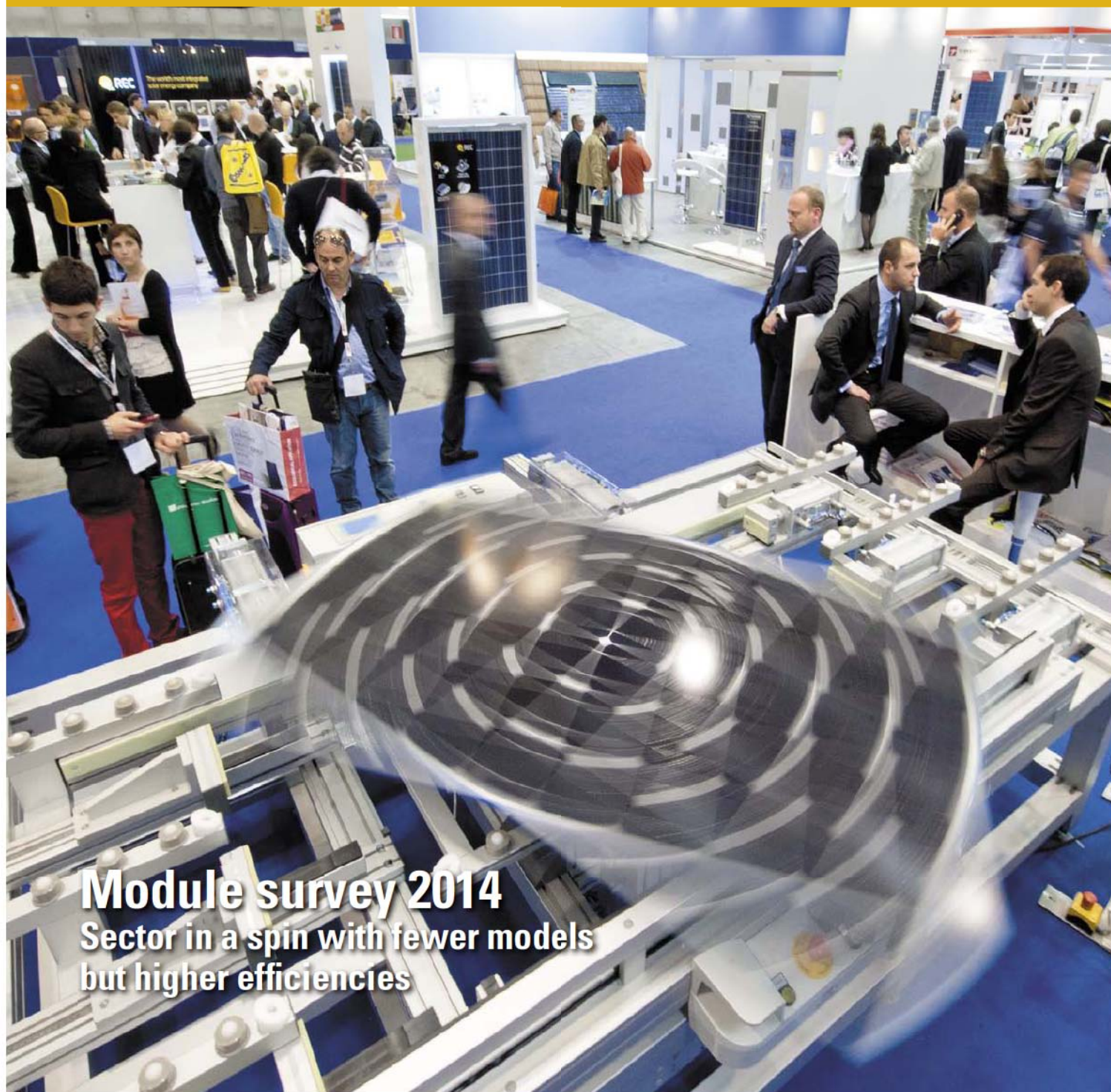


# Photon

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## Module survey 2014

Sector in a spin with fewer models  
but higher efficiencies



### Progress in Brazil

As Brazil prepares to host the soccer World Cup, PV scores a major goal in one state

### Danger in Germany

New government coalition intends to cap renewables and support coal-fired power

### Smart modules

As safety becomes more important, module suppliers integrate new technologies

### Mobile module check

Luminescence expands from factory-based quality control to installed modules



## Solar tax policies help level the playing field

As expected, the issue of comprehensive tax reform is now heating up on Capitol Hill. The Senate Finance Committee recently released a far-ranging proposal to overhaul the US Tax Code, wiping out a wide range of tax incentives the government offers to promote clean energy and energy efficiency.

Certainly, this is an important discussion to have, but in some ways it's putting the cart before the horse.

Most importantly, are incentives for renewable energy sources achieving their goals? In the case of solar, the answer is a resounding yes. Today, America's solar energy industry is helping to create thousands of new jobs, save US consumers money, boost our economy and reduce pollution. That's the very definition of an effective public policy.

In 2006, prior to the enactment of the solar Investment Tax Credit (ITC), there were less than 600 MW of grid-connected solar in the US. Today, we are closing in on 13,000 MW – enough to effectively power more than 2 million American homes, including the White House! Thanks to smart public policies, like the solar ITC and 1603 Treasury program, solar has made extraordinary progress in a very short period of time – and yet we still only represent about 1 percent of the total electric generating capacity of the US. Is solar more competitive today? Absolutely. But the playing field isn't level yet. The oil and gas industry, for example, has enjoyed incentives embedded in the US Tax Code for nearly 100 years. You can't catch up to that overnight.

But clearly, solar is trending in the right direction. According to the most recent report by GTM Research and the Solar Energy Industries Association (SEIA), the US installed 930 MW of solar in Q3 2013 – up 20 percent over Q2 2013 and 35 percent over Q3 2012. This represents the second largest quarter in the history of the US solar market and the largest quarter ever for residential PV installations.

Even more importantly, 2013 is likely to be the first time in more than a decade that the US installs more solar capacity than world leader Germany. When all of the numbers are finally tallied, 2013 will go down as a record-shattering year for the US solar industry. We've now joined Germany, China and Japan as worldwide leaders when it comes to the installation of new solar capacity.

Since the solar ITC went into effect, we've gone from being an «upstart industry» – one that our critics predicted would fail miserably – to one of the fastest-growing industries in the US – today employing 120,000 Americans at more than 6,000 companies from coast to coast and pumping billions of dollars into the US economy. But this debate shouldn't be simply about economics. It should also be about preserving our environment and giving future generations of Americans a fair shot at prosperity. Today, the debate continues over how long oil, natural gas and coal reserves will last before being completely depleted. 100 years? 200 years? Maybe 300 years at most?

Then remember this: the life expectancy of the sun is about 5 billion years – give or take a millennia. Which do you think is a better long-term investment? ● rr



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

**The US added 177 MW of installed solar capacity in November.** A total of 14 utility-scale solar power plants with a combined capacity of 177 MW were connected to the grid in the US in November, down from 504 MW in October but up substantially from 5 MW in September. According to the US Federal Energy Regulatory Commission's (FERC) October Energy Infrastructure Update, 222 utility-scale solar power plants representing 2,631 MW of solar capacity were connected to the grid in the first 11 months of 2013, up from 294 plants totaling 1,584 MW in the same period last year. According to revised figures, the US had 7.11 GW of installed utility-scale solar generating capacity as of the end of November. This amounted to 0.61 percent of total installed US operating generating capacity, up from 0.59 percent in September.

During the month of November, Tenaska Inc. connected the 84 MW Imperial Energy So-

lar Center phase 2 project in Imperial County, California, and LS Power Group connected its 33 MW Arlington Valley Solar Energy phase 4 project in Maricopa County, Arizona. Also in November, Apple Inc. completed the 20 MW Apple Data Center phase 4 project in Catawba County, North Carolina, and Trinity Solar connected its 12 MW McGuire Dix Solar project in Burlington County, New Jersey. Other notable projects that were completed in November are Dominion Resource's 4 MW Somers Solar Center in Connecticut and Public Service Co.'s 8 MW Manzano project and 2 MW Los Luna project in New Mexico.

**Calls on Senate Finance Committee to protect solar ITC.** The US Solar Energy Industries Association (SEIA) has criticized a draft tax plan drawn up by US Senate Finance Committee Chairman Max Baucus for reducing the solar Investment Tax Credit (ITC) and for altering the way companies depreciate their assets.

«While we appreciate efforts by Chairman Baucus to make the convoluted US tax code simpler and fairer for everyone, we're very concerned that reducing the solar ITC and dramatically altering the way companies depreciate their assets could jeopardize future clean energy development in the United States,» said SEIA head Rhone Resch.

In mid-December, a group of 24 US senators called on the Senate Finance Committee to renew key renewable energy tax incentives that are set to expire. In an open letter, the senators urged the committee to extend 10 tax policies that they say have created jobs and other economic benefits and have reduced pollution. The 10 policies include the Renewable Electricity Production Tax Credit (PTC) and the ITC, which the senators say have been critical to supporting investments in renewable energy generation projects. The senators have also asked the committee to change the ITC rules so that