

# Coal *Fictions* — and *FACTS*

**Coal Fiction:** “Clean coal” can help solve climate change and pollution problems.

**FACT:** New coal technologies don't even exist yet and can't be used in the 100+ plants planned. And even if the technology works, it can only reduce the amount of carbon dioxide spewed into the air from coal-fired energy plants. That only delays -- it doesn't stop -- the worst effects of climate change. Solar, wind, and conservation, on the other hand, have close to zero emissions.

**Coal Fiction:** We'll need all this new coal-generated electricity to drive economic growth.

**FACT:** We do need energy to drive economic growth, but coal is not the answer. If we rely on coal, climate changes brought on by greenhouse gasses and other pollutants could easily overshadow any economic benefits coal could bring.

**FACT:** Solar energy production and installation will create more, better, and safer jobs per kilowatt hour in every state than coal could ever provide.

**Coal Fiction:** Building more coal-fired electricity plants is cheaper than developing wide-spread use of renewable energy.

**FACT:** The energy companies' mis-information campaign ignores the enormous energy, economic, and health costs of mining, transporting, processing, burning, and dealing with the poisonous residue of coal. Taxpayers heavily subsidize the coal industry in dozens of ways with tax credits, pollution clean up, health costs, and -- ultimately -- in the cost of our changing and increasingly violent climate.

**FACT:** Renewables' cost, especially solar, is dropping fast, and needs only a push to bring that cost down to the cost of coal. Focusing on coal as an energy future will divert the resources needed to accomplish that.

**Coal Fiction:** Coal could eventually be made “clean”.

**FACT:** Compared to solar and wind energy, coal can NEVER be clean. Even the cleanest coal emits sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxide, and mercury.

**FACT:** The entire coal-mining process is dangerous, dirty, and poisonous -- from the risks to coal miners, to destroying the landscape with open-pit mining, to groundwater pollution, to tens of millions of tons of waste from the mining process dumped -- poisoning our water and the Earth.

**FACT:** The public health epidemic of asthma in children and adults is directly linked to coal-fired electricity plants. And significant amounts of mercury -- a deadly nervous system-damaging element -- come from burning of coal for electricity. Even “clean” coal would emit significant amounts of particles and nitrogen and sulfur emissions, the chief culprits of smog and acid rain.

[www.coopamerica.org/go/climateaction](http://www.coopamerica.org/go/climateaction)



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**List of pollutants that even the cleanest coal emits, either in the air or into our groundwater:**

Arsenic • Beryllium • Cadmium • Chromium  
Hydrogen Chloride • Hydrogen Fluoride • Lead  
Manganese • Mercury • Sulfur Dioxide  
Nitrogen Oxides • Thorium • Uranium