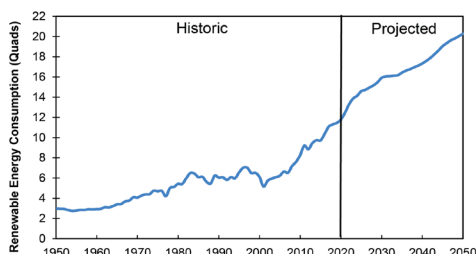


U.S. Renewable Energy

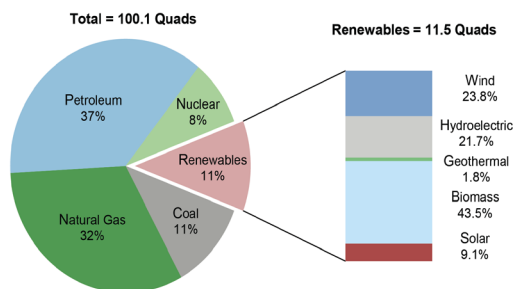
Patterns of Use

While energy is essential to modern society, most primary sources are unsustainable. The current fuel mix is associated with a multitude of environmental impacts, including global climate change, acid rain, freshwater consumption, hazardous air pollution, and radioactive waste. Renewable energy has the potential to meet demand with a much smaller environmental footprint and can help to alleviate other pressing problems, such as energy security, by contributing to a distributed and diversified energy infrastructure. About 80% of the nation's energy comes from fossil fuels, 8.4% from nuclear, and 11.4% from renewable sources. Wind and solar are the fastest growing renewable sources, but contribute just 3.8% of total energy used in the United States.¹

U.S. Renewable Energy Consumption: Historic and Projected^{1,2}



U.S. Total and Renewable Energy Consumption by Source, 2019¹

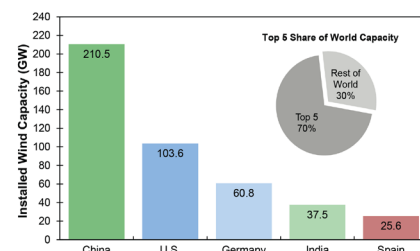


Major Renewable Sources

Wind

- U.S. onshore wind resources have the potential to generate almost 11,000 GW of electricity, 106 times more than the current installed capacity of 103.6 GW.^{3,4} U.S. offshore wind resources are approximately 4,200 GW. To date, only 30 MW have been deployed, but a pipeline of more than 26 GW is in various stages of development.^{4,5}
- Over the past decade, the federal production tax credit (PTC) has significantly influenced wind development, but cycles of legislative enactment and expiration lead to year-to-year changes in investment of up to 92%.⁶ In 2019, the PTC was extended with a new expiration date of December 31, 2020.⁷ Over 9 GW of wind capacity was installed in the U.S. in 2019, a 20% increase from 2018.⁸
- Based on the average U.S. electricity fuel mix, a 2.32 MW wind turbine (U.S. average in 2017) can displace 4,600 metric tons of CO₂ emissions per year.⁹ By 2050, 404 GW of wind capacity would meet an estimated 35% of U.S. electricity demand and result in 12.3 gigatonnes of avoided CO₂ emissions, a 14% reduction when compared to 2013.¹⁰
- Wind turbines generate no emissions and use no water when producing electricity, but concerns include bat and bird mortality, land use, noise, and aesthetics.¹¹

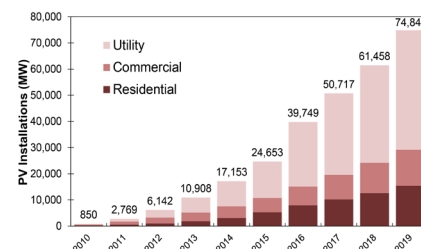
Installed Wind Capacity, Top 5 Countries, 2019³



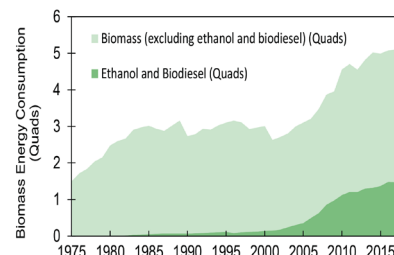
Solar

- Assuming intermediate efficiency, solar photovoltaic (PV) modules covering 0.6% of U.S. land area could meet national electricity demand.¹³
- PV module prices have declined to \$0.58-\$0.75/Watt in residential systems.¹⁴ U.S. market share of PV cell and module manufacturing has dropped to just 1% of worldwide production.¹⁵
- Solar PV installations reached a high of 14,762 MWdc in 2016.¹⁶ In 2019, over 13 GWdc of solar photovoltaic capacity was added in the U.S., raising total installed capacity to over 81 GW.¹² Solar accounted for 40% of new generating capacity in 2019.¹²
- The U.S. Department of Energy's SunShot Initiative aims to reduce the price of solar energy 50% by 2030, which is projected to lead to 33% of U.S. electricity demand met by solar and a 18% decrease in electricity sector greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.¹³
- While solar PV modules produce no emissions during operation, toxic substances (e.g., cadmium and selenium) are used in some technologies.¹³

U.S. Photovoltaic Installations, 2010-2019¹²



U.S. Biomass Consumption, 1975-2019¹



Biomass

- Wood—mostly as pulp, paper, and paperboard industry waste products—accounts for 46% of total biomass energy consumption. Waste—municipal solid waste, landfill gas, sludge, tires, and agricultural by-products—accounts for an additional 9%.¹
- Biomass has low net CO₂ emissions compared to fossil fuels. At combustion, it releases CO₂

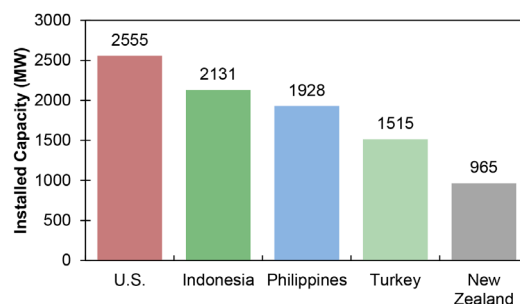
previously removed from the atmosphere. Additional emissions are associated with processing and 124 acres of land are required to generate one GWh of electricity per year.¹⁸

- U.S. ethanol production is projected to reach 46 million gallons per day in 2050.²

Geothermal

- Hydrothermal resources, i.e., steam and hot water, are available primarily in the western U.S., Alaska, and Hawaii, yet geothermal heat pumps can be used almost anywhere to extract heat from shallow ground, which stays at relatively constant temperatures year-round.²⁰
- Each year, electricity from hydrothermal sources offsets the emission of 4.1 million tons of CO₂, 80 thousand tons of nitrogen oxides, and 110 thousand tons of particulate matter from coal-powered plants.²¹ Some geothermal facilities produce solid waste such as salts and minerals that must be disposed of in approved sites, but some by-products can be recovered and recycled.²⁰
- Electricity generated from geothermal power plants is projected to increase from 16.4 billion kWh in 2019 to 52.2 billion kWh in 2050 and has the potential to exceed 500 GW, which is half of the current U.S. capacity.^{2,22}

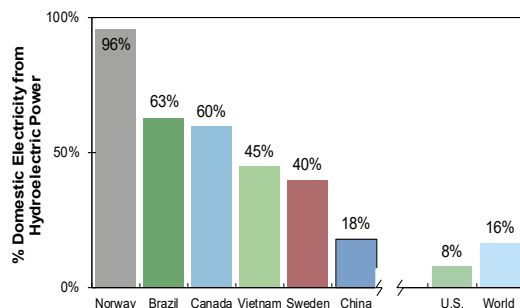
Geothermal Installed Capacity, Top 5 Countries, 2019¹⁹



Hydroelectric

- In the U.S., net electricity generation from conventional hydropower peaked in 1997 at 356 TWh/yr. Currently, the U.S. gets about 274 TWh/yr of electricity from hydropower.¹
- While electricity generated from hydropower is virtually emission free, significant levels of methane and CO₂ may be emitted through the decomposition of vegetation in the reservoir.²⁴ Other environmental concerns include fish injury and mortality, habitat degradation, and water quality impairment. “Fish-friendly” turbines and smaller dams help mitigate some of these problems.²⁵

Hydropower Electricity Generation, 2017²³



Advancing Renewable Energy

Encourage Supportive Public Policy

- Renewable Portfolio Standards (RPS) that mandate certain levels of renewable generation and Clean Energy Standards (CES) that mandate certain levels of carbon-free generation are proving successful.²⁶ Thirty-seven states, the District of Columbia, and four U.S. territories had renewable portfolio standards or goals in place as of August 2020.²⁷ State standards are projected to support an additional 73 GW of renewable electricity projects by 2030.²⁸
- Renewable energy growth is also driven by important federal incentives such as the Investment Tax Credit, which offsets upfront costs by 10-26%, as well as state incentives such as tax credits, grants, and rebates.²⁹
- Eliminating subsidies for fossil and nuclear energy would encourage renewable energy. Congress allocated over \$12.3 billion in tax relief to the oil and gas industries for fiscal years 2016-2020.³⁰ Studies estimate that the Price-Anderson Act, which limits the liability of U.S. nuclear power plants in the case of an accident, amounts to a subsidy of \$366 million to \$3.5 billion annually.³¹
- Net metering enables customers to sell excess electricity to the grid, eliminates the need for on-site storage, and provides an incentive for installing renewable energy devices. Forty states, the District of Columbia, and four U.S. territories have some form of net metering program.³²

Engage the Industrial, Residential, and Commercial Sectors

- Renewable Energy Certificates (RECs) are sold by renewable energy producers in addition to the electricity they produce; for a few cents per kilowatt hour, customers can purchase RECs to “offset” their electricity usage and help renewable energy become more cost competitive.³³ Around 850 utilities in the U.S. offer consumers the option to purchase renewable energy, or “green power.”³⁴
- Many companies purchase renewable energy as part of their environmental programs. Google, Microsoft, Intel, Walmart, and Equinix were the top five users of renewable energy as of August 2020.³⁵

kWh = kilowatt hour. One kWh is the amount of energy required to light a 100 watt light bulb for 10 hours.

Btu = British Thermal Unit. One Btu is the amount of energy required to raise the temperature of a pound of water by 1° Fahrenheit.

Quad = quadrillion (10¹⁵) Btu. One Quad is equivalent to the annual energy consumption of ten million U.S. households.

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