



October 25, 2022

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We're celebrating Halloween with a *spooky* issue, which is not *diff-occult* to do, because climate change is *scary*. And there are few people more *terrified* than my friend, Elyssa.

I've been on a campaign to help her feel less climate *doom*, guessing that if I succeed, maybe I can help you, too. Chefs get a test kitchen; I get a Test Elyssa. So I gave her a call to see what's driving her *batty* today.

"Climate change is set in motion and there's nothing we can do about it," she said when she answered, like a creepy butler greeting an unexpected guest on a stormy night.

"So you think everything is just going to keep getting worse?" I asked.

"Of course," she said, as thunder gathered in the distance. "You say there are all these solutions, but I don't see them. I don't hear about them. It's all so *horrific*."

Her words struck like lightning, because the lack of stories about climate progress is a big problem. "If it bleeds, it leads," so they say. [News outlets write more negative stories](#) because they capture our attention, leaving us to believe the world is worse than it actually is. Plus, [we're hardwired to fixate on bad news](#), which isn't great when all the news seems bad.

It's a self-sustaining *vortex of doom*, made worse because Big Oil throws fuel on the fire with bogus narratives that [seed hopelessness and doomism to protect continued extraction](#).

"They do what now?" said Elyssa, as the frenzied bats flying over her head settled down to listen. I told her they've spent billions on a decades-long effort to convince us that climate change isn't real, that it's unsolvable, and that economies would suffer if governments took action.

In other words, they created a *boogeyman* to thwart climate progress by turning us into *doom zombies* who think taking action is pointless. "We can't let them win," she said, and I sensed a shift in mood as her thunder roared in a new, more productive direction.

Beware any story that makes you feel hopeless, because it might be from the *Boogeyman*. Let's get into it, *Witches!*

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🇺🇸 **The climate action that matters most today is voting by November 8.** 🇺🇸

Policymakers who **don't** prioritize our health by supporting climate adaptation, resilience, and electrification could **dramatically slow climate action** just as we've reached an important turning point for the planet.

Climate action is working, and it's picking up speed

Witch is why we need to keep the momentum going.

It's not easy to stay up to date on climate progress. But if a wind turbine spins and no one's there to see it, does it still produce energy? You better *boo-lieve* it!

So, join us tomorrow at 12pm ET for the launch event of the *Lancet* Countdown on Climate and Health



Co-authored by our Climate MD leader, Dr. Renee Salas and featuring our former director, Gina McCarthy, you'll learn why experts from 51 institutions, including the World Health Organization, are raising the alarm that **we can no longer prioritize the profits of fossil fuels over our health** and well-being in advance of COP 27.

As we head into these important international climate negotiations, let's recap some highlights. The U.S. has:



Set our most ambitious climate goals ever: In a race to stay under a 1.5°C rise, the U.S. pledged 100% clean *elec-trick-city* by 2035, and net-zero emissions by 2050, promising coordination between all government agencies and the entire private sector. Check out the long-term strategy and what every agency has done so far.



Passed three climate laws allocating \$514B to decarbonize everything. Previously, the 2009 Recovery Act included \$90B in clean energy programs and was touted as “the largest single investment in clean energy in history.”

Made plans to rebuild our country to run on clean energy, which will transform our economy and infrastructure on a scale we haven't seen since the New Deal. Projects are already underway.



To decarbonize quickly, renewables must be cheaper than fossil fuels so it makes good business sense to transition. Good news:



Electricity from renewables is cheaper than natural gas, with solar now 33% cheaper and land-based wind 44% cheaper.

The U.S. is striving to make renewables even cheaper: DOE aims to slash the cost of geothermal energy by 90% and the cost of floating wind farms by at least 70% by 2035, and just committed to finding ways to lower the cost of all wind energy projects.

But can we implement renewables faster than a teenager can run from Freddy Kreuger?



In the last 10 years, solar has increased **15x** and wind increased **3x**, enough to power 15M homes and 35M homes, respectively; battery storage has grown 32x, and EV sales have grown 13x. Take that and shove it in your brains, *doom zombies!*

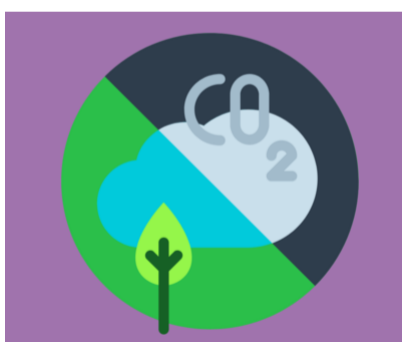
We will likely surpass our goal of deploying enough offshore wind to power 10M homes by 2030, with our 18 active offshore wind leases and 14 new plans approved.



The Department of Transportation began issuing **\$120B** in grants to increase safety, reduce emissions, and *skullpt* a more equitable transportation system, shaping our infrastructure for generations. Generations!

The White House aims to speed up the pace of building infrastructure by working with governors, mayors, and federal agencies to design and build efficiently.

Renewables and EVs are already reducing emissions.



That should lift your spirits! CO2 emissions will rise <1% this year, far below last year's 6% growth. The rise would be more than 3x this amount "were it not for the major deployments of renewable energy technologies and EVs around the world."

Do you know someone who is the opposite of a doom zombie?

Perhaps an emerging climate leader whose story deserves to be told?

Nominate them for the Grist 50, an annual list that recognizes the next generation of innovators forging our climate future—like our Health Equity Fellow Dr. Gaurab Basu, a 2021 Fixer, for *exhume-ple*.



Our box of tricks

What *dead* we do now?

Check our [Climate Resilience for Frontline Clinics toolkit for wildfire resources](#), including a tip sheet for patients to assess air quality, an action plan for patients, and how clinics can prepare for and recover from wildfires. This accompanies our extreme heat resources and our hurricane resources will be out soon. [Reuters](#) has a *wicked* overview of our work with community health centers and free clinics.

Tomorrow, Harvard is officially launching its new climate institute—the [Salata Institute for Climate and Sustainability](#) to advance and catalyze research programs across all of Harvard's Schools and enable comprehensive cross-University education in climate and the environment.

Thursday, explore how the education sector can drive climate action — with innovation, urgency, and leadership, presented with the Askwith Education Forum at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. [Learn more and register.](#)

P.S. Did you notice something different about this newsletter? We didn't *haunt* down a costume—we've got a new look, and we hope you find it *fang-tastic*.



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