

# China speeding up approvals for new coal plants: Greenpeace

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China relies heavily on coal for generating electricity, but authorities have pledged to peak carbon emissions by 2030.

China has ramped up approvals for new coal power plants this year, Greenpeace said Wednesday, with authorities trying to lower the risk of

economically painful electricity shortages.

China is the world's biggest emitter of the greenhouse gases driving [global warming](#), and President Xi Jinping last year vowed to phase down coal use from 2026 as part of an ambitious set of national climate commitments.

But campaigners fear those targets are under threat with the government focused on [economic challenges](#), even as the deadly impact of climate change is felt around the world.

In the first quarter of 2022, Chinese regulators gave the [green light](#) to [coal plants](#) with a total capacity of 8.63 gigawatts, according to research conducted by Greenpeace.

That is nearly half of the entire coal-fired capacity approved last year, the environmental campaigners said.

"Building more coal-fired power capacity will not provide energy security for China," said Wu Jinghan, climate and energy campaigner with Greenpeace in Beijing.

"China has an overcapacity of coal-fired power plants. Power inadequacies originate from poor integration of generation, grid, load and storage."

The figure for new coal plant approvals dipped in mid-2021 but rebounded later in the year as China experienced widespread power outages due to a supply crunch.

Electricity consumption has surged this summer as China suffers through an intense heatwave, with air conditioning cranked up at homes and businesses to try and keep people cool.

China relies on coal for around 60 percent of its electricity, and has asked domestic miners to increase capacity by 300 million tons this year.

The State Council, China's cabinet, in May announced 10 billion yuan (\$1.5 billion) of investment in coal power generation, as coal producers were pressured to ramp up output before the 2025 threshold.

"An overcapacity of this one energy source is a major hurdle for energy security, as well as China's energy transition," Wu warned.

Skyrocketing global commodity prices in the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine have renewed China's focus on [energy security](#).

As the Chinese economy stalls under strict Covid policies and prolonged supply chain disruptions, authorities are looking to boost growth through a massive infrastructure construction push—which relies overwhelmingly on coal [power](#).

China is the world's biggest coal consumer and producer, and analysts worry that economic targets will derail its pledge to peak carbon emissions by 2030.

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