

# The Fiduciary Focus

Investment News From a Pro-Shareholder Perspective

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**This Week:** Jaguar launches disastrous rebrand; German energy CEO begs for power plants amid the “dark doldrums”; China’s climate imperialism.

## Jaguar Launches “Disastrous” Rebrand



Luxury carmaker Jaguar is facing backlash over its “disastrous” rebrand, [Newsweek](#) reports.

**The Ad:** The new ad features a diverse cast of androgynous, avant-garde models traipsing around a barren, pink-drenched, otherworldly background. It’s Barbie meets The Fifth Element. No one speaks. Words appear on screen. “copy nothing.” “break moulds.” Missing? The cars.

**A Viral Moment:** The ad [blew up](#) on social media, garnering almost 47 million views and tens of thousands of comments in the first 24 hours. Most commenters were not kind:

- [“Baffling,”](#) said one longtime Jaguar owner and fan.
- [“Bad Light 2.0,”](#) columnist John Gabriel wrote, comparing the move to Anheuser-Busch’s decision to hire a controversial transgender activist as a spokesperson.
- [“Outdated and confusing,”](#) wrote one PR professional. “If they’re going to abandon the male audience, they should replace it with a more lucrative audience, and it’s unclear who they’re going for here. Vegans?”
- [“Tone deaf and patronising,”](#) said writer Madelaine Hanson. “If a black disabled transgender woman was going to buy your car, she’d need to see it in the commercial. She wouldn’t make a decision based on some puffed sleeves and the words ‘delete ordinary.’”

**Activism Explained:** The rebrand comes as the company plans to move entirely to electric cars, hoping to “[shift \[the company\] to a whole new space](#)” by recasting itself in a more progressive light. DEI is a key component. As its UK brand director [explained](#) at an LGBTQ+ awards ceremony last month:

We’re on a transformative journey of our own. Driven by a belief in diversity, inclusion, creativity, policy and, most importantly, action. We’ve established over 15 DEI groups such as Pride, which are here tonight... We’ve launched major policy revisions such as ‘transitioning at work’ to drive equality and support for our communities, embracing individuality as our superpower.

**Polarizing By Design?:** The rebrand is so controversial, some commentators are speculating it’s intentional. That’s not a crazy theory, as the company claims the campaign is going [“as expected.”](#) Indeed, the company seems pleased to lose a majority of its current customer base: “We don’t want to necessarily leave all of our customers behind,” a Jaguar boss [said](#), but [anticipates](#) that just “10 to 15 percent of our current Jaguar customers will follow us, so relatively few.” It’s an unusual strategy, but if Jaguar was looking for a way to drop its current customers, then the ad campaign is a success.

## German Energy CEO Begg for Power Plants Amid the “Dark Doldrums”



European utility companies that have long championed the energy transition are now panicking amid the “dark doldrums”—periods in which there is little sun or wind to power renewable energy.

**What’s Going On:** In early November, Germany experienced a [12-day wind drought](#) that sent energy prices skyrocketing. On the evening of November 6, electricity prices spiked 10x as a result of the short supply. The CEO of Germany’s largest electric company, RWE, [spoke out](#), explaining that if the wind drought had happened during a period of greater demand, Germany’s energy grid would have failed and the country would have faced widespread blackouts.

### An Ominous Warning:

[I]n Germany (for years) we have been acting as if the question of adding secured power is something that can be postponed. We can already see very clearly today what happens when power is switched off and no backup is provided for renewables.

**Nuclear Phaseout:** Germany’s wounds, while painful, are largely self-inflicted. That’s because Germany recently completed its phaseout of nuclear power plants, which could have served as a 24-7 clean energy backup. At its peak, Germany generated 25% of its energy from nuclear. It [shut down](#) its last plant last year.

**Darkness Befalls the Continent:** Germany is not alone in grappling with the consequences of its bet on renewables.

- [The UK](#) has also been affected, but the result is not totally unexpected. Its energy chief warned that the net zero transition will require energy [austerity](#), including surge pricing and asking citizens to turn off appliances during peak times.
- [The Netherlands](#) is also facing shortages, with one Dutch power expert explaining that current policy proposals designed to make fossil fuels more expensive will have the effect of upping renewable prices too, since the grid as a whole will be less stable.
- [Poland](#) saw its grid operator, PSE, declare a state of emergency during the recent wind drought, following broader warnings that Poland may face power capacity shortages of up to 4.2 gigawatts in 2026 and 9.4 gigawatts in 2034.

**A Short-Sighted Plan:** In their rush to push the transition to net zero, environmentalists have often ignored the consequences of their policies, much to the detriment of the billions of people who rely on cheap, accessible electricity in their everyday lives.

- A new paper in [Nature](#), for example, reveals that renewables developers typically chose sites based on how much average energy they can produce, ignoring the site’s variability and vulnerability to extreme weather events.
- But even more straightforwardly, environmental activists have often pushed for the premature retirement of nuclear and fossil fuel plants without adequate backups in place, jeopardizing grid and price stability.

**Blowing Smoke:** Climate activists often present renewable energy as a [win-win](#), offering cheaper, cleaner energy with no drawbacks. That’s not true. While the coal plants may no longer be blowing smoke, some environmental activists most certainly are.

## China’s Climate Imperialism



China’s dominance over clean energy technology has allowed it to cement its influence over developing nations, [Politico](#) reports.

### What’s Going On:

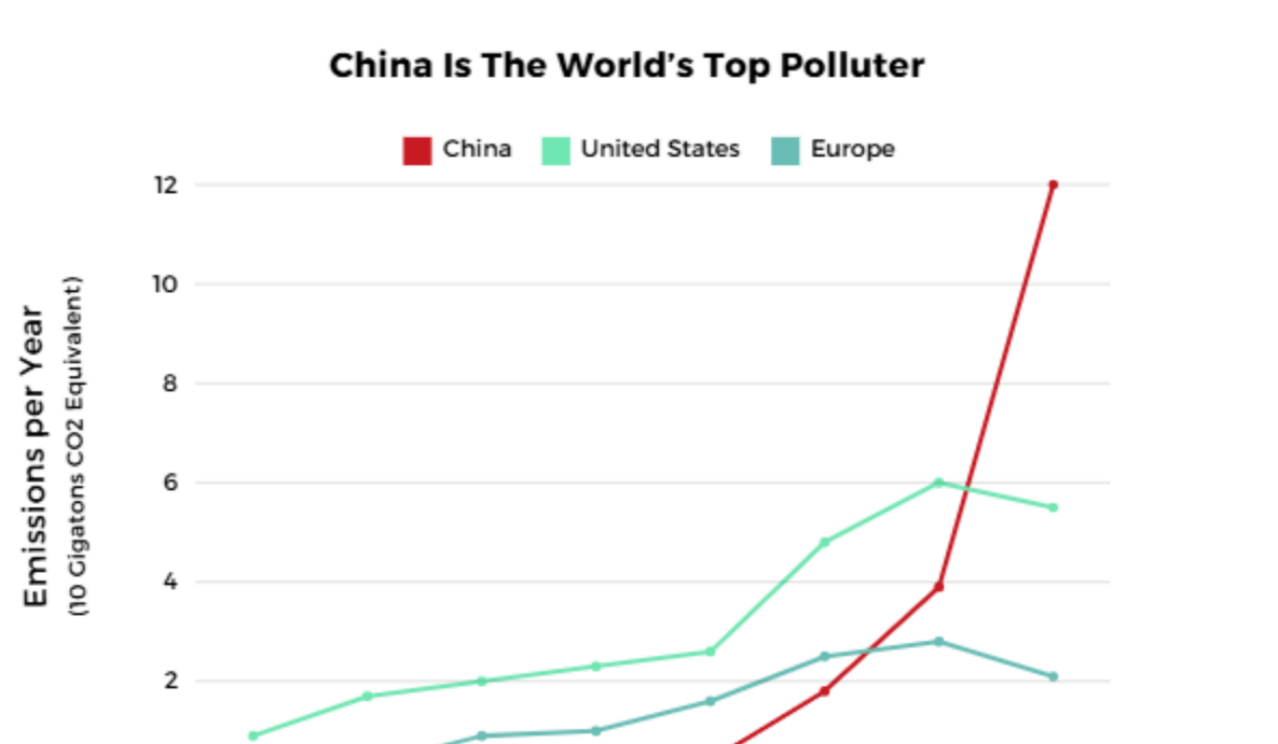
Beijing’s decades-long effort to dominate the world’s clean energy economy is enabling tight business alliances with governments in Africa, Asia and Latin America—without insisting on the labor and environmental safeguards that the United States and European Union typically demand. Those countries, in turn, are taking China’s side in disputes with the U.S. and Europe.

**How It Works:** China has provided over \$25 billion in climate financing to developing nations since 2016. But these deals often come with strings attached—such as requiring countries to transfer ownership of natural resources or strategic shipping ports.

**China’s Dominance:** China is able to exert this control for a few reasons:

- [One-on-one agreements:](#) China works directly with developing nations to fund green infrastructure projects. The U.S., in contrast, often donates money to intermediaries like The World Bank or International Monetary Fund, which pool money from many sources before cutting checks.
- [Monopoly power:](#) China also has a “stranglehold over the minerals and technology underlying electric cars, batteries, solar panels and other clean-energy infrastructure.” Per Politico, “86 percent of battery, 81 percent of solar, 64 percent of wind and 69 percent of electrolyzer technologies are made in China.”

**Do As I Say, Not As I Do:** While China is quick to sell its renewable technology to developing and developed nations alike, that doesn’t mean the country is averse to fossil fuels. China is the world’s [top polluter](#), generating 30% of the world’s greenhouse gases—more than the United States and EU combined.



Accordingly, China’s interest in the green transition can only be described as China first: It “serves China’s goals, benefiting its clean-technology industries while allowing fossil fuels to stay dominant for decades to come.”

**The Upshot:** China’s dominance in clean technology—and its willingness to leverage that dominance to advance its geopolitical goals—shows why climate efforts aren’t always as rosy as they appear. Decarbonization may sound great, until you realize it empowers the CCP and other global dictators. When it comes to climate finance, there’s no such thing as a carbon-free lunch.

## The Best of the Rest

Additional stories about ESG investing, company happenings, and more.

- [City of Detroit to accept cryptocurrency for tax payments:](#) paper money may one day go the way of the copper shilling, but death and taxes are here to stay.
- [Americans are souring on corporate DEI efforts:](#) but companies are continuing to [push](#) them anyway.
- [How the AI boom may lead to economic growth:](#) will it be a sudden explosion or a slow burn? The history of the computer boom may provide clues.
- [Shell exits carbon offset market:](#) announcement comes just days after Dutch court [overturned](#) climate ruling mandating the company cut emissions.
- [Nineteen states seek to block BlackRock’s stake in utilities:](#) ask the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to deny BlackRock’s blanket authorization to exceed cap in ownership of utilities companies.
- [Climate talks end with \\$300 billion annual agreement:](#) plan was immediately lambasted by developing nations, which claim it isn’t nearly enough.
- [CalPERS affirms commitment to ESG:](#) threatens to invest “outside the U.S. should Trump administration and/or Republican policies result in fewer [sustainable] investment opportunities.”

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While many asset managers push companies to focus on other stakeholders such as employees, suppliers, the environment and society at large, we live by a strict commitment to shareholder primacy—the belief that **the purpose of a for-profit corporation is to maximize long-run value for investors.** [Click here](#) to learn why shareholder primacy is so important.

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