

Photon

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Quasi-mono hype over?

Equipment makers offer products for mono-like ingots but demand is slow



Previewed: Intersolar Munich

Many new products presented at Europe's largest PV show

Punished: Chinese PV makers

Europe puts import tariffs on wafers, cells and modules

Surveyed: Sun simulators

Overview on IV-measurement equipment for modules

Terminated: Italian PV program

Successful feed-in tariff program reaches funding limit

Critics of renewable energy policies need to get facts straight

In a recent op-ed, Taylor L. Smith of the Heartland Institute argued in favor of abolishing North Carolina's environmentally friendly Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Portfolio Standard (REPS), claiming it will lead to higher taxes and 3,500 lost jobs statewide.

But it's what Smith didn't say that should be disconcerting to North Carolinians, as well as to people all across America. According to published reports, internal documents obtained from the Heartland Institute in 2012 detail how the organization planned to secretly develop school curriculums as a way to create doubt about the causes of climate change. Wow.

What's more, national efforts to repeal renewable energy portfolio standards are being bankrolled by big oil companies and other fossil fuel interests. I wonder where they stand on climate change and global warming?

Reading this so-called policy analysis reminded me of an old saying: »Beware of the half-truth. You may have gotten the wrong half.«

Clearly, there is no secret when it comes to the growing importance of solar energy to America's economy, as well as to our nation's long-stated goal of achieving energy independence.

Over the past 5 years, the US solar energy industry has experienced sustained growth thanks to rising demand, falling costs and new financing options. Since 2008, the amount of solar powering our homes, businesses and military bases has increased six-fold – from 1,100 MW to more than 7,700 MW today, which is enough to power more than 1 million average American households.

Some of this growth is attributed to the fact that the cost of a solar system has dropped by nearly 40 percent over the past 2 years, making solar more affordable than ever for consumers.

Just as importantly, solar has been a bright spot for the US economy during these troubled financial times. America's solar industry now employs nearly 120,000 workers throughout

the country. That's a 13.2 percent growth over 2011's jobs numbers, making solar one of the fastest-growing industries in the nation. What's more, many of the 5,600 companies that make up America's solar energy industry are small businesses spread all across the US.

Since 2007, the total economic benefit to North Carolina from clean energy project development is \$1.7 billion, and today there are more than 15,200 full-time equivalent employees working in North Carolina's clean energy industry.

Nowhere is this success more evident than at Apple's massive solar panel farm and adjacent fuel cell facility in Maiden, which is now providing clean energy for its \$1 billion, 500,000 ft² data center. This is one of the largest non-utility owned systems in the world and is part of Apple's bold and visionary plan to use 100 percent clean energy for all of its data centers.

That's real progress – the kind of progress the vast majority of Americans want. Over the past 5 years, national polls show that 9 out of 10 people believe we should develop and use more solar power. And this support is consistent across the political spectrum.

In addition to Apple, some of the most successful companies and organizations in the world, including FedEx, GE, GM, Google, IKEA, Macy's, Target, Walmart, Berkshire Hathaway and the US military, have all made significant investments in solar.

Why? It's simple: solar is good for our economy, our environment and our nation's future prosperity.

Fortunately, attempts to repeal North Carolina's renewable energy law failed – thanks, in part, to efforts by SEIA and many others in the state. But rest assured, this fight is far from over.

So let's have that discussion over clean energy – using hard facts and not half-truths – and then tell the »earth-is-flat« crowd to set sail.

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Solar Energy Industries Association (SEIA)

▲ Rhone Resch, president of the US Solar Energy Industries Association (SEIA), writes a monthly column on PV in the US.



ELight Wind and Solar, Inc.

◀ More energy from wind and solar: The Colorado State Legislature has passed a bill that doubles renewable energy requirements for rural energy suppliers from 10 percent to 20 percent by 2020.

of 19 clean energy power plants including the Ivanpah, Agua Caliente, Desert Sunlight, Alamosa Solar, Antelope Valley Solar Ranch One, Mesquite Solar 1 and California Valley Solar Ranch One solar power projects.

The US Department of Energy will distribute up to \$20 million over the next 4 years to companies developing thermochemical energy storage (TCES) sys-