



### New Power Plants (by Fuel)

This revealing graph from [Wonkblog](#) has some important lessons. First, power plants last a long time. Most of the generation fleet is twenty to sixty years old.

Second, at this point, coal is basically a legacy fuel. It exists because it pays to keep old plants open. They are grandfathered and don't have to use state-of-the-art pollution control. New coal plants, however, have not been appealing because of the pollution control requirements.

The era of coal-fired power may be coming to an end in the United States, at least if present trends continue. As another [chart](#) shows, the current coal fleet is beginning to erode at the same time that construction of new coal plants has virtually ceased:



### Disappearing Coal Plants

If U.S. coal-fired electricity generation is on its last legs, efforts to keep it alive by softening regulations — a major effort in the GOP House — may only be postponing the inevitable. Of course, predictions are hazardous, but current trends do not seem favorable to King Coal.