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SOLAR POWER IN THE BLUEGRASS: A STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION

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Green Energy, specifically solar energy, can be a controversial topic in Kentucky, a state which produces eight percent of the United States' total coal.^[i]
(file:///C:/Users/Evan/Documents/KJournal/Online%20Editor%20Stuff/Blog%20Posts/Solar%20Blog.docx#_e
dn1) The coal industry in Kentucky, as recently as 2006, was responsible for nearly 528 million dollars in tax revenue. But due to high coal-related expenditures, the industry actually does not advance the economic policy or goals of the Commonwealth in a significant way, if at all.^[ii]
(file:///C:/Users/Evan/Documents/KJournal/Online%20Editor%20Stuff/Blog%20Posts/Solar%20Blog.docx#_e
dn2) While Kentucky invests modestly in green energy, legislators push pro-coal legislation because of the overwhelming support of the industry by voters.^[iii]
(file:///C:/Users/Evan/Documents/KJournal/Online%20Editor%20Stuff/Blog%20Posts/Solar%20Blog.docx#_e
dn3)

Solar power is growing across the globe as industrialized nations reduce their dependence on fossil fuels. Currently forty-three states, including Kentucky, have "net metering", which allows customer-users to receive energy credits from electrical companies for their excess energy.^[iv]
(file:///C:/Users/Evan/Documents/KJournal/Online%20Editor%20Stuff/Blog%20Posts/Solar%20Blog.docx#_e
dn4) In order to be eligible for net metering, one must have an eligible electric generating facility; Kentucky defines an eligible electric generating facility as a unit with a capacity not greater than thirty kilowatts.^[v]
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dn5)

Thirty kilowatts of energy is only a small fraction of many Kentuckians power usage, especially when industrial and commercial properties are considered.^[vi]
(file:///C:/Users/Evan/Documents/KJournal/Online%20Editor%20Stuff/Blog%20Posts/Solar%20Blog.docx#_e
dn6) A bill allowing for increased net metering from thirty kilowatts to one or two megawatts was considered at a committee hearing in 2012, but made no further progress. The increase in allowed energy capacity for eligible electric generating facilities would allow Kentucky to reduce dependence on fossil fuels, lower the cost of utility bills across the state, and could be an incentive for new business ,which could operate with lower energy costs.





The issue with solar power is the initial cost of installing a solar panel on your home. Estimates can range from 15,000 to upwards of 30,000 dollars for installation. The high cost makes transitioning to solar power difficult for many Americans, especially those with low to moderate levels of income. The White House has taken note of this and started a new initiative to install one gigawatt (1000 megawatts) of solar power in lower income homes by 2020.[vii]

(file:///C:/Users/Evan/Documents/KJournal/Online%20Editor%20Stuff/Blog%20Posts/Solar%20Blog.docx#_edn7) The initiative would allow homeowners to finance solar energy through Property Accessed Clean Energy (PACE).[viii]

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The United States is changing rapidly as forces in our government work to decrease our dependence on foreign oil. Kentucky can be ahead of the curve or let itself fall behind as other states move forward with green energy initiatives. Coal has been, and will continue to be, a staple of Kentucky's economy for many more years. But the right steps now towards investment in solar energy can help many Kentuckians adapt to the changing financial environment.

[i]

(file:///C:/Users/Evan/Documents/KJournal/Online%20Editor%20Stuff/Blog%20Posts/Solar%20Blog.docx#_ednref1) U.S. Energy Information Administration, *Which states produce the most coal?*, <https://www.eia.gov/tools/faqs/faq.cfm?id=69&t=2> (last visited August 22, 2016).

[ii]

(file:///C:/Users/Evan/Documents/KJournal/Online%20Editor%20Stuff/Blog%20Posts/Solar%20Blog.docx#_ednref2) See Mountain Association for Community Economic Development, <http://www.maced.org/coal/exe-summary.htm> (last visited August 22, 2016).

[iii]

(file:///C:/Users/Evan/Documents/KJournal/Online%20Editor%20Stuff/Blog%20Posts/Solar%20Blog.docx#_ednref3) *Id.*

[iv]

(file:///C:/Users/Evan/Documents/KJournal/Online%20Editor%20Stuff/Blog%20Posts/Solar%20Blog.docx#_ednref4) Solar Energy Industries Association, <http://www.seia.org/policy/distributed-solar/net-metering> (<http://www.seia.org/policy/distributed-solar/net-metering>); Kentucky Solar Energy Society, *Advanced Net Metering Background*, <http://www.kyses.org/page-1663548> (last visited August 22, 2016).

[v]

(file:///C:/Users/Evan/Documents/KJournal/Online%20Editor%20Stuff/Blog%20Posts/Solar%20Blog.docx#_ednref5) KY. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 278.465 (West 2016).

[vi]

(file:///C:/Users/Evan/Documents/KJournal/Online%20Editor%20Stuff/Blog%20Posts/Solar%20Blog.docx#_ednref6) Kentucky Solar Energy Society, *supra* note iv.

[vii]

(file:///C:/Users/Evan/Documents/KJournal/Online%20Editor%20Stuff/Blog%20Posts/Solar%20Blog.docx#_ednref7) Rebecca Kern, *Low-Income Access to Solar Power Focus of White House Plan*, Bloomberg (July 20, 2016), http://news.bna.com.ezproxy.law.uky.edu/deln/DELNWB/split_display.adp?fedfid=94184900&vname=dennotallissues&cjd=a0j8b8w0e9&split=0.

[viii]

(file:///C:/Users/Evan/Documents/KJournal/Online%20Editor%20Stuff/Blog%20Posts/Solar%20Blog.docx#_ednref8) *Id.*

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