

On the Grid: Earth Day 4/24/23



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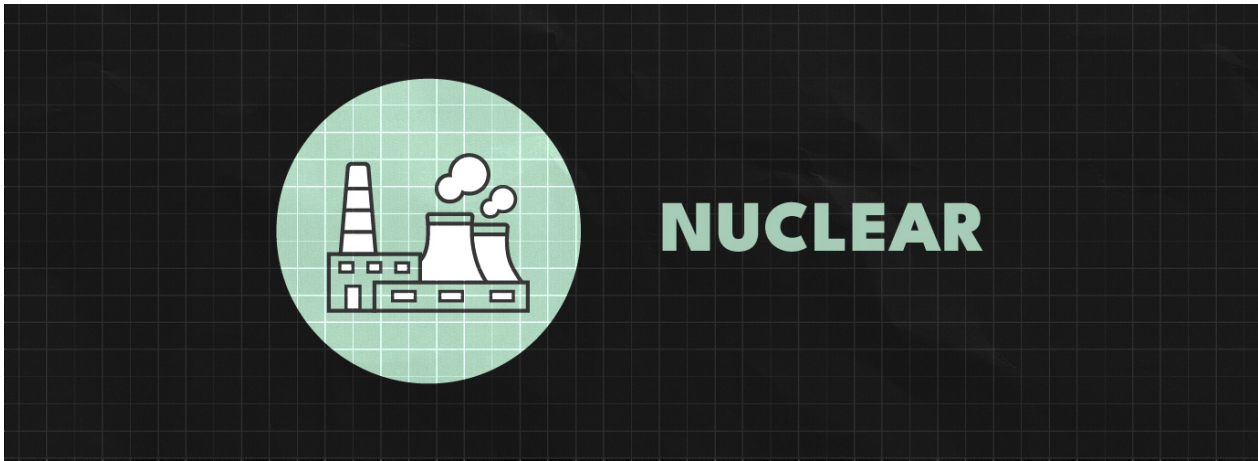
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Earth Day has been celebrated for 53 years now. But over half a century after its inaugural event, the same movement that once championed bold action to create change is now standing in the way of progress.

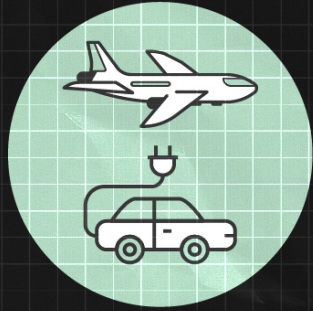
As [Harry Stevens](#) notes in *the Washington Post* last week, environmentalist resistance to major clean energy projects—everything from nuclear plants to hydroelectric dams—is holding America behind. By blocking clean energy projects that will cut carbon emissions, create good-paying jobs, and ensure the US stays economically competitive, environmentalists are putting the affordable, reliable, secure, and clean future they championed 53 years ago at risk. In this week's *On the Grid*, we'll outline some pragmatic solutions that will drive the tangible change we need.



As Europe scrambles to transition to cleaner, more reliable sources of energy and cut its reliance on neighboring petrocrats, Germany, in a baffling step backward last week, pulled the plug on its remaining three nuclear reactors. Germany's move is in stark contrast to the more pragmatic trend emerging across Europe as more nations turn to nuclear to cut carbon emissions and bolster energy security:

- Finland's new Olkiluoto 3 reactor, Europe's largest and most powerful reactor to date, kicked off electricity generation.
- Poland is moving forward with intentions to build and deploy 20 American small modular reactors after the US signaled \$4 billion in financing.
- France and the UK signed nuclear-specific agreements to work together on nuclear innovation and safety.
- Sweden is proposing new legislation that would allow the nation to build more nuclear power plants.

Modeling from Carbon-Free Europe shows nuclear energy will play a leading role in Europe's clean energy future, generating 17%–28% of the EU's and UK's electricity in 2050 and helping nations meet their climate goals. And while Germany intends to replace its nuclear generation with renewables, the country is not building them fast enough, instead turning to coal and gas, or in an ironic move, importing nuclear-generated energy from other countries. As the potential Arsenal of Clean Energy, the US could partner with nations like Germany to help them secure the reliable, affordable, and clean energy they need to build a more durable and resilient energy future.

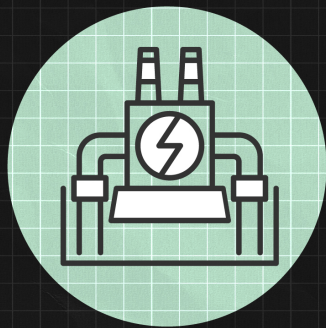


CLEAN TRANSPORT

Earlier this month, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) introduced a set of ambitious new emissions standards that, if implemented, would ensure that the majority of new vehicles hitting the road in 2032 are electric. This move ratified the shift to electric vehicles (EVs) that is already happening by manufacturers and drivers in the US, and it is cutting harmful carbon pollution in the process. But the conversation has become entwined in debates on government overreach, manufacturer readiness, and grid demand, all of which take the backseat when faced with the market reality.

EV sales are already exceeding expectations, representing over 7% of all new car sales this year, a *staggering 65% jump from last year*. Tesla became one of America's best-selling vehicles last year and continues to drop prices, pushing other automakers to do the same. By 2030, with a flood of new models at different price points entering the market, we are projected to see 40 million new EVs hit the road, along with 8-9 million new gas-powered cars, giving Americans the freedom to choose.

The transition is not about the government restricting choice or forcing the market one way or the other. It's about giving American industries a clear endpoint so they can build the competitive advantage to match competitors in the global marketplace.



GEOHERMAL ENERGY

This month, the US and Japan signed a memorandum of commitment, agreeing to collaborate on geothermal energy development. Pairing Japan's long-standing expertise in geothermal power

with America's innovation ecosystem, the two will work together to expand geothermal research and development, exchange key information, and scale up geothermal projects in both countries.

Through this deal, the US is not only deepening its diplomatic relationship with Japan, already a key partner for semiconductors, it is sharpening America's competitive edge in geothermal energy.

Third Way's newest [policy memo](#), based on a Boston Consulting Group [analysis](#), outlines how the US can capitalize on and maintain that existing advantage in geothermal power while working to capture a significant share of a \$1.5 trillion global market and create 100,000 good-paying jobs in the process.

To meet climate goals and ensure the energy system is secure, reliable, affordable, and clean, the US needs to deploy every clean tool in its arsenal. As a firm baseload source of clean energy that can complement intermittent sources like wind and solar, geothermal energy has a vital role to play.



- [Jesse Jenkins](#) in *Mother Jones* makes the urgent case for electrification and how we can build the clean energy infrastructure we need to meet our generation demands and reach our climate goals.
- [Gabriela Aoun Angueira](#) in *Grist* uses a transmission line's 18-year wait time as a case study for expediting the complicated permitting process.
- [Jason Bordoff](#), on the *Columbia Energy Exchange* podcast series, sits down with United States Secretary of Energy Jennifer Granholm to discuss the past two years of landmark clean energy policy and how the Department of Energy is moving forward.

ON SOCIAL

Senior Resident Fellow [Dr. Ellen Hughes-Cromwick](#) dives deep into how market forces, global competitiveness, and innovation are driving the transition to electric vehicles



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