

Since has beneficial
health effects.
besides, man



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Since historic times, the sun has been a vital resource for the existence of man on this planet.

Plants, which humans eventually eat, make their food using the sunlight and adequate exposure to sunlight has beneficial health effects. Besides, man has used the sunlight as a source of generating energy. However, with the depletion of fossil fuels, it was not until the twentieth century that more attention was paid to the benefits of solar energy. The sun's energy can be used in many different forms. One of the most commonly used ways is its conversion into electricity by the use of photovoltaic cells to power several household and industrial electrical appliances (Hirschmann; Brooke). The merits that solar energy offers have made some states, for example, the New Jersey, to adopt its use.

However, is its use beneficial, especially for the state of New Jersey? The state of the New Jersey is second to California in terms of the use of solar energy. After a few years of coordinated efforts, the state now generates almost two times more solar energy than Colorado, the number three. The emphasis on renewable energy sources has brought significant benefits to the state. As people are waking up to the reality that the limited world's resources are increasingly being depleted, New Jersey has embraced the use of energy from the sun in order to help in the conservation efforts. Humans have milked the Earth's vital energy reservoirs without thinking of the next generation. Even though the cost of a barrel of oil has increased tremendously, the world's thirst for oil has not been quenched.

It is estimated that if the current trend continues, the world's demand for oil is likely to rise by up to sixty percent in the next two decades. It is possible, and as New Jersey has discovered, that solar energy will be present even after the other resources have been completely depleted from the face of our planet. It is estimated that in the U. S.

, the cost of electricity has been escalating at an estimated rate of 6. 5 percent yearly for the past three decades (Peter, para. 2). Due to the tremendous increase in the cost of generating energy using conventional non-renewable resources, this increase may yield to unprecedented price increases in consumer power bills if no efforts are made to tap on other alternative sources of energy. Besides, more and more consumers are embracing environmentally friendly methods of generating electric power. The thousands and thousands of tons of carbon dioxide and other bi-products being emitted in the atmosphere yearly due to the generation of energy from fossil fuels is making more people turn to less destructive means producing energy. In this regard, the state of New Jersey, which is sometimes called the ' garden state,' has stood out in reducing the emission of pollutants to the atmosphere.

It is without doubt that our increased dependence on fossil fuels for the generation of energy puts us in a difficult situation (Tyrell). In as much as there are a number of wonderful renewable technologies that can generate power, the difficulty has always been on the issue of cost effectiveness. For a long time now, it has usually been more cost effective to produce energy using fossil fuels; therefore, renewable sources, for example, sun and wind energies have not been adequately tapped. However, the situation now

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seems not to be the same again. The world's consumption of energy far exceeds the amount that is supplied. The grid cannot adequately meet the increased thirst for power. Power failures have become an everyday occurrence.

No wonder the officials of the U. S. government are looking for affordable alternatives to be adopted. And no wonder, New Jersey is outshining the other states in the provision of affordable energy from the sun.

New Jersey is making preparations that will ensure that thirty percent of its energy is supplied from renewable sources by 2020 with 2. 12 percent of it entirely from the sun (Pisani, para. 6).

The complete adoption of this strategy will enable the state to offset utility-supplied energy consumption. This is because it will significantly reduce the cost of electricity as well as provide its residents with electricity even in the event of a power outage. Energy from the sun is available independently. It does not need a connection to a power or a gas grid for its operations. This implies that solar panels can be installed even in the remotest parts of New Jersey such as in log cabins.

This would make it more practical and less costly than the installation of utility electricity to a new location. In addition, the use of energy from the sun lowers the state's reliance on centralized energy sources. These centralized energy sources are usually affected by the occurrence of natural catastrophes or wars. Therefore, the use of solar panels will add to the state's sustainable future. Some people claim that the use of solar energy is expensive due to the high costs incurred in installing solar panels. However,

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in the long run, solar panels save money or are 'free' once the installation process is complete.

The recovery period for this investment is shorter for a household or a commercial enterprise that uses more electricity per day. Moreover, New Jersey offers ambitious financial incentives for people who want to install solar panels. Some utility companies also practice net metering whereby a person sells his or her excess energy to the company, thus building up a credit on his or her account. This eventually reduces the cost on one's electricity bill.

Solar energy systems also save energy in the sense they do not need any fuel; therefore, they are not influenced by the rise and fall of oil prices, and indirectly reduce health costs. It is argued that unlike other states such as California or Nevada, New Jersey has limited space that can not accommodate solar panels, which need adequate space to achieve a high level of efficiency. However, this problem has been surmounted by developing creative strategies. For example, grid-connected solar panels have been attached on utility and light poles, businesses with extra space are filling it with solar panels, and households are installing the solar panels on roofs. Thus, once installed, solar energy systems have no or minimal maintenance costs and more of them can be easily added in the future to cater for any increased needs. After installation, solar panels function silently since they lack any moving parts and do not release offensive smells.

Even though solar energy cannot be produced at night, this difficulty can be trounced by having an efficient battery backup system or by practicing net

metering. Since the effectiveness of the solar panels depends on the location of the sun, fitting them with certain parts will ensure that they operate optimally under different conditions. Although bad weather can reduce the rate of production of solar energy, the consequences are not very much far-reaching. This is because even if the United States were to get forty minutes of sunshine daily, it would get more energy than all the fossil fuels it uses in a year. More so, the fossil fuels are being depleted 100, 000 times faster than they are being created (Wanamingo, para. 3). The use of energy from the sun is able to reduce the usage of the Earth's precious fossil fuels.

Attention in the use of sunlight for the production of energy is on the rise, and it should, too. Even as other states are wrestling with energy policies, the state of New Jersey is proving to be the leader in promoting the use of solar power in the U. S. This is because the use of solar energy has been a beneficial initiative that has assisted it in meeting its increased energy needs. In addition, the state has been able to save money, protect the environment, offset utility-supplied energy consumption, and increase the affordability of electricity.

In contrast to fossil fuels, solar energy is abundant, available almost everywhere in the planet, and can never be depleted. Therefore, even as New Jersey takes the lead, solar power advocates should make concerted efforts to inform the whole world about the benefits of this energy resource.

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