The Local Social and Economic Context of Energy Transitions

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Global vision, local impacts

Culture, politics, economic history and trajectory

Loss of industry and jobs

Growth of zero-carbon resources

California’s San Bernardino County slams the brakes on big solar projects
The many meanings of “transition”


Re-employing coal miners from retiring mines in China to train new coal-miners (3-D media).

Building approximately 11,600 acres of solar farms in North Carolina.

Raising coal output targets in Indonesia.
Local culture and social circumstances

Sheridan, Wyoming: “Coal town” since 1890s facing coal mine bankruptcies and closures.

Montour County, Pennsylvania: Agricultural community facing proposed utility-scale solar farm. “Unprecedented” conflict—concerns about impacts on farmland, hunting, runoff.

https://www.wyohistory.org/encyclopedia/coal-camps-sheridan-county
Local resources

Building from existing resources and leveraging new ones.

Rural coal communities such as **Sheridan, Wyoming:**

Maintaining airport service

Emphasizing quality of life for new employees

Expanding broadband

**Essen, Germany:** Coal to “European Green Capital” (Douglas and Harrahill)
Local resources, continued

Sweetwater, Texas: County’s taxable value (sales, property, etc.) $630 million to $2.5 billion in ten-year period, but declining population.

Need to improve “curb appeal” to attract workers, residents.
Local resources, continued

Agrivoltaics (Montour County, PA): Can farmers transition to raising sheep and turkeys?
Economic factors

School revenue: 50% of Hayden, Colorado’s recent School District bond paid by coal-fired power plant.

Economics: Australia’s Hazelwood plant and redeployment

November 2016—announced closure of Hazelwood brown coal power stations.

Power companies, union, and government negotiated worker redeployment to still-operating coal-fired plants.

Other workers retained for site rehabilitation.

$22 million in immediate financial assistance to the workforce.

Tools

**Government support (not just financial):** EU Just Transition Mechanism, Just Transition Platform

**Host community agreements/community benefits agreements**

**Worker and community engagement/involvement:** Earthworker Cooperative Australia; North-Rhine Westphalia worker, community, employer, government (Douglas & Harrahill)