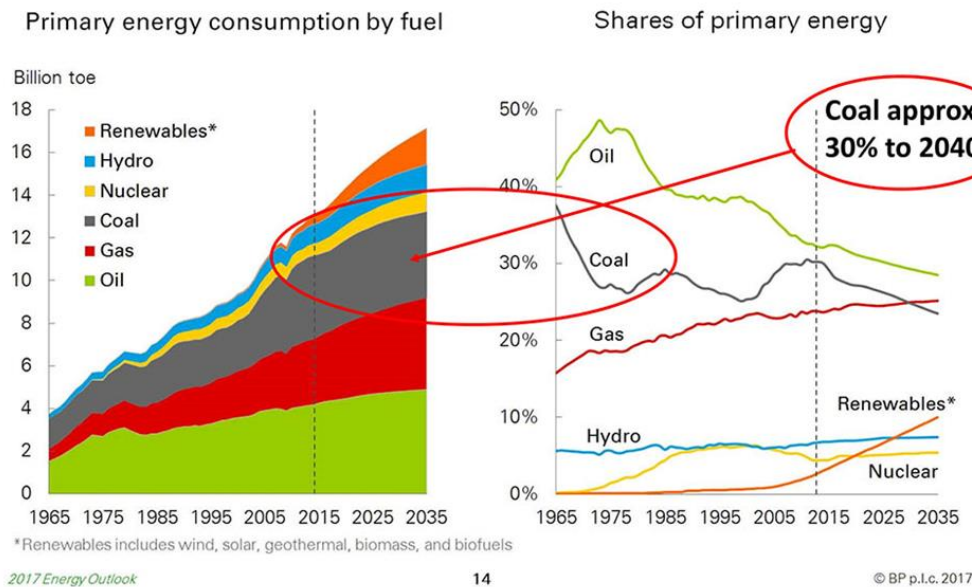


## Global coal use up by third as greenhouse gas emissions rise: IEA Energy Outlook

Greenhouse gas emissions from energy production rose strongly again last year, according to new data from the International Energy Agency (IEA.org), with a young fleet of coal-fired power plants in Asia accounting for a large proportion of the increase.



Energy demand grew at its fastest pace this decade, with a 2.3% increase globally driving rises in fossil fuel consumption. Coal use in power stations was up by nearly a third, and together gas and coal were responsible for nearly 70% of the growth in energy consumption, and while demand for solar and wind power also increased, it was by much less overall.

Gas consumption in the US leapt by 10%, or the equivalent of the UK's entire gas consumption in a year. Fracking has been a key driver, and oil production in the US also grew, while the dismantling of government incentives intended to reduce reliance on fossil fuels has continued.

**Asia is now responsible for the majority of coal-fired power generation globally**, and the average age of power plants there is now just 12 years, meaning they have decades to go before reaching their planned end of production in about 30 to 50 years.

**Heating and cooling accounted for a fifth of the increase in global energy demand – the cooling needed for many areas to cope with global warming is an increasing factor in the world's greenhouse gas emissions**, as temperatures in some regions rose to record levels as the result of climate change.

Fatih Birol, Executive Director of the International Energy Agency, said last year had been a golden year for gas, which met nearly half of the growth in global demand for energy, but urged governments to take action that would reduce greenhouse gas emissions. *"We have seen an extraordinary increase in global energy demand in 2018, growing at its fastest pace this decade,"* he said. *"Last year can also be considered another golden year for gas. But despite major growth in renewables, global emissions are still rising, demonstrating once again that more urgent action is needed on all fronts."*

He called for greater development of non-fossil fuel energy sources, action from governments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and investment in the capture and storage of carbon dioxide, as ways to reduce the impact of energy production on climate change. Energy efficiency has been increasingly ignored, the IEA found, despite the economic gains to be had from relatively simple measures to curb energy waste.

Nuclear reactors met 9% of the increase in global electricity demand last year, according to the IEA's analysis, as newly built plants in China came on-stream and facilities in Japan were reopened after the Fukushima disaster at the beginning of the decade.

➤ By Fiona Harvey, Environment correspondent, The Guardian, March 26, 2019