

On the Grid: Vive La France 4/29/22



Mary Sagatelova
Communications and Content Advisor
[@MarySagatelova](https://twitter.com/MarySagatelova)



Jared DeWese
Deputy Director of Communications, Climate and Energy Program
[@jareddewese](https://twitter.com/jareddewese)

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On Sunday, April 24, incumbent French President Emmanuel Macron defeated Marine Le Pen. Le Pen ran on a far-right platform grounded in blatant xenophobia and Islamophobia and an alarmingly anti-climate agenda. Le Pen tried to balance her anti-wind and solar stance with support for the country's existing nuclear fleet. The reality was, however, that her virulently anti-European Union position would have derailed the efforts of almost a dozen Member States to build new nuclear power to replace Russian gas and coal, become more energy independent, and decarbonize.

The first French President to win re-election in 20 years, Macron still faces some challenges ahead, especially threading the needle between the left and right on climate issues. [Read](#) Josh Freed, Senior Vice President of the Climate and Energy Program and co-founder of [Carbon-Free Europe](#), unpack

the consequences of France's election and the impact on the global climate and clean energy policy trajectory.

With an eye towards the international landscape this week, we're highlighting significant events abroad, as well as major happenings at home.

1. Big Oil's Big Concerns



At the start of April, oil executives testified before the House Committee on Energy & Commerce, unilaterally denying their role in driving up gas prices across the country.

Darren Woods, CEO of ExxonMobil, even went on the record, stating, *“No single company sets the price of oil or gasoline. The market establishes the price based on available supply and the demand for that supply.”* Now, oil companies have changed their tune.

This week, Clifford Krauss, in *the New York Times*, unpacked the unwillingness of energy companies to ramp up production, despite widespread global demand. Still scarred by the shock of a sudden demand drop in the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic, oil companies are now hesitant to drill new wells, especially amid geopolitical uncertainty.

A March survey of 141 oil company executives shattered the illusion that companies have carefully crafted. The survey found that 60% of respondents, and their investors, were reluctant to expand our oil supply because it would likely bring down prices and, therefore, profits. Given Europe's need for more American gas and oil, US fossil fuel companies' reluctance to increase production could make it tougher on our allies as they try to coordinate a unified response to Vladimir Putin's aggression in Ukraine.

Read about the vital role that American oil and gas production will have in weaning Europe off Russian energy.

2. The Kremlin Pushes Back



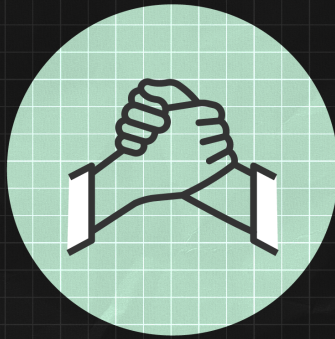
This week, Russian-state-owned energy company Gazprom announced that it would be suspending all fuel exports to Poland and Bulgaria. Both countries have staunchly refused to participate in the Kremlin's efforts at circumventing international banking sanctions by paying in Rubles and are now feeling the effect of Putin's temper tantrum.

While Bulgaria and Poland import significant amounts of Russian gas, Bulgaria, more so, decades of tension with Russia have prepared both nations to weather the storm. With Poland's 26-year Gazprom contract already set to expire at the end of this year, the country has long diversified and bolstered its' energy supplies. Bulgaria, also ready to end its Gazprom contract this year, is in a slightly more precarious situation but is relying on energy stores and alternative routes.

Vladimir Putin's attempts at holding Europe hostage underscore the importance of a clean energy transition. Modeling from our Carbon Free Europe initiative shows that both Bulgaria and Poland have the capacity to significantly reduce their reliance on gas overall by 2050 by transitioning to a diverse suite of technologies like solar, onshore and offshore wind, and nuclear energy. However, Russia's attempts at blackmail will throw a wrench in the nations' intentions to move from coal to less carbon-intensive gas as an intermediary between clean energy technology.

The United States has the opportunity to support both countries and the whole of Europe as they move to rapidly scale up their clean energy transition through the export of our ideals, standards, and technology.

3. Manchin's Case for Bipartisanship



Democratic Senator Joe Manchin is attempting to revive a climate and energy bill, reaching across the aisle to build momentum for some form of Congressional action. The bipartisan effort, spearheaded alongside Senator Lisa Murkowski, is emulating Biden’s ongoing “whole-of-government” approach to overcoming the global impact of Russia’s invasion. The bill would likely include overhauls to the federal oil and gas leasing program as a means of bolstering the production of liquified natural gas (LNG), a critical resource to help Europe break its’ reliance on Russian energy.

Wrangling 10 Republican votes, along with the support of the entirety of the Democratic party, could prove to be a challenge for Manchin and Murkowski. But, the effort is nonetheless encouraging, particularly given both Manchin’s and Murkowski’s support of broader clean energy policies like nuclear energy and carbon capture.

4. Appropriate Appropriations



When it comes to driving clean energy innovation, the federal government is the best person to have at the wheel. Federal investments have accelerated cutting-edge carbon-free technologies and laid the foundation for an economy-wide clean energy transition.

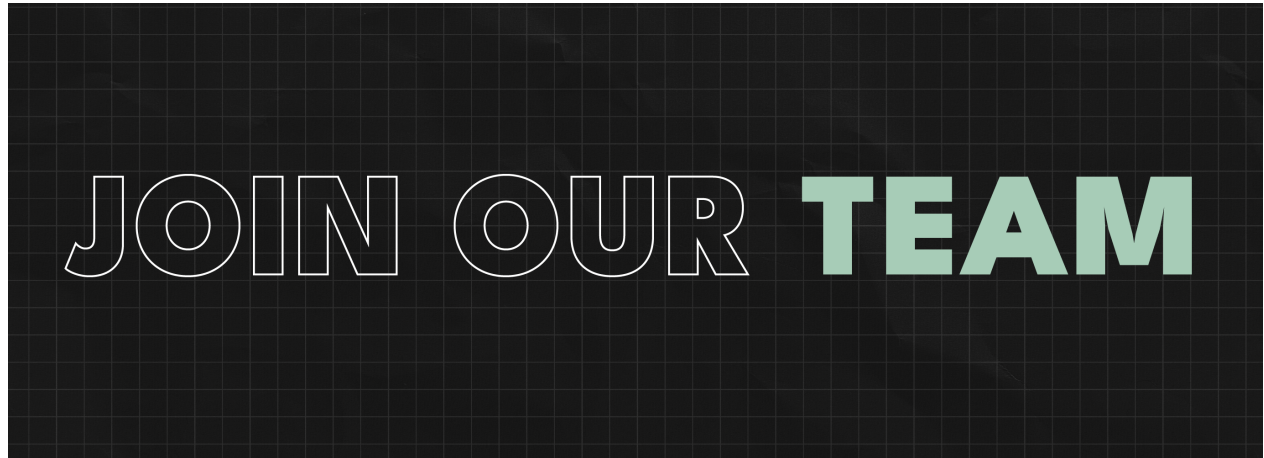
As Congress considers several appropriations measures for fiscal year 2023, the Third Way Climate and Energy Program has outlined several funding recommendations that will mobilize the entirety

of the federal government towards reaching our net-zero emissions goals by 2050.

In our new memo, our experts recommend funding across 12 specific programs and offices within the Department of Energy that will substantially scale up the technology needed to cut carbon emissions, support economic opportunities in every corner of the country, and reinforce America's global leadership and competitiveness.

Read: [Spending Smart: High-Priority Appropriations for Energy Innovation at DOE](#)

5. We're Hiring



The clean energy policy conversation is expanding...and so are we! The Climate and Energy Program is looking for people with talent and a passion for climate solutions to fill two new roles on our team. If you've got anyone in your mental Rolodex who you think might be a fit, please send them our way. And if you wanted to circulate these job postings more broadly with your networks, we wouldn't mind that either!

Executive Coordinator: This person will manage scheduling, meeting set-up, and meeting and calendar logistics for the Senior Vice-President, as well as provide background research in preparation for meetings and events, plan logistics of online and in-person events, prepare expense reports, and file consultant invoices and reimbursements. *(1 year of relevant work experience preferred)*

Policy Advisor for Transportation: This person will focus predominantly on policies to decarbonize the aviation sector by conducting original-source research and analysis, and authoring high-impact written reports, memos, and op-eds to better understand and explain the importance of policies, federal funding changes, and technologies that are necessary to eliminate emissions from aviation and provide associated benefits for the US economy, jobs, security, public health, and climate. *(1 year of experience in transportation, clean fuels policy, or a relevant field)*

Deputy Director for Innovation and Clean Industry: This person will help set policy, advocacy, and product strategy and supervise multiple team members working on issues surrounding energy

innovation, carbon management, and industrial decarbonization while overseeing in-depth research and quantitative analysis to better understand and explain our policy goals in specific issue areas that relate to American clean energy innovation, deployment, and competitiveness. (5+ years of experience in clean energy policy)

6. What We're Reading and Listening To



- Darrell Proctor, in *POWER*, reports on the announcement from Duke Energy and Purdue University regarding their intention to explore the feasibility of using a small modular reactor (SMR) as the University's energy source.
- Shannon Osaka in *Grist* applauds President Macron's victory in France while also offering fair criticisms of his history on climate policy. Moving into his second term, Macron must make good on the ambitious climate and clean energy promises he ran on.
- Dylan Matthews and Dara Lind, on their Vox podcast, *The Weeds*, tackled the difficult conversation around US energy independence with *The Atlantic's* Robinson Meyer and how a globalized trade system and international market forces, not domestic oil and gas drilling, set prices.