

On the Grid: It's Getting Hot in Here 7/22/22



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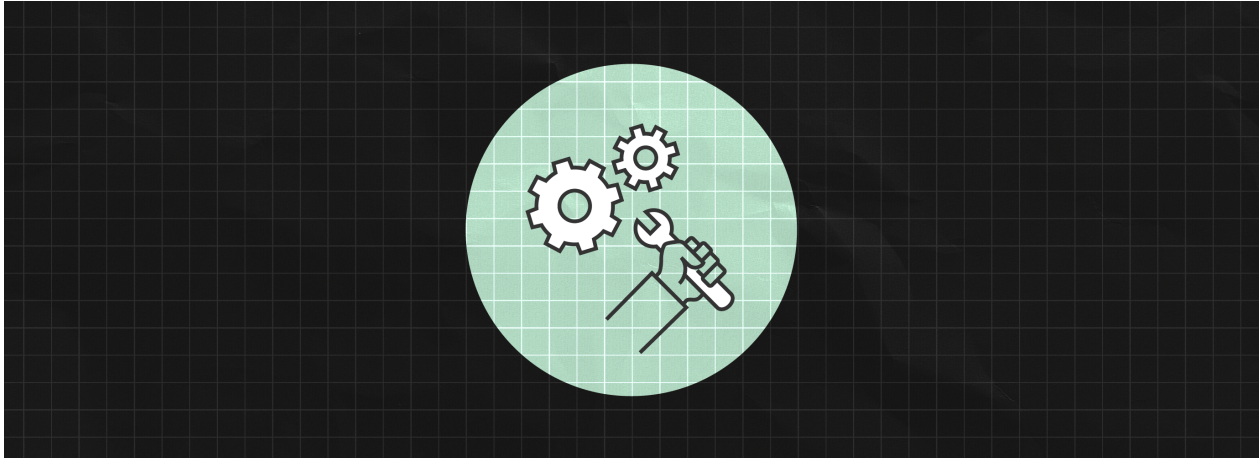
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In the middle of a scorching heat wave that is racking Europeans and Americans alike, chances of getting clean energy into a reconciliation package are also melting. It looked increasingly possible to get Senator Manchin's support on a deal that boosts clean energy technologies across the board, lowers household energy bills by hundreds of dollars, increases US economic competitiveness and energy security, and keeps emissions targets in reach. That plan hit major turbulence last week. It all comes down to (quickly) convincing one Democratic senator of what economists and experts have been shouting: adding energy and tax provisions to reconciliation will fight inflation and invest in American communities!

While we work to keep a reconciliation deal alive, we've also got some major clean energy wins that deserve celebration. For one, the UK government has given Sizewell C, a two-reactor nuclear power plant that will generate enough power for 6 million homes, the official go-ahead. At the same time,

the US postal service announced their intentions to electrify at *least* 40% of their new trucks, a major indicator for the future of the American automotive industry. This week, as we continue to battle the heat, we're putting some key climate and clean energy news on everyone's radar.

1. California Dreamin'



Heavy industry manufactures some of our most essential goods, like cement and steel, but in doing so, also generates one of our largest carbon footprints...nearly one-fifth of all global greenhouse gas emissions! This begs the question, how do we cut carbon across some of our largest industrial emitters without damaging American businesses?

To tackle this challenge, President Biden signed an Executive Order in December, creating the first-ever Buy Clean Task Force that will leverage the massive purchasing power of the federal government by guiding cleaner procurement. It's a big challenge, but we aren't flying blind. California signed the first-ever Buy Clean procurement policy in 2017, giving us the unique opportunity to learn from the challenges and successes of the state's program.

In a new memo, Third Way's John Milko and Ruth Cox, a top sustainable purchasing official in the Obama Administration, outline key lessons we can draw from California's experience and apply to a Buy Clean policy at the national scale.

Here are just a few of the key lessons:

- Stakeholder engagement is *essential*, especially from a diverse set of industry, labor, and environmental organizations that can help identify and address any potential roadblocks to the implementation of federal Buy Clean policies.
- We are going to need some startup cash. Financial incentives to help generate transparent emissions reports and drive down the initial costs of low carbon construction materials are key to getting a federal Buy Clean program off the ground

- The American industrial sector is dynamic, which means our Buy Clean program has to be as well! Staff at *every* level of the procurement process must be well-trained to ensure the uniform implementation of a national set of standards.

2. Madam Speaker’s Magic Minibus



After weeks of markups, the House Appropriations Committee has finally moved a package of six appropriations bills—a *minibus*—onto the House floor for a vote. The minibus is filled with provisions that sustain funding for crucial clean energy, climate, and environmental activities. Third Way’s Climate and Energy Team has long advocated for major increases in many of these programs and we’re elated to see the House moving in the right direction. Here’s some funding we’re particularly excited for:

- The Office of Clean Energy Demonstrations is seeing an **800% increase** in funding from FY22. This funding is critical for keeping this office productive and on task in future years as it rolls out its large-scale clean energy demonstration programs like hydrogen and carbon capture hubs, energy storage, and advanced nuclear demonstration projects.
- Several programs such as the Bioenergy Technologies, Hydrogen & Fuel Cell Technologies, and Vehicle Technologies Offices all saw a **20% bump** in funding, which will go towards decarbonizing our automotive industry!
- Carbon dioxide removal (CDR) RD&D would **grow by 70%** in the House bill, with specific language from the committee directing DOE to support a diversity of CDR solutions.
- This Congress continues to prioritize nuclear energy as the House approves funding for the Advanced Reactor Demonstration Program and gives activities bolstering our domestic nuclear fuel supply a **120% boost!**

For a deeper (and more fun) dive on the House’s funding package, check out this tweet [thread](#) from the Climate Team’s Senior Policy Advisor and in-house appropriations wiz, Dr. Nick Montoni!

What's next? The Senate is expected to start the ball rolling on its own version of federal funding legislation, moving their bills through the Appropriations subcommittees and the full committee before a final vote on the Senate floor hopefully this Fall, not unlike the House's process. Afterwards, the two chambers will need to come together to iron out differences and pass compromise legislation, which will need some support from Republicans. While some in the GOP talk about their love for federal energy innovation, let's see if they step up to fund it. Our guess... stopgap measures will be needed to fund the government until a deal gets made, possibly in early 2023.

3. Historic Global Heat Waves



You don't have to be a meteorologist to notice a dangerously common new weather trend—all you have to do is step outside. Scorching heat waves are increasing in frequency, duration, *and* intensity as human-caused climate change continues to push temperatures to record highs.

Let's review—how are our actions triggering extreme heat? The greenhouse gasses we release into the atmosphere by burning fossil fuels are exceptionally talented at absorbing heat, holding onto it, and then re-emitting it back down onto the planet. As we continue to burn fossil fuels with no off-setting practices in place, we're feeling the consequences more and more.

This week, areas across Europe and the United States saw unprecedented temperatures, toppling triple digits and leading to over a 1,000 heat-related deaths across Spain and Portugal and widespread drought. The urgency to drastically cut our carbon emissions has never been clearer. Policymakers are recognizing the need for a comprehensive clean energy transition and have been making massive strides to build out reliable, affordable, carbon-free energy and shore up our fragile grid system. But, we've still got a lot of work ahead of us. If only the US had some major clean energy legislation ready for enactment that could show global leadership...

4. What We're Reading and Listening To



- Isabelle Chan, Policy Advisor for Third Way’s Climate and Energy Program, leverages energy systems modeling and geospatial analyses to lay out how land-use constraints across Europe are impacting a comprehensive transition to net-zero emissions.
- The Editors at *Bloomberg* discuss the two sides of President Biden’s ever-evolving energy strategy—address the short-term energy demand while also laying the foundation for a clean energy transition in the long-term.
- Mary Annaisé Heglar, and temporary co-host Ko Bragg, of Crooked Media’s *Hot Take* podcast series, sit down with Amal Ahmed, Disaster Reporter at Southerly to unpack aspects of climate change and how the notion of “personal responsibility” for addressing climate change is depicted in our society.