

# Correspondence

## Nations at COP30 must cancel fossil-fuel concessions

The Paris climate agreement requires that countries work to limit global warming to well below 2 °C, and pursue efforts to limit it to 1.5 °C, to avoid devastating climate tipping points. The latter target requires drastic action, even when assuming a small temporary overshoot that is combated by draw-down of atmospheric carbon to lower temperatures later in the century – a presumed best-case scenario for most climate scientists.

To stand a chance of meeting the Paris goals, we urge nations at COP30 to mobilize massive investment in renewable energy, and to urgently redefine international legal frameworks such that existing fossil-fuel licences can be revoked.

To restrict warming to 1.5 °C requires that no more than 130 gigatonnes of carbon dioxide is released going forward (P. M. Forster *et al. Earth Syst. Sci. Data* **17**, 2641–2680; 2025). At current rates of emissions, this budget will be spent by early 2028. Burning existing fossil-fuel reserves from active oil and gas concessions and coal mines would result in 936 GtCO<sub>2</sub> (K. Trout *et al. Environ. Res. Lett.* **17**, 064010; 2022) – seven times higher than the 1.5 °C carbon budget. The world must stop exploration for more fossil fuels, cease licensing new concessions and decommission a huge portion of existing oil and gas concessions and coal mines.

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## Leaders at COP30 should promote solar and wind power over mega-dams

The COP30 climate meeting in Brazil is being framed as a ‘conference of implementation’, with the emphasis shifting from making new pledges to fulfilling existing climate commitments by boosting the transition to green energy. As your News feature highlights, China, Brazil and India have made rapid advances in this area (see *Nature* **647**, 20–23; 2025). However, this progress includes the development of large hydropower projects in ecologically fragile regions such as the Himalayas and the Amazon rainforest.

Growing evidence indicates that mega-dams in biodiverse and seismically active regions alter hydrological regimes, disrupt sediment transport, impede fish migration, induce seismic activity and displace local communities (C. Zarfl *et al. Sci. Rep.* **9**, 18531; 2019).

As countries present climate plans at COP30, we urge the Green Climate Fund and multilateral development banks to prioritize investments in solar and wind power instead of large dams, and to mandate rigorous ecological assessments for hydropower in sensitive basins. A just energy transition must safeguard both the climate and the river systems that support livelihoods.

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## Safeguard ocean conservation in the offshore wind energy era

The extent of offshore wind farms (OWFs) is expected to increase markedly by 2030. The number of conserved areas, including marine protected areas (MPAs), must also rise to help conserve 30% of the world’s oceans under the Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. The two will need to coexist.

Some policymakers want to exclude fishing in OWFs and consider them as de facto conserved areas. As co-chairs of the working group for MPAs and conservation at the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea, we caution against this. OWFs can hamper conservation through noise pollution, habitat alteration and physical barriers (S. C. L. Watson *et al. Nature Rev. Biodivers.* **1**, 581–596; 2025).

We urge governments to instead halt fishing that is incompatible with biodiversity conservation in more MPAs, and to consider combining OWFs with commercial fishing and aquaculture sites. This would require a strategic shift from OWF developers, who can shy away from multi-use designs owing to operational and potential security concerns. But evidence suggests that placing well-managed fisheries and aquaculture around OWFs could support a sustainable ocean economy (P. O. Bonsu *et al. Mar. Policy* **159**, 105941; 2024).

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## Panels of peers are needed to gauge AI’s trustworthiness

In his World View, Vinay Chaudhri proposes using an expert interview – a ‘Sunstein test’ – to gauge an AI model’s true level of understanding (see *Nature* **646**, 1027; 2025). This is a good way to check technical proficiency, but risks anointing a select group of elites as the arbiters of an AI tool’s ‘trustworthiness’. This would inadvertently reinforce power structures critiqued by Cathy O’Neil in her book review, which highlights that the objectives of AI systems reflect the goals of the select few people who build and control them (see *Nature* **646**, 1048–1049; 2025).

An AI tool might pass a Sunstein test given by a legal scholar, for example, by masterfully citing legal precedent. Yet it might fail to recognize how that precedent perpetuates systemic bias – a reality immediately apparent to a community advocate. This creates a blind spot in which an AI model can be technically correct, but societally harmful.

We propose a crucial extension: evaluation by a jury of peers. An AI tool for the justice system must pass not only the Sunstein test but also a ‘community-advocate test’. A hiring algorithm must be vetted by labour unions and diverse job-seekers, as well as human-resources executives. The goal should not be merely to certify an AI tool’s intelligence, but to ensure that its application bends towards justice.

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