

There's been a lot of interesting environmental news recently, much of which seems to have gotten little notice. The topics range from U.S. wind power (growing) to U.S. coal power and Arctic sea ice (both shrinking), with a bit of Ted Cruz to spice things up.

Here's the round-up:

**Out with coal, in with wind.** The Energy Information Administration [reports](#) that new electrical generating capacity this year will be predominantly wind, solar, and natural gas, with wind as the largest component at ten gigawatts. Coal plants are being retired, with coal-based generating capacity declining thirteen gigawatts. Apart from climate benefits, these changes are very positive in terms of public health.

**Cleaning up China's air.** [RAND](#) estimates that cleaning up China's air would cost \$140-160 billion annually. That's a lot of money, but RAND also estimates the annual cost of air pollution in China as three times as big - over half a trillion dollars a year! Air pollution has been costing China about 6.5% of its GDP annually.

**Obama beats Bush on energy and environment.** According to [Pew](#), 52% of the public think that Obama is doing a good job on environmental issues, as opposed to 30% who thought that about Bush at the same point in his second term. Obama rates lower in terms of energy policy (39% approval), but still higher than Bush (26% approval). This probably doesn't mean a lot in electoral terms, since relatively few voters cast their votes based on environmental issues. But it does suggest that Obama are by no means out of touch with public preferences (or at least less so than GOP policies).

**Climate change? What climate change?** Ted Cruz remains confident that there's no global warming, which the [Washington Post](#) attributes to his cherry-picking data (using only satellite data and ignoring ground-level data and picking an especially hot year as a baseline).

**The shrinking ice cap.** The polar bears may be unconvinced by Senator Cruz's assurances that nothing is happening to the climate. "The winter ice covering the Arctic Ocean has reached its annual peak, but the extent of sea ice cover this winter is smaller than it has been at the end of any winter since 1978, when scientists began keeping consistent satellite records." So reports the [NY Times](#).

*And that's the way it was, on March 30, 2015.*