



Where are solar panels manufactured

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Solar panels are made using caustic chemicals like sodium hydroxide and hydrofluoric acid, which can lead to water contamination and air pollution. Apart from concerns surrounding toxic waste, solar panel production is also often associated with habitat loss, carbon emissions, and unsustainable mining practices.

It's important to do your research on a company's ethics and sustainability before buying solar products. Look at the manufacturer's supply chain reports and check how well it follows the Solar Energy Industries Association's Traceability Protocol.

U.S. buyers can reduce the impact their solar panels have on the environment by sourcing them from domestic manufacturers. Firstly, buying domestically reduces the carbon emissions that come from international shipping. Secondly, the U.S. enforces strict laws against forced labor and has even banned imported materials linked to this issue.

David Kuchta, Ph.D. has 10 years of experience in gardening and has read widely in environmental history and the energy transition. An environmental activist since the 1970s, he is also a historian, author, gardener, and educator.

Solar deployments represent a growth opportunity for American manufacturing, with the American market for solar expected to quadruple by 2030. As of this writing, it is still to be seen whether new infrastructure spending will include tax incentives for the rebirth of solar manufacturing in the United States.

As with other issues of fair trade, supporting a just energy transition means assessing the quality not just of the product but of the production process of solar panels. Knowing where those products come from is a large part of that assessment.

Murphy, Laura T. and Nyrola Elim?. "In Broad Daylight: Uyghur Forced Labour and Global Solar Supply Chains." Sheffield Hallam University Helena Kennedy Centre for International Justice, 2021.

Smith, Brittany L., and Robert Margolis. "Expanding the Photovoltaic Supply Chain in the United States: Opportunities and Challenges." National Renewable Energy Laboratory, 2019.

Key: ac = alternating current, CdTe = cadmium telluride, c-Si = crystalline silicon, dc = direct current, E-BOS = electrical balance-of-system, GW = gigawatt, HQ = headquarters, kt = kilotonne, MW = megawatt, S-BOS = structural balance-of-system, W = watt, and yr = year.



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