

NRDC is in the Dark about Solar Power



By Josh Bloom — June 30, 2017



I knew that someday the template I keep around would come in handy:

"NRDC is in the dark about -----"

This time the template was especially useful given the juxtaposition of sun and darkness. And it's a something that we at the Council have been saying forever: The Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) comes up a little short in the science department, and rather often. So, let's shine a light on NRDC's perplexing position on energy, especially in light of recent criticism of solar panels.

Julie Kelly's recent (and brilliant) [National Review piece](#) ^[1] "A Clean Energy's Dirty Little Secret," pointed out quite clearly that solar panels are VERY far from the idea clean energy solution as they are portrayed. The panels work OK, but the materials required to manufacture them aren't so wonderful for the environment or people. So, it will be especially interesting to see the response of NRDC, which in the past has displayed nothing short of orgasmic bliss when talking about solar energy. Will they once again come up short in the world of chemistry and toxicology? The smart money says yes. Here are a few (of **many**) quotes from their website about the goodness of solar panels (emphasis mine):

- [K-Solar Lets the Sunshine In](#) ^[2], (January 2106)

*"New York's first-in-the-nation K-Solar program (read that "K through Solar"), designed to help schools across the state tap into the **pollution-free power of the sun.**"*

- [Three Cheers for Solar Champions](#) ^[3] (April 2014)

"Federal officials announced new policies to promote the **pollution-free technology** and celebrating 10 solar "Champions of Change."

- [Should You Go Solar?](#) ^[4]

"Solar power sounds like a genius, obvious way to save the planet—after all, **solar is clean and renewable.**"

By now you get the point. NRDC is a BIG fan of solar power. But NRDC is *not* a big fan of chemicals, whether they are actually harmful or not. So, I thought it might be interesting to look at what the group has to say about [chemicals required to make solar panels](#) ^[5]—lead, cadmium, and chromium. If they come across as confused, don't worry. It's hardly the first time.

1) Lead

- "[W]hat's happening right now in Flint, Michigan, is just the latest example of humanity's toxic relationship with lead." (Lead By the Numbers, [February 2016](#) ^[6])
- "That's why NRDC has joined with Earthjustice and dozens of other organizations to demand that lead be made a top priority of President Obama's Task Force on Environmental Health and Safety Risks to Children." ("Lead Toxicity Is a Nationwide Crisis, [November 2016](#)" ^[7])

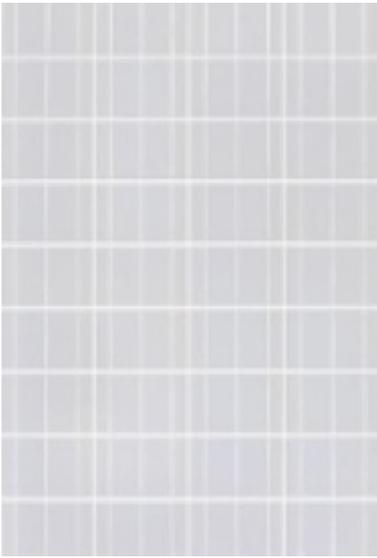
2) Cadmium

- "Raw coal typically contains trace amounts of arsenic, cadmium and other toxic heavy metals." ("How About a Coal Drink of Water?" [October 2009](#) ^[8])
- "Electronics are of particular environmental concern because they are the fastest growing part of the residential waste stream and can contain lead, mercury, cadmium and other harmful materials." ("The Post Office and E-Waste, Perfect Together" ([March 2008](#) ^[9]))

3) Chromium

- "Congress Must Protect People from Toxic Chemicals Known to Cause Harm: Hexavalent Chromium" ([July 2010](#) ^[10]) **(1)**
- "NRDC, EWG Sue to Protect Millions of Californians from Contaminated Drinking Water" ([August 2012](#) ^[11])

OK. NRDC loves solar panels, but they don't like any of the materials needed to make them. Maybe we need homeopathic solar panels.



A really lame attempt to draw a homeopathic solar panel

Since NRDC really hates chemicals (especially heavy metals) is it safe to assume that solar energy will become a no-no over there? Because if it does, be prepared to live in a dark house and

drive a slightly different car.



The problem is that NRDC doesn't seem to like *any* kind of energy.

- [Coal: Not Just a Climate Killer](#) ^[12]
- [Think Wood Pellets are Green? Think Again.](#) ^[13]
- [Writing on the Wall for Big Oil](#) ^[14]
- [Stand Up to Fracking](#) ^[15] (This is how you get natural gas, which is the cleanest burning hydrocarbon in the world. No fracking. No gas. Sorry.)
- [California's Last Nuclear Power Plant](#) ^[16]

In summary, NRDC doesn't like to burn oil, coal, wood or natural gas, nor does it want nuclear power. It did love solar power, but it should be interesting to see how they now justify this.

What are we going to do???



Lights out!

Note:

(1) Contrary to the movie "Erin Brockovich," hexavalent chromium did not cause cancer in Hinkley, CA. You can read about this [here](#) [17], [here](#) [18], and [here](#) [19].

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Links

- [1] http://www.nationalreview.com/article/449026/solar-panel-waste-environmental-threat-clean-energy?utm_source=social&utm_medium=twitter&utm_campaign=kelly&utm_content=clean-energy
- [2] <https://www.nrdc.org/experts/jay-orfield/k-solar-lets-sunshine>
- [3] <https://www.nrdc.org/experts/nathanael-greene/three-cheers-solar-champions>
- [4] <https://www.nrdc.org/stories/should-you-go-solar>
- [5] <http://www.environmentalprogress.org/big-news/2017/6/21/are-we-headed-for-a-solar-waste-crisis>
- [6] <https://www.nrdc.org/onearth/lead-numbers>
- [7] <https://www.nrdc.org/experts/rhea-suh/lead-toxicity-nationwide-crisis>
- [8] <https://www.nrdc.org/experts/rob-perks/how-about-coal-drink-water>
- [9] <https://www.nrdc.org/experts/kate-sinding/post-office-and-e-waste-perfect-together>
- [10] <https://www.nrdc.org/search?search=chromium>
- [11] <https://www.nrdc.org/media/2012/120814>
- [12] <https://www.nrdc.org/experts/rob-perks/coal-not-just-climate-killer>
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- [16] <https://www.nrdc.org/experts/rhea-suh/californias-last-nuclear-power-plant>
- [17] <http://fumento.com/brockovich/erinmarch.html>

[18] <https://www.quackwatch.org/01QuackeryRelatedTopics/brockovich.html>

[19] <http://blogs.discovermagazine.com/fire-in-the-mind/2013/03/21/erin-brockovich/#.WVUuhNPtUe>