

Kentucky State Background Brief

Policy Overview

Kentucky has a long history as a coal-mining state as it was once central to the coal industry, as well as to miners rising up against coal companies. Harlan County, for example, is home to both a violent confrontation between striking coal miners and private security and local law enforcement in 1931 and a sustained action to block coal trains in the aftermath of the sudden closure of the mine and layoff of miners in 2019. While workers have risen up against coal companies, coal mining remains deeply ingrained in the culture and economy, which is reflected in the relative lack of state-level climate action.

Lack of Climate Policy

Kentucky has limited climate policy; there is no Renewable Portfolio Standard or renewable energy generation or consumption required, no wind development and no energy efficiency standard. The state's House of Representative's energy chair has been documented as a strong climate change denier, and as chair of the Natural Resources and Energy committee, he has the ability to choose which bills are heard and which are given priority (Van Velzer 2020). The state opposed the Clean Power Plan and any attempts to regulate carbon.

In addition to the absence of renewable energy and energy efficiency efforts, the state legislature is generally hostile to climate policy. For example, in 2019, the Kentucky state senate proposed and won SB 100 which rolls back net metering provisions (Kentucky General Assembly 2019). Back in 2015, the state made introduced a resolution that encouraged the congressional delegation to support carbon capture and storage technologies (CSS) (Kentucky General Assembly 2015). In 2011, a resolution encouraging U.S. Congress to kep the Environmental Protection Agency from regulating greenhouse gas emissions (Kentucky General Assembly 2011). In 2010, a resolution that would prohibit restrictions on carbon dioxide emissions (Kentucky General Assembly 2010).

Empower Kentucky

Despite the opposition to climate policy, there are just transition efforts. An earlier effort, *Shaping our Appalachian Region* (SOAR) was formed to reimagine an economic future for the region. However, research by Graff et. al (2018) found that respondents in Appalachia were disillusioned with SOAR, as it was top-down and "performative and exclusive." In response, residents started Empower Kentucky.

Empower Kentucky is not a single policy, but an energy plan that reflects the vision of dedicated Kentuckians aiming to achieve positive outcomes for all residents through a just transition to a clean energy economy. Established in 2015, the project's main goal is to prove that just transition is possible even in a place with the history that Kentucky has. The project focuses its efforts on reaching energy efficiency, relying on renewable energy, and putting a low price on CO2 pollution. Through this, the plan produces jobs, less pollution, and lower average bills over 15 years. By 2032, Empower Kentucky Plan aims to invest nearly \$400 million in a just transition for communities and workers most affected by extractive economies by prioritizing energy efficiency in low-income communities and limiting Kentucky's reliance on other polluting energy possibilities (Empower Kentucky 2015).

Changing States Overview

Conditions for Change

Economic

Over the past 40 years, Kentucky has had positive economic growth but has trailed behind the national average. While job growth was 71% and GDP was 120% nationally from 1979 to 2017, Kentucky's performance figures were 50% and 63%, respectively.¹

In 2017, the unemployment rate in Kentucky was 4.9%, slightly higher than the national average. While the performance of the economy has lagged behind in Kentucky, income inequality has continued to increase. The change in percent of families living below 150% of the federal poverty line by race/ethnicity from this period 1990 to 2013-2017 was variable. The percentage increased substantially from 23% to 43% for Latinos, increased from 20% to 23% for AAPI, decreased from 25% to 22% for White, and moderately decreased from 45% to 38% for Black populations.

Wages also demonstrated substantial disparities when broken down by race/ethnicity and gender. Median earnings by race and gender (\$2017), full-time workers ages 16+, in 2013-2017 show that males consistently had higher earnings across all groups. The average across groups was \$47,674 for males and \$37,666 for females. The largest gaps were amongst Asian residents (males \$57,461 and females \$38,978) and white residents (males \$49,501 and females \$38,232). From 1990 to 2017, jobs and earnings for medium-wage and low-wage categories saw steady growth, and although the growth in jobs was low, the growth in earnings per worker was large.

Across all industries in Kentucky, the average number of establishments grew over the period of 2001 to 2018. The share of establishments that are in fossil fuel (FF) industries decreased from 3.387% in 2001 to 2.406% in 2018. Industry sectors in Kentucky have seen varying employment

growth rates over 2000 to 2017. Notably, of these industries, one of the smallest was mining, which was also one of the industries shrinking the most, with a growth rate close to -50%. The share of FF industries in employment across all industries decreased from 3.078% in 2001 to 1.901% in 2018. Average annual pay across all industries grew from \$42,056 to \$46,189 during the same period. In comparison, average annual pay among FF industries was significantly more lucrative; it grew from \$63,047 to \$73,406.

Demographics

In Kentucky, despite a large white majority and high in-state U.S. born individuals (70%), population growth rates by race/ethnicity have varied substantially over the past 40 years. During this period, the share of population growth by race/ethnicity shifted significantly, from 85% to 41% for white residents, 23% to 8% for AAPIs, 12% to 14% for Black residents, and -16% to 24% for Latinos. Between 2000-2017, whereas growth for Non-Hispanic white and people of color (POC) are both positive, POC are increasing at a higher rate than Non-Hispanic white populations. This trend is the reverse of that during 1990 to 2000.

Politics

In the 2016 Presidential Election, a large majority of voters (1.20 million; 62.52%) voted for Donald Trump, whereas nearly half of that number (0.63 million; 32.68%) voted for Hillary Clinton. The largest counties regarding population size, Jefferson and Fayette Counties, were Democratic leaning. These counties are located in central northern Kentucky. All other counties were Republican leaning. When split into congressional voting districts, clustering of Democratic voters mostly occurs in urban areas. Southeastern and eastern Kentucky show dense clustering of Republican voters. In the Kentucky State Legislature, Republicans control both houses.

Arenas for Change

Legislative

In Kentucky, some of the most important struggles for advancing a just transition are over legislation. With regards to federal legislation that supports coal communities, there have been some wins despite years of delay. In 2016, Majority Leader Mitch McConnell blocked President Obama's Power Plus Plan, which devoted \$1 billion to transition Appalachia away from coal (Groves 2020). In 2019, the U.S. Senate passed the Bipartisan American Miners Act to support pensions and health benefits for retirees, legislation that was previously blocked by McConnell in 2015 and 2017 (Schimmel 2019). In 2019, Rep. John Yarmuth (D) introduced the ACHE Act,

which was a moratorium on mountaintop removal permitting pending government health studies (Ridder 2019b). Due to COVID-19, the industry has been pressuring Congress for bailouts while trying to reduce funds that support miners (Bruggers 2020).

In the State General Assembly, there has not been much success in protecting mining communities or renewable energy. In 2018, HB 2 changed the state's workers' compensation system to make it much more difficult for miners to receive benefits (Becker 2018; Boles 2020c). In 2020, HB 239 was introduced to undo this provision (Kentucky General Assembly 2020). Additionally, after a long battle between solar advocates and electric utilities industry contingents, SB100 was signed by the governor, which crippled previous net-metering law and reduced access to solar power (Abbott 2018; Loftus 2019; Partymiller 2019). SB 100, increased the power of the monopoly electric utilities, keeping competition from small solar businesses low while the utilities were able to secure bigger opportunities in the solar market (McDonald 2019).

Electoral

An important battle in the fight for a just transition in Kentucky is the expansion of voting rights, as local and state elections outcomes are crucial to pushing legislation forward (Ballotpedia 2016, 2020). There has been no traction on related ballot measures that expand voter rights in recent years. There have been calls for a Kentucky voting rights bill, which would lift restrictions with a constitutional amendment (Kenning 2019; Kentuckians for the Commonwealth 2019). After assuming office in December of 2019, one of the first acts taken by Governor Beshear was to restore voting rights for non-violent formerly incarcerated individuals, approximately 140,000 people (Mosley and Paris 2019). As June 23rd is primary election day, there also have been efforts, limited by and because of the COVID-19 pandemic, to support registration, voting by mail, and absentee voting (Kentuckians for the Commonwealth Staff 2020a, 2020c; Newton 2020). However, the majority opposition, in recent years, has put more restrictive policies in place. For example, the state reduced the number of polling places to 200 (95% of the typical number), which disproportionately disenfranchised Black voters (Bailey and Sonka 2020; Democracy Now! 2020).

Senator McConnell's U.S. Senate seat is an intensely watched race in Kentucky, as many of the issues facing coal miners, in particular, have been orchestrated by him (Bruggers 2019b). Two contenders, Amy McGrath and Charles Booker stand out among the Democratic candidates, and the result of their primary will have significant implications for the chance to unseat McConnell. Also of note, in April of 2020, SB 2, a restrictive voter ID law, was passed—overriding a veto—but it did not go into effect until the General Election (Kentuckians for the Commonwealth Staff 2020d). These policies ultimately will help continue Republican control of local and regional seats.

Judicial

Battles in Kentucky regarding compliance, environmental protections, and transparency are decided in the courts and by the Attorney General's Office. For example, a federal bankruptcy court judge placed sanctions on the American Resources Corporation, which owns mines in Kentucky, after it failed to comply with court orders and despite receiving \$2.7 million in COVID-19-related aid from the government (Boles 2020d). Whereas the current Republican Attorney General (AG) David Cameron has joined a 23-state coalition against a lawsuit that would expand federal authority over Kentucky's land and water resources, "saddling" Kentuckians with costly fees and Obama-era environmental regulations. The former Democratic AG Andy Beshear had a different approach (The Lane Report 2020). AG Beshear's Office advocated for and succeeded in protecting low-income Kentuckians from unreasonable utility rate increases, securing community leaders' seats at the table with the Public Service Commission, calling for greater scrutiny on pipelines, and providing transparency in government regulation of utilities (Sebastian and Staley 2018; Staley and Mansfield 2019; Van Velzer 2020).

Administrative

At the federal level, discussion of a just transition in Kentucky starts with former President Donald Trump's campaign promise to support coal miners, a campaign promise he failed to meet (Estep 2018). Although the fate of the industry has become clear to experts, the Trump Administration was staunchly against "the war on coal," arguing to keep coal-fired power plants open. Notably, in February 2020, the remaining coal-fired generator of the Paradise power plant operated by the federally-owned Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), was shut down despite protestations from former Governor Matt Bevin, Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, and President Trump (Bruggers 2019d; Lovan 2020; Van Velzer 2019). The Trump Administration also touted an open and active directive for deregulation, especially for those deemed burdensome from the Obama-era (Patterson 2018; The Appalachian Voice Intern Team 2019b, 2019a). This was most clearly seen in Trump's appointment of Andrew R. Wheeler to the head of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). For example, in June of 2019, the EPA issued the Affordable Clean Energy (ACE) rule, which unlike the Obama-era Clean Power Plan it replaced, gave each state the authority to set its own power plant emissions restrictions (The Appalachian Voice Intern Team 2019b). On the ACE rule, an official from the Kentucky Energy and Environment Cabinet said that this rule provides so-called "regulatory certainty" for companies (Klump and Northey 2019).

Agencies at the federal, regional, and local levels have supported and detracted from the just transition agenda variously. Offices, such as the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC), fund community and economic development in areas that were reliant on or impacted by coal. In 2019, ARC gave \$7.2 million to these communities through the Partnerships for Opportunity and

Workforce and Economic Revitalization (POWER) Initiative (Appalachian Regional Commission 2019). Other agencies, specifically the Department of Labor and the Kentucky Labor Cabinet, have been criticized for lax oversight by allowing coal companies to avoid complying with insurance policies that protect coal miners. Bankruptcies have been used by coal companies to avoid meeting their obligations to the Black Lung Disability Trust Fund, which funds monthly benefits and health care coverage for disabled coal miners when their employers cannot. In addition to paying bonds for their workers as insurance, companies should be paying into the fund via a per-ton tax on coal, but they have been underpaying both for years. The fund incurs significant debt and has had to borrow taxpayer money in order to meet obligations for the past 50 years (KY Press News Service 2019).

Leadership at the state level has taken a promising turn towards a just transition. On the campaign trail, current Governor Andy Beshear advocated for climate and clean energy policy change, and even supported such efforts as Attorney General (Bruggers 2019c; Kentucky Today 2019; Latek 2019). Unlike former Governor Bevin, a Trump loyalist and strong advocate for the industry, Governor Beshear has called for Kentucky to transition to a post-coal economy (Marzian et al. 2019).

Corporate

In Kentucky and throughout the U.S., pressure has been put on coal-fired generation and coal companies due to environmental degradation and the lower price of renewables and natural gas (Lawrence 2020). As a result, there has been a trend of coal-fired plant closures in recent years, such as the Sierra Club-led campaign “Beyond Coal” that pressured LG&E to close down the Cane Run Generating Station in 2015 (Bruggers 2019a; Lawrence 2020). In July 2020, two coal companies, Blackjewel and Revelation Energy, announced Chapter 11 bankruptcy, affecting 600 miners in Kentucky. In response, miners in Harlan County blocked coal trains for six weeks until wages were paid (Moore 2019; Savage 2019). More than half of the companies’ permits for Kentucky-owned mines have not been transferred to other companies, and in the meantime, the company has racked up more than 300 environmental violations (Boles 2020b; Estep and Moomey 2020). An investigation showed that Blackjewel did not post enough bond to cover reclamation of these sites and water treatment, so the obligation and financial burden would then be placed on a state fund (Estep and Moomey 2020). These strategies are part of the institutional logic common throughout the industry. There are some state tax credits available for these companies that help keep coal mining businesses from going bankrupt. However, due to the COVID-19 crisis, the lobbying arm of the coal industry has been asking for additional bailouts (Brown 2020).

In Kentucky, solar energy has emerged as a cheaper alternative and continues to get better footholds in the energy market. Much of this growth is driven by corporate demand (Foehringer

Merchant 2020; Ludden 2017). Despite the cultural attachment to coal in the state and the Trump Administration's successful efforts to dismantle federal regulations, these companies and the utility providers are following the market instead of "seesawing" regulations (Ludden 2017). For example, Louisville Gas and Electric Company (LG&E) and Kentucky Utilities Company (KU) landed the state's first commercial and industrial solar deal (Foehringer Merchant 2020). At the same time LG&E and other utilities have used several different tactics to expand pipelines (Ridder 2019a).

Partnerships between local governments and private companies have also moved Kentucky toward a green economy. For example, there are efforts to use methane gas from landfills to displace nonrenewable fuel (Ludden 2017; Mulliken 2020). Hemp has also emerged as a leading industry, which has helped transition farmers away from growing tobacco (Jackson 2019).

Communications and Culture

Much of the space taken in this arena has been for the struggles of coal communities and the damage to the environment in Kentucky. Kentuckians for the Commonwealth, just one major player in the movement for a just transition, launched a media campaign called "Fix What's Broke," which urged Congress to take actions to protect coal miners (Forward Kentucky 2020; Kentuckians for the Commonwealth Staff 2020b). The stories of miners have been elevated through such projects, such as Devil in the Dust, a blog about black lung. Additionally, there have been some efforts in the media to share the positive effects of reclaiming mine sites and moving towards more sustainable energy sources that uplift the economy (Patterson 2019).

Capacities for Change

There is a robust organizing landscape around the just transition agenda in Kentucky, ranging from small community organizations, to youth-led groups, to community funds, and to large coalitions of organizations. Despite immense pressure from the coal industry, well-resourced organizations, such as the Appalachian Law Center, have stepped in to protect mining communities while other community groups, such as Kentuckians for the Commonwealth and Empower Kentucky, not only lead campaigns that build towards a just transition, but also develop the agenda itself (Curry et al. 2020).

Youth-led groups, such as the Kentucky Student Environmental Coalition, have mobilized campus communities (Kentucky Student Environmental Coalition 2007). Foundations and funding networks, such as the Just Transition Fund, Appalachia Funders Network, and the Kentucky Conservation Fund have all strived to build community, prioritize education, and uplift efforts that materialize a just transition in Kentucky (Appalachia Funders Network 2010; Just Transition Fund 2015; Kentucky Conservation Foundation 2014). Large coalitions of

organizations across Appalachia and within Kentucky that supply various functions for the movement to end mountaintop removal and transition towards reliance on clean energy include the Alliance for Appalachia and the Louisville Climate Action Network (Louisville Climate Action Network n.d.; The Alliance for Appalachia 2006). In the midst of the COVID-19 crisis, the economic fallout of the crisis, and a resurgence in the Black Lives Matter Movement, the intersectional work of these organizations will be crucial to protecting communities impacted by the extractive economy in Kentucky and building for a more sustainable and just future (Boles 2020a; Gustin et al. 2020; State Journal staff report 2020).

References

- Abbott, Lisa. 2018. "Anti-Rooftop Solar Bill Defeated in Final Hour of 2018 Kentucky General Assembly." *Kentuckians for the Commonwealth*. Retrieved June 25, 2020 (<http://kftc.org/blog/anti-rooftop-solar-bill-defeated-final-hour-2018-kentucky-general-assembly>).
- Appalachia Funders Network. 2010. "ABOUT US." *Appalachia Funders Network*. Retrieved May 14, 2021 (https://www.appalachiafunders.org/about_us).
- Appalachian Regional Commission. 2019. "Appalachian Regional Commission Announces \$44.4 Million to Diversify Region's Coal-Impacted Economies." *Appalachian Regional Commission*. Retrieved June 25, 2020 (https://www.arc.gov/news/article.asp?ARTICLE_ID=678).
- Bailey, Phillip M., and Joe Sonka. 2020. "While National Voices Claim 'voter Suppression,' Kentucky on Pace for Record Voter Turnout." *Courier Journal*, June 22.
- Ballotpedia. 2016. "California Proposition 167, Sales and Income Tax Increases (1992)." Retrieved December 19, 2016 ([https://ballotpedia.org/California_Proposition_167,_Sales_and_Income_Tax_Increases_\(1992\)](https://ballotpedia.org/California_Proposition_167,_Sales_and_Income_Tax_Increases_(1992))).
- Ballotpedia. 2020. "Kentucky 2020 Ballot Measures." *Ballotpedia: The Encyclopedia of American Politics*. Retrieved June 25, 2020 (https://ballotpedia.org/Kentucky_2020_ballot_measures).
- Becker, Benny. 2018. "Amid Black Lung Surge, Kentucky Changes Benefits Process For Miners." *Ohio Valley Resource*. Retrieved June 25, 2020 (<https://ohiovalleyresource.org/2018/03/28/amidst-black-lung-surge-kentucky-changes-benefits-miners/>).
- Boles, Sydney. 2020a. "Anxiety In Appalachian Coal Country: First The Mines Closed, Then Came Coronavirus." *Ohio Valley Resource*. Retrieved June 25, 2020 (<https://ohiovalleyresource.org/2020/03/20/anxiety-in-appalachian-coal-country-first-the-mines-closed-then-came-coronavirus/>).
- Boles, Sydney. 2020b. "Bankrupt Blackjewel Coal Still Racking Up Environmental Violations, Officials Warn." *Ohio Valley Resource*. Retrieved June 25, 2020 (<https://ohiovalleyresource.org/2020/01/22/bankrupt-blackjewel-coal-still-racking-up-environmental-violations-officials-warn/>).
- Boles, Sydney. 2020c. "Black Lung Benefits Drop For Kentucky Coal Miners After Controversial Law Change." *Ohio Valley Resource*. Retrieved June 25, 2020 (<https://ohiovalleyresource.org/2020/02/21/black-lung-benefits-drop-for-kentucky-coal-miners-after-controversial-law-change/>).
- Boles, Sydney. 2020d. "Federal Judge Threatens Jail Time as Coal Company Flouts Court Orders." *Ohio Valley Resource*. Retrieved June 25, 2020 (<https://ohiovalleyresource.org/2020/05/18/federal-judge-threatens-jail-time-as-coal-company-flouts-court-orders/>).
- Brown, Matthew. 2020. "Amid Pandemic, US Coal Industry Seeks Lower Taxes, Royalties." *Kentucky Today*. Retrieved June 25, 2020 (<https://www.kentuckytoday.com/stories/amid-pandemic-us-coal-industry-seeks-lower-taxes-royalties,24989?>).

- Bruggers, James. 2019a. "A Kentucky Power Plant's Demise Signals a Reckoning for Coal." *Inside Climate News*. Retrieved June 14, 2019 (<https://insideclimatenews.org/news/13062019/coal-kentucky-natural-gas-climate-change-bloomberg>).
- Bruggers, James. 2019b. "McConnell Says He's a Friend to Coal. But Will His Record with Miners Hurt Him in 2020?" *Courier Journal*, September 24.
- Bruggers, James. 2019c. "Southern State Energy Officials Celebrate Fossil Fuels as World Raises Climate Alarm." *Inside Climate News*. Retrieved June 25, 2020 (<https://insideclimatenews.org/news/26092019/fossil-fuels-climate-change-southern-states-energy-board-koch-kentucky>).
- Bruggers, James. 2019d. "TVA Votes to Close 2 Coal Plants, Despite Political Pressure from Trump and Kentucky GOP." Retrieved June 25, 2020 (<https://insideclimatenews.org/news/14022019/tva-coal-power-plants-shut-down-vote-trump-mcconnell-pressure-paradise-kentucky-bull-run-tennessee>).
- Bruggers, James. 2020. "Congress Rejects Coal Industry Bailout in the Coronavirus Stimulus Plan." *Courier Journal*, March 29.
- Curry, Mikaela, Trinidad Jackson, Tona Barkely, Nikita Perumal, and Lisa Abbott. 2020. "Revisioning What We Mean by 'A Just Transition.'" *Kentuckians for the Commonwealth*. Retrieved June 25, 2020 (<http://www.kftc.org/blog/revisioning-what-we-mean-just-transition>).
- Democracy Now! 2020. "Kentucky Slashes 95% of Polling Places Ahead of Primary Election." *Democracy Now!* Retrieved June 25, 2020 (https://www.democracynow.org/2020/6/22/headlines/kentucky_slashes_95_of_polling_places_a_head_of_primary_election).
- Empower Kentucky. 2015. "Empower Kentucky: Vision and Principles." Retrieved May 14, 2021 (<https://www.Empowerkentucky.org/plan/vision-and-principles/>).
- Estep, Bill. 2018. "Trump Promised to Put Coal Miners Back to Work. Kentucky Has Fewer Coal Jobs Now." *Lexington Herald-Leader*, November 12.
- Estep, Bill, and Liz Moomey. 2020. "Coal Company Accused of Letting Kentucky Mine Conditions Worsen after Miners Protest." *Lexington Herald-Leader*, June 18.
- Foehringer Merchant, Emma. 2020. "Even in Coal-Heavy Kentucky, Corporations Can't Stay Away From Solar Power." *Greentech Media*. Retrieved June 25, 2020 (<https://www.greentechmedia.com/articles/read/a-big-solar-project-in-coal-heavy-kentucky-hints-at-growing-corporate-demand>).
- Forward Kentucky. 2020. "KFTC Calls on Congress to 'Fix What's Broke.'" *Forward Kentucky*. Retrieved June 25, 2020 (<https://forwardky.com/kftc-calls-on-congress-to-fix-whats-broke/#>).
- Graff, Michelle, Sanya Carley, and David Konisky. 2018. "Stakeholder Perceptions of the United States Energy Transition: Local-Level Dynamics and Community Responses to National Politics and Policy." *Energy Research & Social Science* 43. doi: 10.1016/j.erss.2018.05.017.

- Groves, Margaret. 2020. "Letter: McConnell Blocking Legislation That Would Help Communities That Rely on the Coal Industry." *The State Journal*. Retrieved June 25, 2020 (https://www.state-journal.com/opinion/letter-mcconnell-blocking-legislation-that-would-help-communities-that-rely-on-the-coal-industry/article_51261c78-5a4e-11ea-b779-a7320678fd26.html).
- Gustin, Georgina, James Bruggers, Kristoffer Tigue, and Dan Gearino. 2020. "Polluting Industries Cash-In on COVID, Harming Climate in the Process." *Inside Climate News*. Retrieved June 25, 2020 (<https://insideclimatenews.org/news/27032020/coronavirus-covid-pandemic-agriculture-plastics-airlines-renewables-coal>).
- Jackson, Kyeland. 2019. "For The First Time, The Kentucky State Fair Presenting Sponsor Is A Hemp Company." *WFPL News Louisville*. Retrieved June 25, 2020 (<https://wfpl.org/for-the-first-time-the-kentucky-state-fair-presenting-sponsor-is-a-hemp-company/>).
- Just Transition Fund. 2015. "Just Transition Fund - Overview." Retrieved May 14, 2021 (<https://www.justtransitionfund.org/overview>).
- Kenning, Chris. 2019. "Kentucky Lawmakers Announce Bills to Restore Voting Rights and Increase Voter Access." *The Courier-Journal*. Retrieved January 13, 2020 (<https://www.courier-journal.com/story/news/2019/11/01/kentucky-lawmakers-announce-bills-restore-voting-rights/4122066002/>).
- Kentuckians for the Commonwealth. 2019. "Kentucky Voting Rights Bill." *Kentuckians for the Commonwealth*. Retrieved June 25, 2020 (<http://www.kftc.org/campaigns/voting-rights-amendment>).
- Kentuckians for the Commonwealth Staff. 2020a. "Helping People Register to Vote during Covid-19." *Kentuckians for the Commonwealth*. Retrieved June 25, 2020 (<http://www.kftc.org/blog/helping-people-register-vote-during-covid-19>).
- Kentuckians for the Commonwealth Staff. 2020b. "Media Campaign Pushes Congress to Act on RECLAIM Act and Black Lung Fund." *Kentuckians for the Commonwealth*. Retrieved June 25, 2020 (<http://www.kftc.org/blog/media-campaign-pushes-congress-act-reclaim-act-and-black-lung-fund>).
- Kentuckians for the Commonwealth Staff. 2020c. "Pushing to Vote by Mail in Kentucky." *Kentuckians for the Commonwealth*. Retrieved June 25, 2020 (<http://www.kftc.org/blog/pushing-vote-mail-kentucky>).
- Kentuckians for the Commonwealth Staff. 2020d. "Senate Bill 2 Passes as Legislators Override Veto." *Kentuckians for the Commonwealth*. Retrieved June 25, 2020 (<http://www.kftc.org/blog/senate-bill-2-passes-legislators-override-veto>).
- Kentucky Conservation Foundation. 2014. "About KCF." *Kentucky Conservation Foundation*. Retrieved May 14, 2021 (<https://kyconservationfound.org/about/>).
- Kentucky General Assembly. 2010. "Kentucky 2010 Regular Session House Joint Resolution 20." Retrieved May 14, 2021 (<https://apps.legislature.ky.gov/Record/10RS/hjr20.html>).
- Kentucky General Assembly. 2011. "Kentucky 2011 Regular Session Senate Resolution 116." Retrieved May 14, 2021 (<https://apps.legislature.ky.gov/Record/11RS/SR116.html>).

- Kentucky General Assembly. 2015. "Kentucky 2015 Regular Session Senate Resolution 187." Retrieved May 14, 2021 (<https://apps.legislature.ky.gov/record/15rs/sr187.html>).
- Kentucky General Assembly. 2019. "Kentucky 2019 Regular Session: Senate Bill 100." Retrieved May 14, 2021 (<https://apps.legislature.ky.gov/record/19RS/sb100.html>).
- Kentucky General Assembly. 2020. "Kentucky 2020 Regular Session HB 239." Retrieved May 14, 2021 (<https://apps.legislature.ky.gov/record/20rs/hb239.html>).
- Kentucky Student Environmental Coalition. 2007. "Mission and History." *Kentucky Student Environmental Coalition*. Retrieved May 14, 2021 (<https://www.KYStudentEnvironmentalCoalition.org/mission.html>).
- Kentucky Today. 2019. "Kentucky Governor Says Teen Climate Activist 'Ill-Informed.'" *Kentucky Today*. Retrieved June 25, 2020 (<https://www.kentuckytoday.com/stories/kentucky-governor-says-teen-climate-activist-ill-informed,21734?>).
- Klump, Edward, and Hannah Northey. 2019. "How Officials from 4 States View Trump's New Carbon Rule." *Energy News Network*. Retrieved June 25, 2020 (<https://energynews.us/2019/07/01/west/how-officials-from-4-states-view-trumps-new-carbon-rule/>).
- KY Press News Service. 2019. "Our State Government Absolutely Failed to Protect Coal Miners." *Forward Kentucky*. Retrieved June 25, 2020 (<https://forwardky.com/our-state-government-absolutely-failed-to-protect-coal-miners/>).
- Latek, Tom. 2019. "Bevin Puts Kentucky in Trump's Coal Coalition." *Kentucky Today*. Retrieved June 25, 2020 (<https://www.kentuckytoday.com/stories/bevin-puts-kentucky-in-trumps-coal-coalition,21628?>).
- Lawrence, Keith. 2020. "OMU Stops Producing Electricity after 119 Years." *Messenger-Inquirer*, May 30.
- Loftus, Tom. 2019. "Kentucky Bill Would Limit What Solar Customers Earn from Excess Energy." *Courier Journal*, February 12.
- Louisville Climate Action Network. n.d. "About | Louisville Climate Action Network | United States." *Lcan*. Retrieved May 14, 2021 (<https://www.louisvillecan.org/about>).
- Lovan, Dylan. 2020. "Iconic Plant's End Spells Doom for Struggling Coal Industry." *Kentucky Today*. Retrieved June 25, 2020 (<https://www.kentuckytoday.com/stories/iconic-plants-end-spells-doom-for-struggling-coal-industry,25060?>).
- Ludden, Jennifer. 2017. "Big Business Pushes Coal-Friendly Kentucky To Embrace Renewables." *NPR Environment and Energy Collaborative*. Retrieved June 25, 2020 (<https://www.npr.org/2017/04/17/523763826/big-business-pushes-coal-friendly-kentucky-to-embrace-renewables>).
- Marzian, Mary Lou, Josie Raymond, Tom Burch, Lisa Willner, Tina Bojanows, and Jim Wayne. 2019. "Opinion: Beshear Win Shows Kentucky Is Ready for Hard Truths about Coal, Climate Change." *Courier Journal*, December 18.

- McDonald, Andy. 2019. "Guest Columnist: Future of Rooftop Solar Uncertain as Kentucky Regulators Weigh Changes to Net Metering." *The State Journal*, October 9.
- Moore, Molly. 2019. "Bankruptcies Shake Coal Industry." *The Appalachian Voice*. Retrieved June 25, 2020 (<http://appvoices.org/2019/12/16/bankruptcies-shake-coal-industry/>).
- Mosley, Tonya, and Francesca Paris. 2019. "Kentucky Governor Andy Beshear Restores Voting Rights To Felons." *WBUR*. Retrieved June 25, 2020 (<https://www.wbur.org/hereandnow/2019/12/13/kentucky-felon-voting-rights>).
- Mulliken, Jacob. 2020. "County Finds Potential Partner in Landfill Gas Project." *Messenger-Inquirer*, March 28.
- Newton, Dave. 2020. "How Kentucky's June 23 Primary Will Be Different - Vote by Mail Details, Etc." *Kentuckians for the Commonwealth*. Retrieved June 25, 2020 (<http://www.kftc.org/blog/how-kentuckys-june-23-primary-will-be-different-vote-mail-details-etc>).
- Partymiller, Matt. 2019. "Our Lawmakers Can't Let Utility Companies Kill Solar Energy in Kentucky." *Courier Journal*, February 14.
- Patterson, Brittany. 2018. "What Trump's 'Unprecedented' Power Plant Bailout Could Mean For The Ohio Valley." *Ohio Valley Resource*. Retrieved June 25, 2020 (<https://ohiovalleyresource.org/2018/06/06/trumps-unprecedented-power-plant-bailout-mean-ohio-valley/>).
- Patterson, Brittany. 2019. "Portal 31: How A Closed Mine Opened New Prospects For One Coal Town." *Ohio Valley Resource*. Retrieved June 25, 2020 (<https://ohiovalleyresource.org/2019/11/08/portal-31-how-a-closed-mine-opened-new-prospects-for-one-coal-town/>).
- Ridder, Kevin. 2019a. "Kentucky Agency and Conservationists Fight Proposed Gas Pipeline." *The Appalachian Voice*. Retrieved June 25, 2020 (<http://appvoices.org/2019/12/16/kentucky-agency-and-conservationists-fight-proposed-gas-pipeline/>).
- Ridder, Kevin. 2019b. "Neighbors of Mountaintop Removal Testify Before Congress." *The Appalachian Voice*. Retrieved June 25, 2020 (<http://appvoices.org/2019/06/07/neighbors-of-mountaintop-removal-testify-before-congress/>).
- Savage, Erin. 2019. "Blackjewel and Revelation Energy Coal Bankruptcy Raises Concerns for Workers and Mine Cleanup." *The Appalachian Voice*. Retrieved June 25, 2020 (<http://appvoices.org/2019/08/07/blackjewel-and-revelation-energy-coal-bankruptcy/>).
- Schimmel, Becca. 2019. "After Nearly A Decade Of Anxiety Over Pensions, Coal Miners See Light At The End Of The Tunnel." *WKU Public Radio*. Retrieved June 25, 2020 (https://www.wkyufm.org/post/after-nearly-decade-anxiety-over-pensions-coal-miners-see-light-end-tunnel?fbclid=IwAR3SUECQu1HGbYQD2LLjieZrGmgKQhO5_mhy57nOZBzFUMxUpYrp6Ygdir0%22%20%5C%20%22stream/0).

- Sebastian, Terry, and Crystal Staley. 2018. "Beshear, Lawmakers Pushing for Stronger Protections for Kentuckians in Utility Rate Cases." *Kentucky Gov.* Retrieved June 25, 2020 (<https://kentucky.gov/Pages/Activity-stream.aspx?n=AttorneyGeneral&prId=583>).
- Staley, Crystal, and Kenneth Mansfield. 2019. "Beshear: Victory Over Atmos Energy Saves Kentucky Families Nearly \$15 Million Annually." *Kentucky Gov.* Retrieved June 25, 2020 (<https://kentucky.gov/Pages/Activity-stream.aspx?n=AttorneyGeneral&prId=758>).
- State Journal staff report. 2020. "Kentucky's Positive COVID-19 Cases Are up to 13,454." *The State Journal*, June 19.
- The Alliance for Appalachia. 2006. "Our Mission." *The Alliance for Appalachia*. Retrieved May 14, 2021 (<https://theallianceforappalachia.org/mission-values/>).
- The Appalachian Voice Intern Team. 2019a. "EPA Proposes Weakening Rules for Coal Ash and Related Pollutants." *The Appalachian Voice*. Retrieved June 25, 2020 (<http://appvoices.org/2019/12/16/epa-proposes-weakening-rules-for-coal-ash-and-related-pollutants/>).
- The Appalachian Voice Intern Team. 2019b. "The Trump Administration's Environmental Record." *The Appalachian Voice*. Retrieved June 25, 2020 (<http://appvoices.org/2019/08/07/the-trump-administrations-environmental-record/>).
- The Lane Report. 2020. "AG Joins 23-State Coalition Protecting Ky.'s Land and Water Resources from Excessive Federal Oversight." *The Lane Report*. Retrieved June 25, 2020 (<https://www.lanereport.com/127325/2020/06/ky-joins-23-state-coalition-to-protect-states-land-water-resources/>).
- Van Velzer, Ryan. 2019. "Researchers Say Even In Kentucky, There's A Path To A Carbon-Free Future." *WFPL News Louisville*. Retrieved June 25, 2020 (<https://wfpl.org/researchers-say-even-in-kentucky-theres-a-path-to-a-carbon-free-future/>).
- Van Velzer, Ryan. 2020. "A Decade Of Climate Science Denial From Ky. House Energy Chairman." *89.3 WFPL News Louisville*. Retrieved April 12, 2021 (<https://wfpl.org/a-decade-of-climate-science-denial-from-ky-house-energy-chairman/>).

¹ Unless otherwise stated, all analysis related to industry data was sourced from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW). All analysis related to demographic and economic data is USC ERI analysis of: IPUMS USA; U.S. Census Bureau; Woods & Poole Economics, Inc; GeoLytics, Inc; U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics; and U.S. EPA National Air Toxics Assessment