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Equal Taxation for Solar Representation



Written by Marsha Johnston

Wednesday, 19 November 2008



Yet another example of the unequal policy playing fields between renewable and fossil fuels emerged at a recent seminar on utility-scale solar projects. According to existing tax policy, any industry burning natural gas pays no sales tax on capitalized fuel. In the same way, said Charlie Ricker, senior vice president of thermal solar provider BrightSource Energy Inc., the materials needed to build a solar field that generates steam (mirrors, towers, boilers, power block) should not be subject to sales tax either.

"A solar field is capitalized fuel, just like natural gas, but there is no sales tax on natural gas burned as fuel!" he said, adding that the materials in question account for 45-55 percent of the total capital cost of a concentrated solar power (CSP) installation.

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