

# COAL IS UNSUSTAINABLE



Coal is emblematic of an unsustainable energy future, primarily due to its finite resources, environmental degradation, air and water pollution, economic viability challenges, regulatory pressures, and changing social licenses. The U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) estimates that global coal reserves could last approximately 130 years at current consumption rates, yet to combat climate change, studies indicate that nearly 80% of fossil fuels, including coal, must remain unburned to keep global warming below 1.5°C.

Furthermore, coal-fired power plants contribute significantly to air quality issues, emitting millions of tons of sulfur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>) and nitrogen oxides (NO<sub>x</sub>) annually, while coal mining results in serious water contamination, with over 2 billion gallons of wastewater produced daily.

On the economic front, investment in coal has sharply declined, with global capacity additions reaching the lowest point since 2002, reflecting a reduced appetite for coal amid increasing costs and environmental liabilities. Regulatory bodies like the World Bank have also ceased financing coal projects, echoing the trend toward a net-zero emissions commitment by numerous countries by 2050.

Additionally, there is a growing public consensus for a shift away from coal, as evidenced by a 2021 survey indicating that 65% of Americans support transitioning to renewable energy sources, which may lead to greater social and political resistance against coal projects in the future. Given these multifaceted challenges, the trajectory for coal appears increasingly untenable, calling for accelerated investment in sustainable energy alternatives.



POWERING OUR PLANET