

French Southern Territories solar panels in parking lots

Should parking lots in France be covered with solar panels?

I cover robocar technology & previously worked on Google's car team. In a surprisingly strong move, the French Senate has voted to require that all parking lots in France above a certain size be covered with solar panels. This is forecast to generate 11 gigawatts, adding to France's 160 gW capacity and nearly doubling the amount of solar.

Will French parking lots be topped with solar canopies?

The French Senate has approved a bill requiring all large parking lots across France to be topped with solar canopies in the next six years, which are predicted to generate as much energy as 10 nuclear reactors.

Does France have a solar canopy law?

France has stormed into a new era of solar with a new law just passed requiring a massive increase in solar canopies. The country's new law requires that that large parking lots have at least 50% of their lot covered in solar canopies. Naturally, this doesn't apply to lots with something like 6, 8, or 10 parking spaces.

Can solar panels be mounted over a car park?

Also, while a lot of car parks in southern Europe already have sun shades over them (which allow solar panels to be mounted onto existing structures), this is rare in cooler countries. As a result, it would probably be a lot easier to mount panels on the roofs of buildings than over the surrounding car park in some countries.

How will solar panels affect France's electricity grid?

This is part of a wider programme that will see solar panels occupy derelict lots, vacant land alongside roads and railways, as well as some farmland. This is expected to add 11 gigawatts to the French electricity grid equal to ten nuclear reactors.

How many gigawatts will France's solar panels generate?

This is forecast to generate 11 gigawatts, adding to France's 160 gW capacity and nearly doubling the amount of solar. What's particularly interesting is the relationship between these panels and the electric cars that will park under them.

Parking lots that accommodate trucks carrying heavy goods or parking areas in historic or protected areas are exempt from the measures. This move is part of French President Emmanuel Macron's plan to multiply the amount of solar energy produced in France by 10.

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These panels need only cover 0.5% of French urban land, or about 0.07% of France's total area. So it's possible, though car parks will make up a tiny portion of the overall programme.

An administrative order is still to be published, to obtain the list of renewable energy production methods whose installation within the parking lot's perimeter exempts compliance with the obligation to install photovoltaic panels.

A big benefit of panels on parking is that there are no transmission costs. Wholesale solar power in the morning might cost as little as 2 cents/kWh in sunny climates, a bit more in France.

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