

Précis - Current and Future Trends: Nonrenewable Energy Sources

Nonrenewable energy sources, such as oil, coal, gas, and other fossil fuels, currently make up more than 80% of the world's energy. The combustion of these fossil fuels contributes to nearly three-quarters of the U.S.'s greenhouse gas emissions, which are a major contributor to climate change. Outside of the land, air, and water damage that nonrenewable energy sources can cause, they're also in limited supply - because they are not naturally restorable, their continued use presents challenges in longevity and sustainability.

I ranked this trend as having great importance because of the implications that nonrenewable energy use has on the globe, within and outside of an environmental/geographical context. Regarding climate change, the harmful effects they induce are numerous and wide-ranging. These effects include, but are not limited to, hotter/broader varying temperatures, more severe natural events such as floods, forest fires, and droughts, pollution, warming and rising oceans, loss of biodiversity, and human displacement. Outside of these catastrophic extant and potential outcomes, the continued use of nonrenewable energy will deplete these limited resources, disrupting every industry, community, and process that relies on these forms of energy to function.

Fortunately, there are a great deal of alternatives and measures in place to power our future, namely in the form of renewable energy. Renewable energy is a replenishable energy source that produces lower carbon emissions than fossil fuels. Common renewable energy sources include solar, wind, geothermal, and hydroelectric, but other forms exist and some emergent forms show great promise. Renewable energy is less taxing on the planet, literally and figuratively: it not only allows for a lower carbon footprint, the dropping prices and increased job opportunities in the renewable energy sector are good for the global economy. Clean, renewable energy positively impacts people's health, their environments, their communities, and the planet at large.

RESOURCES

1. Energy and the Environment Explained: Where Greenhouse Gases Come From. U.S. Energy Information Administration. June 24, 2022. Accessed February 4, 2023. <https://www.eia.gov/energyexplained/energy-and-the-environment/where-greenhouse-gases-come-from.php>
2. Local Renewable Energy Benefits and Resources. United States Environmental Protection Agency. December 19, 2022. Accessed February 4, 2023. <https://www.epa.gov/statelocalenergy/local-renewable-energy-benefits-and-resources>
3. Renewable Energy - Powering a Safer Future. United Nations. Accessed February 4, 2023. <https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/raising-ambition/renewable-energy>