Renewable and non renewable energy resources

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Non-renewable energy resources are available in limited supplies, usually because they take a long time to replenish. The advantage of these non-renewable resources is that power plants that use them are able to produce more power on demand. The non-renewable energy resources are:

For example, the sun rises each day, but its ability to generate power is limited when its cloudy. Another disadvantage is that power plant operators can’t crank up renewable energy production when people are consuming more power, such as on a hot day when many people are running air conditioners at the same time.

States like California are trying to solve this problem by using energy storage, like large batteries, to collectelectricity from renewable sources when demand is low in order to use it later when demand goes up.

When coal, natural gas and oil are burned to produce energy, they emit heat-trapping gases such as carbon dioxide. This process of trapping heat is what drives climate change, and the failure to address this problem is what"s catalyzing the current climate crisis.

Fossil fuels are hydrocarbon-containing materials like coal or gas that are found in the Earth’s crust and formed in the geological past from the remains of living organisms. These energy sources account for the majority of the world’s greenhouse gas emissions.

If emissions continue unrestrained, the atmosphere could warm by as much as 2.7 degrees Fahrenheit above preindustrial levels by the year 2040, according to the latest report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, a group of international scientists empowered by the United Nations to advise world leaders.

Scientists say this increase in the temperature would threaten life on the planet in a myriad of ways, including severe water shortages; more air pollution; rising sea levels, habitat loss; heat waves; melting ice sheets in West Antarctica and Greenland; and destruction of the world’s coral reefs.

Over the last 150 years, humans are responsible for the vast majority of the increase of these gases in the atmosphere, and the burning of fossil fuels through activities like driving a car is the largest source of these emissions.

There is a vocal group of environmentalists and researchers —Stanford’s Mark Jacobson, who developed a state-by-state 100% renewable plan for one — who argue that the power grid should be supported only by renewable resources.

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Nuclear energy is considered clean energy, as it doesn’t create any air pollution or emit carbon dioxide, but generates energy through nuclear fission, the process of atoms splitting apart.

Those who are in favor of more nuclear energy hold that that even with investment in wind, solar and other renewable resources, nuclear power is necessary, because without it we can’t reduce emissions quickly enough to stave off the worst impacts of climate change. Without contributions from nuclear energy “the cost of achieving deep decarbonization targets increases significantly,” wrote MIT researchers in a 2018paperexamining the issue.

Detractors of this approach say that both the mining and refining of uranium and the building of nuclear power plants is energy-intensive. Other downsides to nuclear energy are the finite amount of uranium deposits on the planet and the production of harmful waste from nuclear reactors.

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