

ENERGY POLICY

PREAMBLE

Access to energy for all is essential. Working towards this goal is especially important as it interlinks with other Sustainable Development Goals. The Climate Emergency demands a rapid reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, including from the energy sector, while also expanding access to electricity and clean cooking solutions to the billions without it. Focusing on universal access to energy, increased energy efficiency and the increased use of renewable energy through new economic and job opportunities is crucial to creating more sustainable and inclusive communities and resilience to environmental issues including climate change.

The energy system must address the temperature targets of the 2015 Paris Agreement on Climate Change, including the Climate Emergency targets, taking into account fairness within and between nations. Conservation, efficiency, research and development, and renewable energy sources are essential elements of the energy policy.

VISION

The Greens' vision is for national, state and local energy strategies based on the principles of ecological sustainability and social equity. This vision includes fair, affordable and equal access to energy and the goods and services it provides. Conservation, efficiency, research, development and renewable energy sources are essential elements of a Greens energy policy.

OBJECTIVE

The objective of our energy policy is to decarbonise the energy system based on efficient use of electricity and heat from renewable sources providing security of supply and replacing fossil fuels. We seek to decrease overall energy use to the minimum possible through improved efficiencies, changes in materials and reductions in overall consumption, and transform the energy system to bring about significant health benefits, improved social well-being, environmental safeguards, and positive economic effects on employment and across all sectors of the economy.

ACTION PLAN:

Exclusive and efficient use of renewables represents the only viable route to achieving a sustainable energy sector. Incentives for sustainable transformation of the energy sector need to be accompanied by disincentives for the consumption of fossil fuel. All buildings and appliances need to be energy-efficient and energy conserving. All households need affordable energy to meet essential needs. Environmental costs need to be factored into the price of energy in such a way as to encourage and enable a rapid, equitable and affordable shift towards sustainability. Government has an essential role to play in creating a net zero emission energy sector and industries. Therefore, the Greens will –

Energy Efficiency

- Implement energy and carbon performance standards in building construction and use
- Carry out refurbishment programmes to increase the energy efficiency of existing buildings.
- Provide government-funded or subsidised home insulation programs to reduce energy costs and encourage energy efficient buildings and homes.

- Develop and implement sector-specific energy efficiency policies, targets and standards
- Encourage and incentivise the transformation of industrial processes to energy efficient, low carbon alternatives, including through energy recovery
- Encourage people to lessen energy demand, such as by driving less and using more fuel efficient cars, living closer to their work, and eating lower on the food chain, and ensure that urban planning facilitates and incentivises such decisions
- Use smart technologies, metres, appliances, grids and energy storage to reduce energy demand and financial strain on people with low incomes
- Undertake public awareness campaigns promoting the myriad benefits of energy efficiency
- Encourage the use of transport methods with greatest energy efficiency, such as rail, marine, and public transport, as well as active transport, such as cycling and walking

Electricity Generation

- Increase clean electricity generation substantially, based primarily on renewable, very low carbon sources, such as offshore wind, onshore wind, marine, solar photo-voltaic, biofuels and hydro power
- Phase out electricity generation from nuclear, coal, gas, and incineration of waste
- Facilitate low-cost government loans to households and for small-scale solar power generation
- Provide incentives to community energy cooperatives
- Allow homes with rooftop solar panels to sell excess energy to the grid
- Retrofit government and public buildings, including schools and hospitals, with rooftop solar generation facilities
- Permit small-scale hydropower projects that do not require dam construction
- Call for federal commitment to the mass-production of cheap, non-toxic solar photovoltaic technology to enable widespread deployment and economies of scale
- Decentralise and secure electricity generation through new technologies such as small wind, combined heat and power retrofitting, water and air pumped storage, hydrogen cell storage, and less dependence on outside sources of energy
- Discourage use of environmentally destructive alternative fuels produced from unsustainable or toxic sources

Energy

- Work towards net zero carbon economy by replacing fossil fuels with renewable energy in all sectors
- Implement a strong effective price on carbon to encourage the shift from fossil fuels to renewables at the speed and scale required
- Invest in energy storage solutions to meet peak demand and stabilise the grid
- Electrify the transportation system, including rail, coach, marine, and vehicular transport
- Promote use of zero emission vehicles
- Implement binding annual emission limits for all sectors with significant greenhouse emissions, informed by a well-funded, independent, comprehensive, integrated and research-based emissions reduction plan with appropriate targets and reporting.

Research & Development

- Fund and support research into clean renewable energy technologies that do not create pollution in the course of generating electricity, such as wind, solar, marine, geothermal, and small-scale hydro power
- Make available substantial research, development and deployment (R&DD) funding to promote cost-effective implementation of clean energy solutions, especially for renewable power generation, energy storage, and building energy performance improvements
- Promote R&DD of sustainable fuels that demonstrably reduce greenhouse gas emissions and do not threaten biodiversity or food security
- Promote the R&DD of carbon neutral technologies for manufacturing and industry, particularly replacing the direct use of fossil fuels in industrial processes.
- Promote greater collaboration between industry and research
- Support a range of renewable energy generation, storage and conservation technologies.

Finance

- Encourage partnership between energy users and producers in order to assist energy management at all levels
- Develop financial instruments to assist energy efficiency measures
- Authorise tax-exempt bonds to finance public ownership of utilities and to allow publicly owned utilities to finance conservation, energy efficiency, and renewable energy projects

International cooperation

- Negotiate a multilateral emission abatement treaty that shares the burden equitably, recognising the proportionately greater historical and current contribution of wealthy industrialised nations to climate change
- Develop and implement complementary policy measures in collaboration with other governments where possible
- Promote transfer of leading energy technologies around the world to ensure higher efficiency standards

Miscellaneous

- Discourage and avoid imports of products with high embodied energy/emissions
- Remove public subsidies for nuclear power and put a formal moratorium on the construction of new nuclear power plants, ensure early retirement of existing nuclear power reactors and phase out technologies that use or produce nuclear waste.
- Regulate the energy sector with a focus on environmental and social objectives, health and wellbeing, and transparency and accountability
- Review and improve technical and vocational curricula to incorporate and promote best-practice energy efficiency practices, including in construction, transport, manufacturing and energy

References:

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