

Ground mounted solar

Posted on *January 13,2016* by *admin*



Don't let the the title "Ground mounted solar" put you off.

Sometimes you find the weirdest most improbable story out there you have to run it. This is one and as a disclaimer I should add I didn't find the story but my brother did somehow. I know Americans read my blog, I apologise but these stories only seem to come out of the US. A small town (Woodland) in North Carolina US has recently rejected a Ground mounted solar farm. Nothing unusual there but its the apparent reasons at a public meeting to oppose them given that have made the story go [viral](#). They include; " the solar farms would suck up all the energy from the sun and businesses would not come to Woodland" "that photosynthesis, which depends upon sunlight, would not happen and would keep the vegetation from growing." "no one could tell her that solar panels didn't cause cancer" Some people have written more [charitable](#) explanations of what was said but on the face of it it does seem to show the most incredible ignorance. I do have some issues with ground mounted solar, but not all of them are expressed in the links above. Firstly, there have to be concerns over the aesthetics of filling green areas with large numbers of panels. This is one of the main arguments used against ground mounted solar and I share some of these concerns. There are developments that find a way round these problems. The use of wasteland, old quarries or old airfields have been made in the UK without any loss of amenity. Putting solar farms in areas surrounded by trees so they are invisible to those around is another option. Another potential drawback is we are setting up another competition in land between fuel and food. Its not possible to use land for solar farms to grow crops unlike with wind farms. It is possible to graze sheep or keep poultry around solar panels. We need to watch this. If solar is in large farms then there will be resistance losses getting the power to where its needed which by and large is not going to be where its generated. Its not a "deal breaker", but is worth bearing in mind. One criticism I don't accept is that of cancer. The actual panels in their finished state are not going to cause cancer. However, I do accept the argument over their manufacture in the link above. There are two counter arguments to this. Firstly, worker protection is important and suppliers of panels here along with us who buy them should ensure those making them are treated safely and fairly. This not an argument against solar PV but for workers rights. Second people who make this criticism don't mention that PV's are semiconductors. We are surrounded by droves of semiconductors, I'm writing this using many now. I hear little concern over semiconductors in phones, computers and just about every other device going. In my view the best place for PV (which I love and have fitted on my house) is on a roof. Aesthetically its better and the power ends up where its needed most. However I'm torn, there is no doubt we need to get off fossil fuels as fast as possible for peak oil and climate change reasons and ground mounted solar has helped bring the price of solar down. There are drawbacks and silliness can sometimes help see [these](#). It looks like even the UK ground mounted solar is now at grid parity so this problem is not going to go away. Neil

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