

## **Green Notes: Weekly tips for reducing your carbon footprint from First United Methodist's Green Team:**

### **Stop new fossil-fuel infrastructure projects now!**

Don't be misled by the words of Big Oil executives and advertising campaigns. The world's largest fossil fuel companies may proclaim their deep commitment to renewable energy, but 96 percent of their business investments are going to new oil and gas projects.

No matter how much we invest in clean energy, we cannot achieve the necessary reductions in global greenhouse gas emissions if we continue to burn coal, oil and natural gas for energy. A whopping 75 percent of planet-warming pollution is attributable to fossil fuels. That's why the industry is working so feverishly – and furtively, in some respects – to lock in its business model for decades to come.

A [new report](#) released last week by Oil Change International listed 24 fossil-fuel infrastructure projects currently under construction or in the approval process nationwide. Together, they would release annual greenhouse gases equivalent to 20 percent of 2019 U.S. emissions. That's more emissions than all 294 coal-fired power plants now operating in the continental United States. But here's what you should know: The vast majority of these projects do not yet have full federal approval. They could be stopped, if citizens put enough pressure on the Biden administration. But we must speak up, and take action to make our voices heard.

The [most recent report](#) from the International Panel on Climate Change didn't mince words about the peril of continuing to burn oil, natural gas and coal – and the need for immediate,

widespread action. “If you’re trying to plan a U.S. energy future, you don’t want to encourage a lot of new fossil-fuel infrastructure and exploration,” Princeton geosciences professor Michael Oppenheimer told [The Conversation](#) earlier this month. “The climate can’t bear it.”

Can the U.S. slow the pace of change to give the fossil fuel industry more time? No, Oppenheimer said. “We’re already headed for at least 1.5 degrees Celsius of warming, where the Paris Agreement’s danger zone starts, and we anticipate significantly more damage at 2 degrees. Every increment of warming brings more harm.

“Climate models show that extreme events, like the heat waves and flooding the U.S. saw this summer, are already more common around 1.5 degrees, and they only worsen after that. It’s going to be harder to protect ourselves beyond 1.5 degrees, and much harder beyond 2 degrees. The costs are already getting prohibitive for many communities.

“I’ve been working on these issues since 1981, and it’s been the same story over and over again from many industry officials and politicians – what’s the hurry; let’s wait another year. There was always some argument for slowing action down or putting it off indefinitely. That’s why we’re currently facing one climate disaster after another. The costs get higher the longer the world delays.”

**This month, First UMC’s Green Team will devote our Green Notes to an examination of Big Oil’s tactics – the [“discourses of delay”](#) – followed by a look at actions we can take to counter these deadly misinformation campaigns.**