

DEBUNKING 7 COMMON MYTHS ABOUT SOLAR POWER

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Solar power is abundant, non-polluting, and mainstream. In fact, there is now enough solar in the U.S. to power three million homes. In this day and age, solar has now become an energy solution with widespread benefits to our health, economy, and environment. Still not a believer? Let's debunk the myths and spread the facts on solar.

MYTH #1: SOLAR IS TOO EXPENSIVE/I DON'T HAVE THE MONEY UPFRONT FOR THE COST OF SOLAR

Solar is one of the few household expenses that will pay for itself (unlike that new deck). If you can afford to pay your electric bill and have good credit, you can afford to install solar. Different financing options are now available, some with no money down. Studies show that on average, solar panels return two to four times their cost in saved electricity bills and typically pay for themselves completely within 7 to 15 years. According to a recent study by Harvard Medical School, if coal and other fossil fuels had to tally the total hidden expenses their use imposed on society (i.e. health problems and pollution), coal wouldn't be the cheapest source of electricity and clean-burning solar wouldn't look nearly so costly.

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MYTH #2: SOLAR WILL GET MORE EFFICIENT AND CHEAPER, SO I SHOULD WAIT

Don't wait! Unlike cell phones and computers, modern solar panel technology has changed little for decades. While solar panels are getting slightly more efficient and cheaper every year, the incentives that are available for solar are declining every year. The U.S. is also imposing new tariffs on solar modules from China; therefore the costs for many U.S. solar consumers will increase.

MYTH #3: SOLAR POWER IS NOT READY FOR MASS CONSUMPTION

This particular myth can be harmful, because it causes homeowners to wait, although the technology is proven and reliable. The idea that solar generation will make the grid fall apart, is false. In Germany, solar power capacity is already half of the power demand, even though they receive less sun than America. Solar decreases deadly pollution and cuts water use. However, beyond that, it also guards against fuel price volatility, decreases the risk of power outages, adds grid stability, increases grid security, and cuts the price of electricity.

MYTH #4: SOLAR ENERGY IS CAUSING POWER PRICES TO RISE

Solar is actually an insurance policy against rising costs. The single largest reason for rising power bills is the cost of

upgrades to transmission and distribution infrastructure. This would exist with or without the addition of solar power systems. Solar power actually brings down the price of wholesale electricity. Electricity suppliers get their electricity on the grid through a bidding process. Because the costs of solar and wind power plants are essentially just in the process of building them (the fuel costs are \$0 and the maintenance costs are negligible), they can outbid pretty much every other source of power. As a result, they drive down the price of wholesale electricity.

MYTH #5: I WILL HAVE TO CHANGE ALL MY APPLIANCES IF I GET SOLAR

Many homeowners perceive solar is a complete switchover from regular utility electricity. In fact, you don't have to change out any of your appliances. With a grid-tie system, there is no change with the way power is distributed through your home or the way you use your power. You are simply offsetting your electricity as a whole.

MYTH #6: SOLAR WILL INCREASE MY PROPERTY TAXES

Solar is actually exempt from property tax in the state of New Mexico. Also, solar increases the value of the house. According to Department of Energy research, solar homes sell at *twice the rate* of a conventional home. Its research

also found that homeowners consider energy costs an extremely important factor in the decision to buy a home. Solar panels provide a competitive advantage because a home's owner is not as subject to constantly rising utility prices.

MYTH #7: SOLAR IS JUST A FAD

Solar panels were first invented in 1954 by scientists at Bell Labs. It is a well proven, well developed technology, utilized for decades by NASA and the U.S. military. Thousands of Americans are installing solar in their homes every year, and there is a growing industry and shift toward using it for power in the U.S. In fact, 74 percent of all new electric-generating capacity installed in the U.S. in the fourth quarter of 2014 came from solar.

The National Renewable Energy Laboratory has found photovoltaics to be "the most reliable source of electric power ever invented". In numerous polls, we can see that most people will favor solar energy. Perhaps it's because they realize that energy from the sun is clean, reliable, and affordable. With all that in mind, there's no better time than now to embrace solar energy.

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