

# Why Renewable Energy



Clean energy sources like wind and solar can help us reduce climate change, but can harm wildlife and wildlands if not carefully located.

More than ever, our wildlands are threatened by the nation's addiction to fossil energy, especially oil and coal. No single clean energy solution exists. But together, we can develop solutions to create a sustainable energy future and reduce climate change.

## What is renewable energy?

The United States heavily relies on polluting fossil fuels such as coal, oil and natural gas for energy. Whereas fossil fuels will eventually run out or become too expensive to retrieve, renewable energy resources— especially wind and solar energy— are constantly replenished.

The Wilderness Society works to find solutions to help reach a future in which the nation relies on a more sustainable energy system. This includes efforts to reduce our demand for energy, as well as increase power generation near where people live and work. Additionally, large-scale renewable energy projects capable of replacing fossil energy generation will play a role.

## Why do we need it?

Making America more economically and environmentally secure requires adopting cleaner forms of energy to power our daily lives. Renewable energy offers wildlands greater protections by providing alternatives to expanding oil and gas drilling and coal mining. Replacing fossil energy with renewable energy can reduce carbon emissions and limit the worst effects of climate change.

## Where does it come from?

The most common sources of renewable energy come from the wind, the sun and the earth's geothermal heat. Other forms of energy, like biomass and hydropower, can be considered renewable if they are done sustainably.

## How much will be built?

Study after study makes it clear: the United States needs to transform its energy system with less-polluting options. We need to make tremendous investments in the full range of clean energy alternatives, from renewable energy to building-efficiency programs. If we do not pursue cleaner technologies, we will just further cement the role of polluting fossil fuels. For example, the Western Grid Group estimates that Western states alone will spend \$200 billion in electricity infrastructure over the next 20 years. We have an opportunity to help shape that investment to meet clean energy goals.

## What is the role of public lands in renewable energy?

Along with state and private lands, our public lands harbor substantial wind, solar and geothermal resources. Development is not appropriate everywhere on public lands. Where it does occur on public lands, it needs to be done in a responsible manner.

- See more at: <http://wilderness.org/article/why-renewable-energy#sthash.euJ4KtT4.dpuf>