

Americans move to more solar and wind power in 2021

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The national economy is reenergizing, quite literally.

In 2021, Americans used 5% more energy than in 2020, according to the

most recent energy flow charts released by Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory (LLNL).

Each year, LLNL releases flow charts that illustrate the nation's consumption and use of energy. In 2021, Americans used 97.3 quads (quadrillion BTU) of energy, which is 4.4 quads more than last year's 92.9 quads, equivalent to a 5% increase. Both 2020 and 2021 annual energy consumption totals are less than 2018 and 2019, where Americans used more than 100 quads per year. A BTU, or British Thermal Unit, is a unit of measurement for energy; a BTU is the amount of heat it takes to raise 1 pound (~1 pint) of water by 1 degree Fahrenheit. A total of 3,412 BTUs is equivalent to 1 kilowatt-hour, which is the amount of energy it takes to light an efficient LED lightbulb for a week.

The largest increases in [energy usage](#) were derived from coal and petroleum, which increased by 14% and 9%, respectively. This change in coal-derived energy represents the first increase since 2014 and largest increase in over a decade, hypothesized to be driven by increased natural gas prices in 2021. This hypothesis is supported by the stagnation of natural gas-derived energy between 2020 and 2021 (a decrease of

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