

An achievable climate goal

In his Dec. 13 Outlook essay, "Five myths: The Paris climate agreement," Paul Bledsoe claimed it is a myth that ~~existing technology can meet the Paris goals.~~ In fact, energy efficiency — reducing energy use in buildings, industry, transportation and electricity production — is not only cost-effective now but also absolutely doable with technologies we have today.

The nonprofit think tank ACEEE issued a September 2019 study that energy efficiency could halve U.S. energy usage by 2050. This was followed by a study this year by the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory based on data from 34 states. Saving energy costs about 4.4 cents per kilowatt-hour, significantly lower than the cost of new generation. The analysis shows that as states pursue greater levels of efficiency, having made strides on the easy-to-accomplish low-hanging fruit, the cost to pursue efficiency rises. Massachusetts and Hawaii have the highest efficiency costs, at just under 7 cents per kWh, while South Carolina's cost is about 2.7 cents per kWh. The costs of wind and solar are now below natural gas generation — including, in some cases, battery storage — with privately financed projects in Arizona, California and Nevada. And since 2016, in the United States and elsewhere, more renewable energy has come onto the electric grid than fossil fuel. Action now is achievable, significant, cost-effective and most necessary.

Scott Sklar, Washington

The writer is energy director for the George Washington University Environment & Energy Management Institute.

The Washington Post

FREDERICK J. RYAN JR., Publisher and Chief Executive Officer

News pages:

MARTIN BARON
Executive Editor
CAMERON BARR
Managing Editor
TRACY GRANT
Managing Editor
KAT DOWNS MULDER
Managing Editor
KRISAH THOMPSON
Managing Editor
SCOTT VANCE
Deputy Managing Editor
BARBARA VOBEJDA
Deputy Managing Editor

Editorial and opinion pages:

FRED HIATT
Editorial Page Editor
JACKSON DIEHL
Deputy Editorial Page Editor
RUTH MARCUS
Deputy Editorial Page Editor
JO-ANN ARMAO
Associate Editorial Page Editor

Vice Presidents:

JAMES W. COLEY JR. Production
L. WAYNE CONNELL Human Resources
KATE M. DAVEY Revenue Strategy
ELIZABETH H. DIAZ Audience Development & Insights
GREGG J. FERNANDES Customer Care & Logistics
STEPHEN P. GIBSON Finance & Operations
SCOT GILLESPIE Arc
KRISTINE CORATTI KELLY Communications & Events
JOHN B. KENNEDY General Counsel & Labor
MIKI TOLIVER KING Marketing
SHAILESH PRAKASH Digital Product Development & Engineering
JOY ROBINS Client Solutions

The Washington Post

1301 K St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20071 (202) 334-8000