

Top Five Solar Energy Myths



Myth #1: Solar will get cheaper, so I should wait.

Fact: These days the media loves to hype emerging technologies, but the truth is we are still using the same solar technology that we were back in the 1960's. Since then, solar has become only moderately more efficient (unlike computers or cellphones, which have experienced dramatic improvements) and solar has never seen a dramatic decrease in price. Given federal tax credits for solar (30 percent) and state incentive programs, solar makes excellent economic sense...right now.



Myth #2: Solar doesn't work in cool, cloudy, or foggy climates.

Fact: Solar panels work in ambient light and will still produce significant energy in the fog or on overcast days. In fact, solar panels are actually more efficient at cooler temperatures. Although this might seem counterintuitive, consider that a solar array on a rooftop in cool, foggy San Francisco produces only one percent less electricity than one in nearby Sacramento, where it's sunny and hot.

Myth #3: I will store the excess energy I generate in batteries.

Fact: Nearly all modern solar panel systems are "grid tied," which means they're connected to the conventional electricity grid. Your system generates power during the day and excess is fed back into the grid through a system called "net metering." When this happens, your meter spins backwards and your utility company credits you for that power. At night or on overcast days, you'll use grid power, but you generally don't get charged for it because of all the credit you've generated. This grid tied method tends to be the most convenient for homeowners. Batteries are an option for those who really want them, but they're expensive, bulky, and have to be replaced every five to ten years.



Myth #4: Solar is still so expensive that it will never be able to pay for itself

Fact: In addition to stabilizing (or eliminating) your monthly electricity bill, a solar panel array is one of the few things you can purchase that will actually pay for itself. Studies show that solar panels return two to four times their cost over 40 years, and typically pay for themselves completely within 7 to 15 years. If you live in a state with particularly good incentives, the payback period can be as little as two to four years.

Myth #5: Solar will look ugly on my roof.

Fact: Haven't you heard? Solar is the new black. In the last ten years there's been a growing awareness of how smart renewable energy is from both an economic and an environmental perspective, so solar panels are finally coming into their own and being regarded as an enhancement instead of an eyesore. Homeowners' associations that used to be steadfastly against solar have changed their policies and are now going solar in groups! For homeowners who don't like the look of traditional solar panels, there are now many options and styles, including thin-film and non-reflective solar panel roofing shingles. These styles are discreet and lower-profile than the panels of the 1960's. As they say, beauty is in the eye of the beholder!

**Learn more about how solar works at 1BOG's Solar University:
<http://howsolarworks.1bog.org>**

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