gains made by natural gas. [**HE CONTINUES LATER IN THE CONTEXT QUOTE:]**From 2000 to 2017, power generated by coal fell by 700 billion kWh. Meanwhile, at the same time natural gas generation increased by 700 billion kWh.

Link: Without reduction in demand, we can only add renewables to the energy infrastructure, not replace fossil fuel

Rufo Quintavalle 2017 (Director at Agro-Ecological Investment Management; former professor at New York University) 10 February 2017 “Renewable Energy Won’t Change the World” (accessed 11 July 2022) <https://ssir.org/articles/entry/renewable_energy_wont_change_the_world>

And worse than being a lie, the notion is itself contributing to locking in irreversible climate change. Almost everything we construct or consume today requires fossil fuels. Reading this article has a carbon footprint, and so does building a solar panel or a wind turbine. Sure, once installed, a renewable installation will have a far lower footprint than an equivalent fossil fuel installation, and over time it will repay its original debt. But there is no guarantee that it will replace a fossil fuel installation; without a reduction in demand, the two structures might carry on in tandem. This is precisely what is happening at the moment: The proportion of renewables in the global energy mix is constantly increasing, but so too is the total amount of energy being produced. We are not replacing fossil fuels with renewables; we are just adding them on top.

Impact: Turn the AFF harms. Taking away natural gas as an option makes the problem worse

It slows down the transition to lower-carbon forms of energy by taking a substantial carbon reduction option off the table. Getting to decarbonization requires natural gas, so AFF plan sets back that goal and worsens the harms.