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Sent: Wed 05/06/2019 6:32:17 PM (UTC)
Subject: RE: Axios Generate: U.K.'s fading coal — Toyota's electric plans — Climate politics frenzy
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From: Ben Geman [REDACTED]@axios.com>
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To: Miner, Robert <[REDACTED]@bp.com>
Subject: Axios Generate: U.K.'s fading coal — Toyota's electric plans — Climate politics frenzy

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Generate

By Ben Geman · Jun 05, 2019

Good morning! Today's Smart Brevity count: 1,097/< 5 min. read.

Situational awareness: President Trump again refused to accept the scientific consensus on human-driven climate change in his interview with Piers Morgan. [Watch the clip](#)

Finally, at this moment in 1996, The Fugees were atop Billboard's album charts with "The Score," a classic which provides [today's intro tune...](#)

1 big thing: The U.K.'s 18 coal-free days

Data: IEA; Chart: Andrew Witherspoon/Axios

The United Kingdom broke its record for the number of days without using any coal-fired electricity — thanks largely to natural gas, *Axios'* *Amy Harder* reports.

Driving the news: The 18-day streak snapped [late yesterday](#), according to the U.K.'s electricity operator.

Why it matters: Coal has historically been the nation's dominant electricity source but natural gas burns 50% less carbon emissions than coal.

- **Due to several factors** — notably a carbon price policy implemented in 2013 — U.K.'s coal use has plummeted, natural gas has risen to make up most of the difference, and emissions have dropped.

The big picture: Natural gas is controversial in the world's energy and climate debate. It's still a fossil fuel, but the cleanest-burning kind, so when it's displacing coal, it reduces greenhouse gas emissions as the accompanying chart shows.

- **The U.K. experience** shows what an outsized role natural gas can fill in countries seeking to reduce or eliminate coal altogether.

The intrigue: Via [The Guardian](#): "Coal has been used for electricity generation since 1882, when a plant opened in Holborn, London. However in 2018 the fuel made up just 5% of Britain's electricity generation, a big decline from about 40% in 2012, according to [government] figures."

Yes, but: Longer term — as in many, many decades — remaining heavily dependent on natural gas is likely going to make it a lot harder (some experts suggest impossible) to cut GHG emissions to a level

scientists say will avert the worst impacts of a warmer world.

- **That's because**, while cleaner than coal, natural gas still emits GHGs. To the extent it remains in place for decades, that means less zero-emitting renewable energy.
- **Technology that captures** emissions could allow for aggressive gas usage in a world drastically reducing emissions, but it's expensive and not broadly employed.

What we're watching: The International Energy Agency is set to issue a study in July looking at fuel switching between coal and natural gas and the latter's role in a transition to cleaner energy.

Go deeper: [Tale of four countries: The world's evolving energy mixes](#)



2. Toyota's electric plans

Toyota Mirai. Photo: Anadolu Agency

Toyota plans to unveil a new type of "personal electric vehicle" this week and will outline a broad electrification strategy heavily reliant on partnerships with Chinese manufacturers, *Axios' Joann Muller scooped yesterday.*

Why it matters: Despite its longtime lead in hybrids like the Prius, Toyota is seen as lagging on the industry-wide shift to battery-electric vehicles, especially as China and Europe have moved to mandate more zero-emission vehicles.

What's new: On Friday in Japan, Toyota senior executives will share details of the company's EV pipeline and future business model, according to a source with knowledge of the plan.

- **New products** will include "personal EVs" and other battery-powered passenger cars.
- **The company** also plans to discuss other aspects of its electrification effort, including collaboration with unnamed Chinese partners on batteries and future battery-powered vehicles.
- **The strategy** is not being widely publicized in the U.S. because of sensitivity to strained U.S.-China trade relations.

Go deeper



3. Busy moment in energy and climate politics

Giphy

Diplomacy: Gov. Jay Inslee today unveiled the foreign policy side of his climate-focused platform, which is important because the U.S. is responsible for about 15% of global emissions so spurring cuts by other nations is crucial. Details...

- **Boost the U.S. pledge** to the Paris agreement with a new target of cutting emissions by 50% by 2030.
- **Launch efforts** with other countries to address climate-fueled migration and resettle more refugees in the U.S.
- **Apply an enforceable "climate standard"** in trade deals, "increase trade barriers for fossil fuel products," and seek to boost trade in low-carbon tech.
- **Expand U.S. development** aid for clean energy deployment.

Trend spotting: Wide-ranging plans unveiled yesterday by frontrunner Joe Biden and Sen. Elizabeth Warren (which we covered [here](#) and [here](#)) both call for standing up new federal agencies.

- **Where it stands:** Warren's \$2 trillion "green manufacturing" plan would form a National Institutes of Clean Energy. Biden wants to create a cross-agency Advanced Research Projects Agency for climate (ARPA-C).
- **There are other examples.** Inslee's platform, for instance, revives the idea of creating a federal Clean Energy Deployment Authority (or "green bank").
- **Why it matters:** The plans signal acknowledgment that the federal government's existing structures are imperfectly aligned to spur deep emissions cuts.
- **But, but, but:** There are tradeoffs. Standing up new bureaucracies takes time and often congressional authorization.

Controversy: "Biden's Democratic presidential campaign amended his climate policy plan hours after it was released Tuesday because a handful of passages did not credit some of the sources in the proposal," [AP reports](#).

One more thing! NYT's Brad Plumer [tweeted helpful comparisons](#) of the price tag of candidates' plans.



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4. Catch up fast: gas, Big Oil, nuclear power

Natural gas: [Via The Houston Chronicle](#), "The flaring of natural gas in West Texas' booming Permian Basin has exceeded previous estimates and is now contributing to far more "widespread waste" and pollution than ever before, according to a new report."

Big Oil: "The global crackdown on plastic trash threatens to take a big chunk out of demand growth just as oil companies like Saudi Aramco sink billions into plastic and chemicals assets," [Bloomberg reports](#).

- **Shell, BP, Total and ExxonMobil** "are all ramping up investments in the sector," they note.

Nuclear: The DOE approved the transfer of nuclear information from U.S. companies to Saudi Arabia 7 times under Trump, including twice after the assassination of Washington Post journalist Jamal Khashoggi by the Saudi government, per [a statement](#) from Sen. Tim Kaine (D-Va.).

- **Read more** by Axios' Zachary Basu [here](#).



5. Two renewable things: Beer and VC

Finance: LevelTen, a startup that helps commercial and industrial customers procure renewable power, has raised \$20.5 million in Series B funding.

- **Prelude Ventures** led the funding round but it also includes the VC arms of heavyweight Exelon and oil giants Equinor and Total Ventures.
- **Go deeper:** TechCrunch has more [here](#).

Beer: "Anheuser-Busch announced Tuesday the signing of a 15-year virtual power-purchase agreement with Recurrent Energy for a 222-megawatt (AC) project in West Texas," [Greentech Media reports](#).

- **Why it matters:** Per Greentech, it's the latest of multiple deals that will help the beer giant meet its 2025 target to buy 100% renewable energy several years early.



6. Highest CO2 level in human history

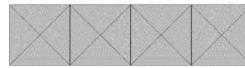
The monthly peak amount of carbon dioxide in the Earth's atmosphere in 2019 jumped by a near-record amount to reach 414.8 parts per million (ppm) in May, *Axios' Andrew Freedman reports*.

Why it matters: It's the highest level in human history and likely the highest level in the past 3 million years.

- **CO2 is the most important** long-lived greenhouse gas, with a single molecule lasting in the air for up to 1,000 years.
- **The buildup of CO2** due to human activities, such as burning fossil fuels, is driving temperatures up and creating harmful effects worldwide.

Threat level: The sharp rise of 3.5 ppm in just 1 year shows that we're headed in the opposite direction from what scientists have shown is needed to avoid the worst consequences of global warming.

Go deeper



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