

The world to burn as much coal as oil by 2017

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- OUR addiction to fossil fuels shows no sign of waning. An International Energy Agency report predicts that [global coal use will continue to grow over the next five years](#).

Demand for coal will increase everywhere except the US, where [cheap gas extracted by hydraulic fracturing or fracking will exceed it](#). By 2017, [coal use will equal that of oil](#), currently our biggest energy source.

This is [terrible news for the climate](#). Coal produces [more greenhouse gas per unit of energy than any other fossil fuel](#). Yet even developed countries like Germany, scaling back on nuclear power after [the accident at Fukushima Daiichi, Japan](#), in 2011, are building more coal-fired power stations. "This is going backwards," says [Stuart Haszeldine](#) at the University of Edinburgh, UK.

If more coal is to be used, then the only chance we have to limit warming to 2 °C is to capture the greenhouse gases it emits when burned. [Carbon capture and storage \(CCS\)](#) technology is available, but the [political will to implement it has so far been lacking](#), says Haszeldine.

The European Union has set aside €275 million for CCS, but said in December that [no projects had been awarded any money](#), mostly because their host countries had failed to stump up their required contribution.

Ultimately, CCS will have to be rolled out far beyond the EU. "Solving carbon emissions from coal means solving them in India and China, who will be burning two-thirds of global coal by 2017," Haszeldine says.