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LA opens rooftops for solar energy installations

By Enid Burns

17:03 April 27, 2012

5 Pictures



Los Angeles rooftops have potential for generating power under the CLEAN LA Solar program

[Image Gallery \(5 images\)](#)

We're used to seeing solar arrays in desert locations, but this initiative is looking to a new frontier for solar energy - the rooftops of Los Angeles. The recent approval of a Feed-in-Tariff (FIT) rooftop solar program known as CLEAN LA Solar by the Los Angeles Department of Water & Power opens up over 12,000 acres of potential rooftop space for solar development.

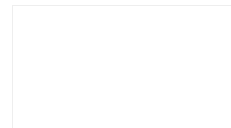


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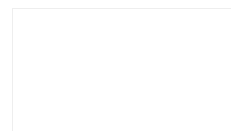
The program targets the rooftops of local homes, businesses and multi-family buildings within Los Angeles to provide rooftops for the installation and collection of solar power. The FIT initiative means building owners will get paid for the energy generated on the rooftop installations. The program differs from a net metering system, which grants owners a retail credit for the portion of electricity generated.

"Feed-in-Tariff means getting paid for energy you're generating from your rooftop," explained Adam Jacobson from the Los Angeles Business Council. "Net metering

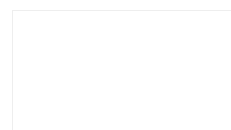
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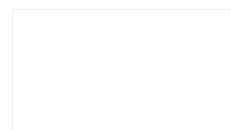
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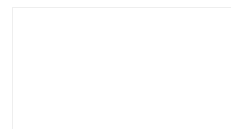
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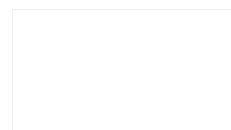
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"Photochemical upconversion" could allow conventional solar cells to break 40% efficiency



Nomad portable solar lighting system launches during Milan Design Week 2012



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turns your meter back so you get a refund."

To create the CLEAN LA Solar initiative, the Los Angeles Business Council created a coalition of roughly 30 non-profit and environmental organizations including CLEAN Coalition, American Lung Association, Tree People and LA Conservation Corps and the Sierra Club.

Over the past three years the coalition has commissioned five studies to support an action for the CLEAN LA Solar program.

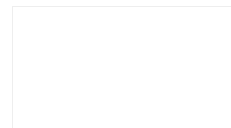
The goal of the program is to build the first 150 megawatts of rooftop solar in the next three to four years with the aim of reaching the 600 megawatts granted in the FiT by 2020. The CLEAN LA Solar initiative works alongside a state mandate requiring local utilities to generate 33 percent of their power from renewable sources by 2020.

"The 12,000-plus acres of available rooftop space available for solar generation could generate as much as 5.5 gigawatts of power Los Angeles," said Jacob Lipa, Los Angeles Business Council Chairman, in a statement. "While getting to a 600 megawatt FIT only takes advantage of a fraction of the total capacity in the city, it's a great start to encourage investment in the city."

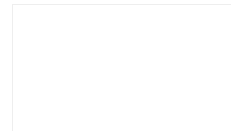
While other localities have implemented solar programs, the Los Angeles Business Council says the Los Angeles participation is a significant development. "It's the first large U.S. city," Jacobson said. "Los Angeles Department of Water & Power is the largest municipal utility in the country."

An increase in solar power equipment in Los Angeles will mean more than a clean energy source. The Los Angeles Business Council sponsored a study conducted by UCLA that found that a 600-megawatt FIT could result in 18,000 green jobs. The program could also bring in as much as \$2 billion in investment. Businesses themselves will benefit from long-term cost savings, in which they'll realize a new revenue source in the sale of electricity.

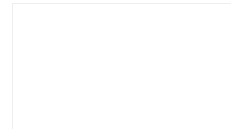
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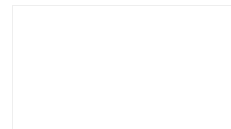
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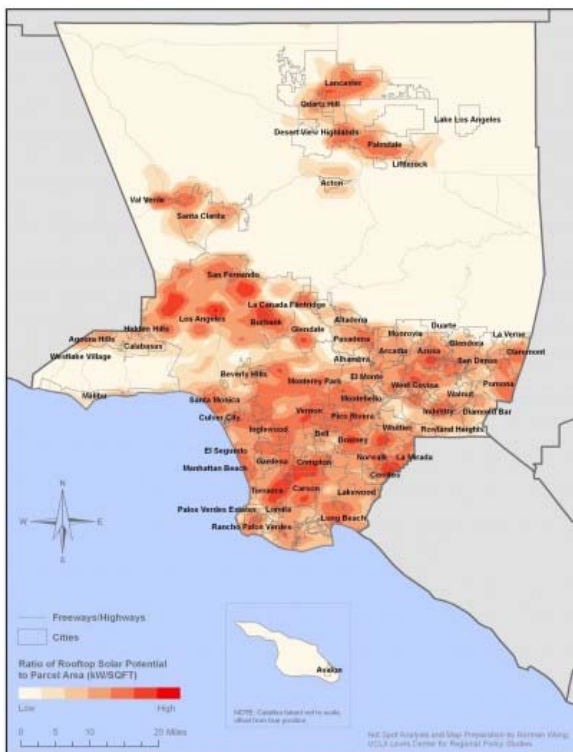
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Map of the rooftop solar potential of Los Angeles County

While any building with a rooftop is eligible for the CLEAN LA Solar program, the Los Angeles Business Council has its eye on a number of buildings. "As part of our campaign to advocate for this program we've identified the top 10 rooftops in each city council district," said Jacobson.

Many of those viable rooftops aren't in affluent areas. A property study commissioned by the Los Angeles Business Council identified several rooftops with the greatest solar power potential in economically disadvantaged neighborhoods.

Source: [Los Angeles Business Council on sustainability, CLEAN LA Solar program](#)

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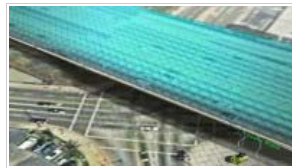
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