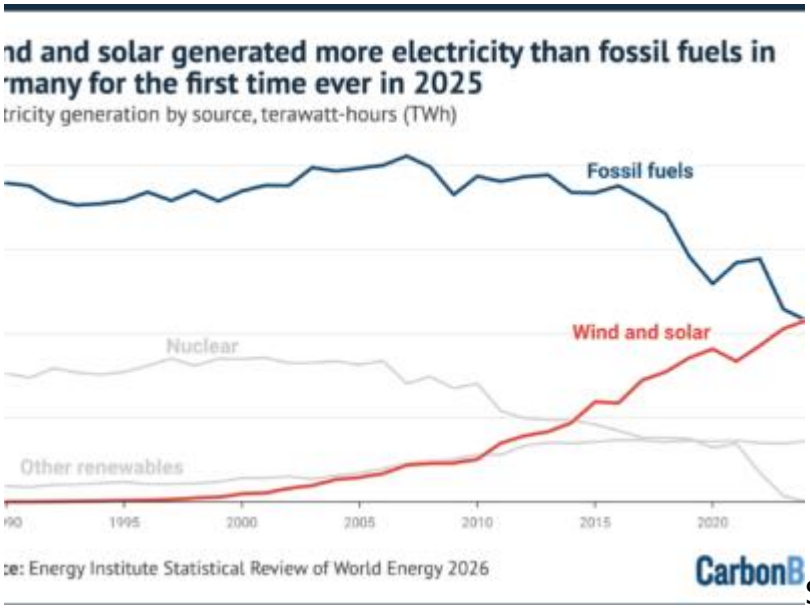
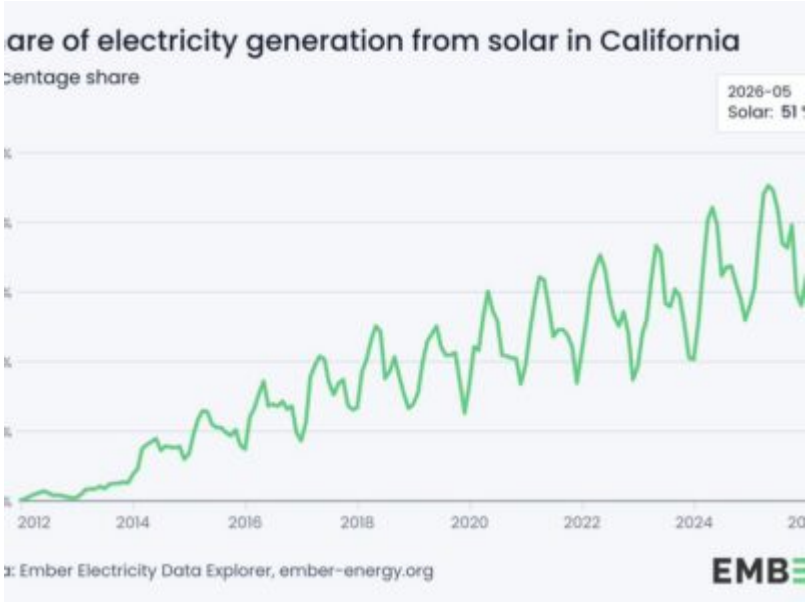


So much is awful nowadays, that we need to share good news at Legal Planet, and there actually is some.

- For the first time ever, German solar and wind electricity production outpaced that of fossil fuels.
- In 1987, forest cover in Costa Rica, one of the famously most biodiverse nations on the face of the Earth, had collapsed to just 21% of its original amount. But now, thanks in part to a gasoline tax that goes to pay for ecosystem services, that number has rebounded to 60%.
- California just became the first grid system anywhere on the planet to generate a majority of its electricity from solar power.



It should be obvious that Numbers 1 and 3 are linked: renewable energy now out-competes fossil fuels, and the development of battery technology means that the traditional problems intermittency are much lower than they were just a few years ago. A friend who knows the field told me a couple of decades ago that “batteries are the future – and they always will be.” No longer.

But even the Costa Rican example demonstrates something important: good policy ***can*** work if we let it.

There are, of course, the standard dark clouds. In Costa Rica, just because a forest has recovered its canopy does not mean it has recovered its biodiversity: species have gone extinct and they are not coming back. And many of the smaller species that make a forest work are still endangered and threatened. Moreover, much of the Costa Rican program was funded with a gasoline tax: but as gasoline usage goes down, it will need a new robust source of funding.

In California, electricity prices remain very high, second only to Hawai’i. A recent report by the state’s Little Hoover Commission identified these factors:

> rates have been driven upward by a mix of wildfire-related costs, problematic rate design resulting in expensive cost shifts, utility profits on capital investments, and declining consumption that spreads fixed costs across fewer kilowatt-hours. At the same time, smaller add-ons such as

> low-income subsidies and **green energy programs increase bills only slightly**.

All of these are going to be hard to change, either due to physical or political barriers. Even if green energy programs increase bills only slightly, the political problem remains. In the words of Ronald Reagan: “when you’re explaining, you’re losing.” Better not to *have* to explain.

And in Germany, even though the nation wants to achieve NetZero by 2045, it is anything but clear that it will make it, especially since it has effectively banned nuclear power, a decision that Chancellor Friedrich Merz has called “a strategic mistake.” Even worse, polls show the possibility of the neo-fascist AfD Party gaining power in the next election, which could reverse the phaseout of coal, as well as creating…uh….other problems.

But if it were easy, it would have been already. This is real progress. And it is progress made by the application of intelligence to actual problems. That is still possible, even with a Lysenkoist Regime in DC that slobbers to take us into the 12th century. It can be fought. And that fight can be won.