



Screenshot: We the Power film | Photo source Patagonia

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PATAGONIA LAUNCHES CAMPAIGN TO SPARK RENEWABLE COMMUNITY-LED ENERGY

 SUSTAINABILITY

The new campaign across Europe aims to encourage citizens to imagine a new energy system that is local, community-owned, renewable and rooted in bringing social and economic benefits to local communities

Spotted: Patagonia has launched We the Power, a new campaign across Europe to galvanise citizens to switch their electricity provider to one that sources from community-owned renewable energy schemes, to join or invest in a community energy group – thereby bringing social and economic benefits to local communities.

Community Energy is a system of energy production in which groups of citizens produce their own renewable power and share the economic benefits among the local community. It democratically spreads the ownership of power into the hands of many, therefore stimulating community employment and boosting local economies with money that would otherwise flow to big energy businesses.

Beth Thoren, Environmental Action and Initiatives Director at Patagonia says that: “Community energy is a win-win situation, whereby local, renewable energy production puts money directly into local communities and speeds up the creation of a cleaner, healthier future for our children”.

The predominant model of fossil fuel production is not viable if we are to limit climate change to 1.5°C — the temperature increase threshold established by scientists to mitigate severe impacts of climate change. By moving away from big extractive energy monopolies that control the systems of power and money, community energy initiatives also exacerbate the climate crisis.

“Patagonia is committing – through our voice, our support for grassroots groups across Europe and our actions as a responsible business – to advocating for this revolution in energy,” Thoren added.

The We the Power campaign also demonstrates the advantages to people and the planet that this clean energy transformation could bring, through a new documentary of the same name. The 30-minute film features the stories of community energy pioneers such as Dirk Vansintjan, the founder of the Europe-wide federation of community energy cooperatives, REScoop.

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Takeaway:

Community energy could provide a widespread solution that increases the demand and use of cleaner, more sustainable energy production. One million European citizens are involved in today's growing community-energy movement. By 2050, it could be more than 260 million citizens, each helping to generate up to 45 per cent of the European Union's electricity from community energy. This would provide local jobs, reduce energy bills, and create a healthier environment and a stronger social fabric.