

Build Back Fossil Free

Keep Fossil Fuels in the Ground

Burning coal, oil, or natural gas is one of the most egregious contributors to global warming, producing billions of tons of CO₂ annually, polluting our air and water with toxic substances, including mercury. Despite this, the U.S. government has a long history of giving away our public land to fossil-fuel companies, so much that today, for example, 40% of the coal mined in the U.S. legally belongs to us taxpayers.

350 Central Mass stands with millions of Americans who say this is a tragic threat to the health of people, wildlife, and the ecosystem as a whole. And because fossil fuel-fired electricity generation has become so expensive relative to renewables, such as solar and wind, subsidizing fossil-fuel extraction serves as an unfair tax on all of us. Meanwhile, because coal, oil, and natural-gas infrastructure is most often built in or near disadvantaged, Black, Brown, and Indigenous communities, these people bear incalculable costs to their health and well-being, though they cause virtually none of the problem.

Under President Obama, in 2016 a major overhaul of the federal coal program signaled a vital step toward keeping fossil fuels in the ground. This action included a moratorium on new coal leases on public land, a win-win for both the climate and all of us tax payers. Unfortunately, the Trump Administration reversed course, moving us backward toward increased mining and use of fossil fuels. But in January 2021, in the first days of his presidency, Joe Biden signed an executive order to begin halting oil and gas leasing on federal lands and waters.

Our public lands aren't the only critical battleground in the fight to phase out fossil fuels. Offshore drilling for oil and natural gas is a growing threat to the climate. The industry's greed continues to grow, fed by ever-more-damaging technologies capable of removing every last drop of oil and cubic foot of gas, and the ultra-wealthy owners continue to profit at the expense of the rest of us.