

# New Policy for New Weather



## JOHN BYRNE

From climate change to acid rain, contaminated landscapes, and biodiversity loss, the origins of many of our least tractable environmental problems can be traced to the operations of the modern energy system. A scan of nightfall across the planet reveals a social dilemma that also accompanies this system's operations: invented over a century ago, electric light remains an experience only for the socially privileged, as two billion human beings—almost one-third of the planet's population—receive evening light by candle, oil lamp, or open fire, reminding us that energy modernization has left intact enduring social inequalities. Recent energy price spikes point to nearly 35 years of policy failure on sustainability and social equity grounds. A reexamination of energy-environment-society relations and a rethinking of policy strategy are needed.

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John Byrne is Director of the Center for Energy and Environmental Policy (CEEP) and Distinguished Professor of Public Policy at the University of Delaware. He is a founding member of the *International Solar Cities Initiative* – a pioneering program to assist cities around the world in building sustainable futures. He serves as a contributing author to the United Nations-sponsored Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). Dr. Byrne has been recognized by the Chinese government for his expertise in climate change policy and his name appears on China's foreign expert registry. His recent books include: *Energy and Environment: The Policy Challenge*, which addresses the global warming debate; *Environmental Justice*, which explores international dimensions of the issue; and *Transforming Power*, which considers the prospects for significant changes in the world energy system.

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Arizona State University, Tempe campus

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