

Above the line

How producers, directors, and cast can set the tone for clean mobile power adoption

About clean mobile power

Diesel generators have long powered film and TV productions, but the technology now exists to replace them. Solar trailers, battery energy storage systems (BESS), and hydrogen power units (HPUs) can deliver clean, quiet electricity that meets production power needs. These solutions can cut generator-related emissions by 60–80 percent, while reducing noise and improving air quality on set.

Thanks to these advancements, productions now have access to a suite of clean mobile power options: compact batteries for set lighting and construction work, solar on ultra-efficient trailers to handle trailer heating and cooling, and large trailer-mounted BESS and hydrogen units capable of powering entire basecamps and sets. These solutions are already being deployed successfully on productions large and small to meet a variety of different power needs.

Benefits

Clean mobile power is not just an environmental upgrade; it is also a creative enabler. Silent, fume-free power systems such as battery energy storage systems allow for greater flexibility in location choice, improved sound recording conditions, and a more comfortable on-set environment for both cast and crew. For directors and cinematographers, clean mobile power expands creative possibilities by powering equipment in remote or noise-sensitive areas. For producers, it reduces operational risks like community complaints and generator failure from wet stacking. And for talent, it means a quieter, cleaner, and healthier workspace that reflects the industry's commitment to innovation and sustainability.

Cost considerations

While clean mobile power solutions may still cost more than diesel generators today, productions and suppliers can recoup these costs through fuel savings and lower maintenance costs, respectively. The technologies themselves (batteries, fuel cells, and PV cells) already benefit from mature, global manufacturing and proven reliability. What drives current premiums is scale: purpose-built systems for film and TV production are still nascent. As more productions adopt clean power, costs are likely to fall, unlocking a future where reliable, zero-emission energy is both the smarter and more affordable choice.

Call to action

Above-the-line leaders such as producers, directors, and talent can champion clean power in production planning and on set. By setting clear expectations for clean mobile power use on productions, they create space for experimentation and wider adoption of these solutions. When visible leaders commit to clean mobile power solution adoption practices, they help normalize adoption and inspire peers across the industry.

This summary was created as a companion document to the report *Charting the Path to Clean-Powered Productions: A Decarbonization Roadmap for Film and Television*. You can read the full report here:

<https://rmi.org/charting-the-path-to-clean-powered-productions>.

How above-the-line producers, directors, and cast can help reduce emissions

Checklist item	Why is it important?	Potential collaborators	Ideal outcome
<p>Communicate a clear message to department heads about the importance of using clean mobile power, and create space for experimentation with new approaches.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Producers and directors help define the culture for the wider production team. Setting a positive narrative for the use of clean mobile power will encourage its use more widely and in innovative ways. Producers can empower crew to rise above the traditional fears that have promoted a culture of providing excess power to sets in the past, and to ask necessary questions for the effective use of clean mobile power on productions. Cast can communicate their desire for the production and basecamp/trailers to use clean mobile power, creating a quieter and healthier work environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department heads, production leadership, talent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Crew feels enabled to think outside the box on power needs, basing the power plan on creative certainties rather than unplanned assumptions and what-ifs.
<p>Champion the inclusion of clean mobile power technology in scheduling and planning conversations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrating cleantech from the earliest stages makes it more likely to be adopted efficiently, without slowing or compromising creative work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Production manager, department heads 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Smoother integration into creative workflows
<p>Include sustainability crew in wider production processes and decision-making.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrating input from sustainability crew members in wider decision-making can help avoid blind spots that make emissions reductions challenging further down the line. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Crew, production leadership, creative leadership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Socialization of clean mobile power solutions available on the market with decision makers