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By Marcy Franck

Happy Earth Month!

To celebrate, I want to share my all-time favorite Earth Day quote from ... me. In [Forbes](#). Last week. 🥳 Climate optimism is going mainstream, Dear Optimists! So if you'll indulge me:

“The story of humanity rising to meet the challenge of climate change is full of things that seemed impossible until they became reality.” —Me

It's too long for a mantra and too dorky for a tattoo (unless it's *your* tattoo, in which case it looks amazing), but it's great for soothing those quiet moments of existential panic.

Remembering that it once seemed impossible for world leaders to agree to a [1.5°C](#) climate goal, or for the U.S. to enact three [climate laws](#), or for the EU to launch a [green industrial revolution](#), or for India to build [giant solar farms](#) in the Himalayas, can lend important perspective.

And the technology! Imagine learning in 1985 that the same [1.21 gigawatts](#) that sent Marty McFly back to the future could one day power over [750,000 homes](#) with wind energy. Then imagine knowing that the world would build [150 gigawatts](#) of wind power *in the ocean* by 2030, and that ships taller than the [Eiffel Tower](#) would build offshore turbines nearly as tall as the [Empire State Building](#), and that they'd produce [12,500% more revenue](#) for taxpayers per acre than offshore oil. What would you do then?

You'd take your [broken wings and learn to fly again](#), just like we all did when we felt despair in 1985. But I digress. Living in a present that was once an imaginary sci-fi future is awesome, but it's the other half of my favorite quote that's the most important, if I do say so myself:

“We need to move faster but we also need to celebrate how far we've come, and use each milestone as motivation to stay engaged.” —Me, again

We need to keep pushing for more. [Our clean energy transition is about to be on steroids](#), but we need a legion of Doc Browns to steer our time-traveling DeLorean into the future we all deserve. So let's celebrate some milestones and see where that takes us, shall we?

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1. A better future isn't only possible, it's already underway

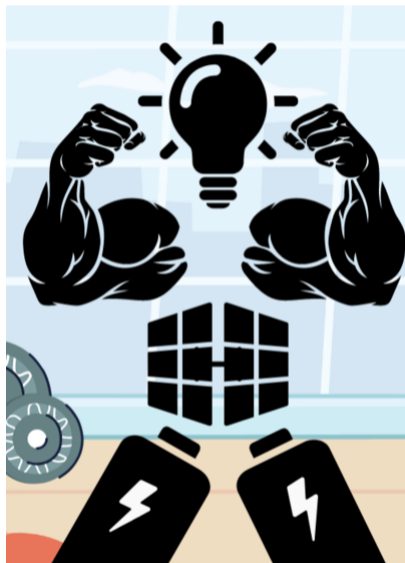
Even without a flux capacitor. Here's why:



- **The energy transition is taking hold**, with renewables' share of the global power generation mix forecast to rise from 29% in 2022 to 35% in 2025. By next year, renewables will supply a quarter of U.S. electricity, and by 2030, it's projected to supply 80-90%.
- **Emissions are bending in the right direction.** Last year global carbon emissions related to energy rose by under 1%, much less than originally feared thanks to the swift adoption of renewables, EVs, and efficiency efforts. What we're doing is working!

2. Countries keep strengthening their goals to reduce emissions

In a flex bigger than Biff's bicep mid-noogie, stronger goals are popping up all over the place.



- **European Union:** Last week, the EU announced reforms that will reduce emissions 62% below 2005 by 2030. The EU will phase out fossil-fuel powered cars by 2035, and the U.S. just proposed its strongest-ever auto standards requiring 60% of new passenger vehicles to be electric by 2032, preventing twice the country's current annual emissions.
- **Stateside,** EPA required power plants and factories in 23 states to cut pollution that harms our hearts and lungs, then proposed tightening mercury emissions that harm our brains, and will soon announce rules for power plants that will eliminate almost all carbon pollution by 2040.

And the Group of Seven richest countries set more ambitious targets for renewables, committed to ending fossil fuel subsidies by 2025 and achieving net zero by 2050, and set a plan for sourcing and recycling raw materials.

3. Climate action is not just about climate. It makes our lives better.

Great Scott! But how?



It lowers energy costs: The Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) will reduce America's energy bills by an average of \$1800/year, and EPA's new auto standards will save consumers \$12,000 over the life of a vehicle.



It cleans our air: Pollution from fossil fuels is responsible for 1 in 5 deaths worldwide—but when you take a power plant offline, the pollution it produces goes away and we see immediate health benefits even miles downwind.

It advances equity: Racist policies led to building highways and fossil fuel infrastructure near Black, Indigenous, and communities of color. Climate justice cleans the air, lowers energy bills, and grows local economies.



It increases energy security: Homegrown energy makes us less dependent on other countries and less vulnerable to geopolitical turmoil.



It creates jobs: If countries stick to their climate pledges, clean energy is expected to add 14 million jobs worldwide this decade.

4. Climate momentum is here to stay

And it's moving faster than a DeLorean at 88 mph.

No one can roll back our clean energy transition because “private companies have made major bets on the future and they’re not going to reverse them,” said John Kerry, our former Advisory Board member and current U.S. Climate Envoy.

The greedy little hands of capitalism are working in our favor, Optimists!

By the numbers:



- **Since the IRA passed 8 months ago**, the U.S. has seen \$150B in private investments for utility-scale clean power—more than in the last 5 years combined
- **These investments put us on track** to support 1 million jobs, clean our air, and power the equivalent of every American home by 2030—if we keep striving to create favorable policies for trade, permitting, and taxes.
- **Global wind and solar capacity will each surpass 1000 gigawatts in 2023.** Wind turbines, not unlike honey badgers, don’t care which way the political winds are blowing, and solar panels, once built, are difficult to stick in places where the sun don’t shine.

Climate, Health, and Equity: Toward a Sustainable Future

CLIMATE

HEALTH

EQUITY

Toward a sustainable future

May 8, 2023
Spangler Center, Harvard Business School
Symposium: 1:00–5:30 pm
Reception: 5:30–6:30 pm

Melissa Hoffer
Massachusetts Climate Chief

Janet McCabe
Deputy Administrator
Environmental Protection Agency

Heather McTeer Toney
Vice President, Community Engagement
Environmental Defense Fund

Register and learn more:
hsph.me/ClimateSummit

#HarvardClimateActionWeek

Are you hankering for an afternoon that will spark new ideas and seed new collaborations? We thought so! On May 8, join us to examine our most urgent challenges and explore the most promising solutions. Organized by the Harvard Chan School as part of Harvard Climate Action Week. Be there or be square. Register | Livestream

More from our team:

- **Allergies:** CNN talked with our Climate MD Program Lead Dr. Caleb Dresser about [why your allergies are getting worse and lasting longer](#).
- **Frontline clinics:** Our [toolkit](#) to increase resilience to climate impacts helps prepare providers to protect their patients' health. [Learn about the resources](#) we've developed with AmeriCares.
- **Kids and climate:** WebMD spoke with our Director Dr. Aaron Bernstein about what makes [children uniquely vulnerable](#) to climate change and how we can help.
- **Climate optimism:** I chatted with the *Raising Healthy Families Podcast* about strategies to help kids with climate anxiety among other things in [this humdinger](#) of an Earth Day pep talk.



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