

# We Can Have It All: A Prosperous, Clean and Healthy Energy Future



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Spring has sprung, at last!

Yet even now, many dread the record-setting temperatures to come, given the unseasonable warmth of this past winter and the sweltering heat of last summer. Extremes in temperature – be it a blistering day in July or sub-zero temperatures in January – pose challenges to healthy human living. We must increasingly rely on heating and air conditioning to provide comfortable and productive indoor environments, sometimes far removed from the temperatures outdoors.

The availability of energy is what makes modern lifestyle possible. Environmental literacy – this year's Earth Day campaign -- is about understanding that human activities impact our natural environment, and vice versa. But what does air conditioning have to do with storms like the Derecho? Let's review the facts.

**FACT:** Electricity is traditionally created by burning fossil-fuels like coal, and from nuclear reactors. This creates air pollution (carbon dioxide) and nuclear waste, which reduces air quality, poisons the environment, and decreases public health. Air pollution prevents the Earth from naturally regulating its temperature, which can lead to extreme weather events such as intense heat/cold, prolonged droughts, and massive hurricanes and floods.



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**FACT:** Energy is still unaffordable for many. Energy takes up a larger portion of low-income households' budgets than it does for the average household. Due to energy unaffordability, extreme weather puts poorer households at greater risk because they are

more likely to be disconnected from electricity service.

**FACT:** Wind and solar energy can be used to create electricity without air pollution or radioactive waste, which can allow us to live more sustainably with our natural environment. And it is currently cheaper than ever to create energy from the sun and wind. Many people have installed rooftop solar panels – and even if you don't own your roof, innovations like community solar can enable you to generate your own clean, renewable energy.

**FACT:** This is a crucial time for energy consumers in DC and Maryland. Both Public Service Commissions (PSCs - the agencies that regulate utilities) have started investigating grid modernization: upgrades to the electric system to improve sustainability and resilience. This is an opportunity to transform energy from a necessary burden in people's lives into an engine of equity, prosperity, and empowerment.

Marylanders for Energy Democracy and Affordability (MEDA) is a network of consumer advocates, 'green' jobs, clean energy, and environmental action groups, working to advance the transition to a just, affordable, and clean energy economy. MEDA works to empower consumers; protect low-income residents; strengthen communities; achieve environmental and economic justice; and live more sustainably with the Earth. We are actively engaged with the Maryland PSC, and if successful in our policy recommendations, all Marylanders will benefit.

**FACT:** Affordable and sustainable energy is within reach! Contact your local representatives to voice your support for clean energy, energy democracy and energy affordability. Visit [www.mdenergyforall.org](http://www.mdenergyforall.org) to find out more about MEDA's policy objectives and to stay up-to-date with news, events, and opportunities for action from our network.

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