

What is causing the U.S. decline in CO2 emissions?



Michael W. Wise | Wednesday, April 4, 2018

According to the International Energy Agency's (IEA) first [Global Energy and CO₂ Status Report](#), renewables saw the highest growth rate of any energy source worldwide in 2017. At the same time, the world experienced an increase in carbon emissions as coal fired generation remains the dominant source of electric generation.

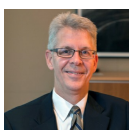
While carbon emissions increased worldwide, the U.S. actually saw a decrease in carbon emissions last year! The IEA attributes this decline in U.S. carbon dioxide emissions to the increased deployment of renewables. [According to the IEA](#), "Over 70% of global energy demand growth was met by oil, natural gas and coal, while renewables accounted for almost all of the rest."

However, the IEA seems to overlook the impact natural gas has on this decline in CO₂ emissions. The IEA reported that natural gas consumption for power grew 3 percent, the most of all fossil fuels.

The correlation between the decrease in CO₂ emissions and the shift from coal to a cleaner fossil fuel (natural gas) is undeniable. According to [Forbes](#), natural gas – not renewables – has been the largest driving factor in U.S. declining CO₂ emissions.

Natural gas should be more of a focus for the U.S. and other countries as a way to reduce CO₂ emissions going forward. It provides a cleaner, abundant, and inexpensive alternative to dirtier fossil fuels and credit should be given to its role in the decline we are seeing in CO₂ emissions.

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