

Solar Energy Emergency

June 22, 2010 - Realty Times

by Carla Hill, Managing Editor

Solar energy has been making big waves over the last few years. As energy costs rise and consumer awareness heightens over environmental issues, many homeowners are making alternative energy choices -- from buying hybrid cars to installing home wind generators.

It has become almost common knowledge that the number one cause of [global warming](#) is coal burning power plants -- producing 2.5 billion tons of carbon dioxide poisoning every year. Those plants are what make our electricity. That is a considerably larger amount than automobiles produce -- at 1.5 billion tons. And if you're a resident of the United States, you have even more to be responsible for. While our population is 4 percent of the total world population, we emit 25 percent of the pollution from fossil-fuels.

But Americans are ready to change. A recent Roper survey has found that "eighty percent of survey respondents would like solar systems available on new home construction; a strong majority of Americans believe solar power is more important than ever." The study also found that:

- 79 percent feel that homebuilders should offer solar power as an option for all new homes.
- 84 percent of Americans ages 25-49 supported solar on new homes; 69 percent of those over 65 years agree.
- Those living in the South and West are more likely to favor solar on new homes (83 percent) than those living in the Midwest or Northeast (74 percent).

- After being told that solar homes have a proven higher resale value, 64 percent would be willing to pay more for home with a solar system.
- 73 percent believe that solar energy technology is more important today than ever.
- 42 percent say that saving money on monthly utility bills is the most compelling argument for installing solar power. Other respondents indicated it was to decrease the nation's dependence on oil (31 percent) or reduce environmental pollution (18 percent).



While many let initial sticker shock deter them from seriously considering solar energy, this could be a serious long-term mistake -- financially and environmentally. With the added government incentives (paying percentages of equipment and installation fees, varying by state) and with the monthly savings over the next 10, 20, or 30 years over conventional electricity methods, solar is a win-win. With recent studies and congressmen urging action, some states have already stepped up.

It was just six months ago that California legislature approved the \$3.2 billion "California Solar Initiative," -- a 10-year plan that will provide many Californians (residential and business) with rooftop solar panels all across the state. And [MSNBC reports](#) that "last year, the Texas Legislature updated the state's renewable energy portfolio to require 5 percent -- or 5,880 megawatts -- of electricity to be generated by alternate sources by 2015."

But the United States is entering late in the game. Japan and many other countries have been pushing the need for solar power for years -- and seeing an amazing response.

So what action are you going to take? Some Americans are pledging to see the new film, "[An Inconvenient Truth](#)," being actively pushed by former Vice President Al Gore, in order to better educate themselves on the issues at hand.

Another option -- for those guilty of having gas guzzling cars -- is to consider the [Terra Pass](#)™. You can calculate an estimate of how much carbon dioxide your car emits. For most, "each year, the average car emits about 10,000 lbs (three times its weight!) in carbon dioxide pollution." Then you buy a "Terrapass" and the company "funds clean energy projects that reduce industrial carbon dioxide emissions."

But in the end, you must raise awareness in your own area and take the necessary steps. And in the end, you might be breathing easier -- with lower energy costs, reduced global warming, and a home that is worth more to potential buyers.

