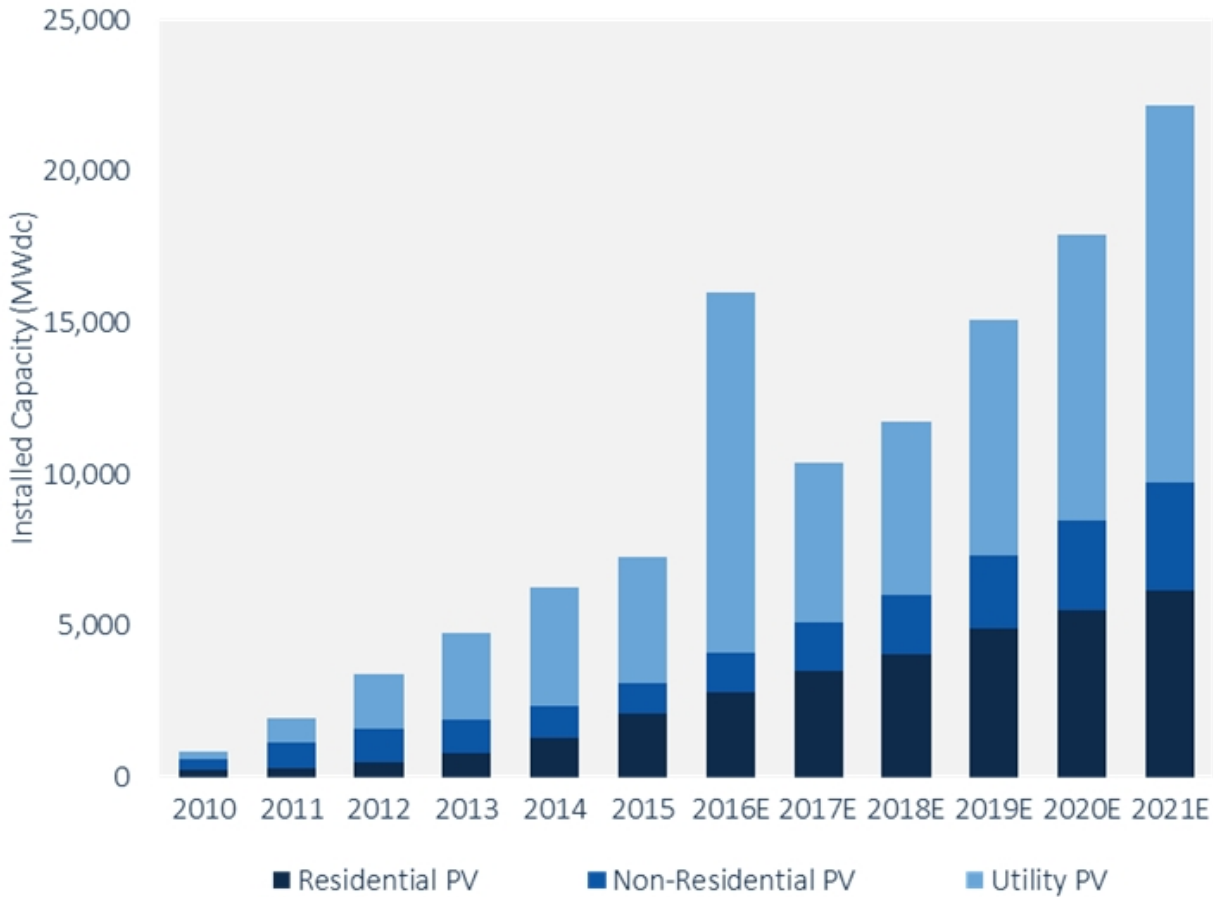


Market intelligence group sees boom year for US solar market

March 12 2016, by Nancy Owano



Credit: GTM Research.

Energy watchers are taking a look at The US Solar Market Insight

Report 2015 Year in Review, written by GTM Research and published in conjunction with the Solar Energy Industries Association (SEIA).

Talking about data shown in this report, *CleanTechnica* reported that the US solar market was set to grow 119 percent in 2016.

Joshua Hill in *CleanTechnica* added: "despite the strong percentage share of new installations the utility-scale sector is expected to achieve in 2016, both the residential and commercial markets will also experience strong growth, with the country on the verge of its one millionth solar installation [milestone](#)."

Environmental journalist Josh Marks, writing in *Inhabitat*, called the 119 percent figure "staggering."

One key feature surrounding the good news is the Investment Tax Credit (ITC). "In December, Congress extended the federal solar [investment tax credit](#) to 2019," said Marks. The ITC is a 30 percent [tax credit](#) for solar systems on residential and commercial [properties](#).

Commenting, *Mother Jones* said, "At the end of 2015, the solar industry experienced something of a Christmas miracle when Congress unexpectedly extended a package of vital tax credits for [renewable](#) energy that were set to expire. Overnight, 2016 went from looking like it was certain to be a bust to looking like one of the biggest growth years on record."

Greentech Media (its market intelligence arm is GTM Research) provided some background on this development. With the federal Investment Tax Credit (ITC) set to expire at the end of this year, developers and EPCs filled their pipelines with projects that would come on-line this year. In December, however, an extension of the ITC provided long-term market certainty. "In 2016, state-level drivers and risks will move to the forefront and play even larger roles in the growth

of both distributed and utility-scale solar."

There were some other factors contributing to solar strength. *Investor's Business Daily* said, "GTM credited North Carolina developers for a Q4 boom in the solar market. In 2015, North Carolina became the second state outside California to add more than 1 GW of utility photovoltaic (PV) [installations](#) on an annual basis." GTM also noted how "Regions in Texas and the Southwest are retiring aging coal fleets and replacing them with utility solar and natural gas."

"Led by the utility-scale segment, GTM Research forecasts 16 gigawatts of solar will be installed in the U.S. in 2016, more than doubling the record-breaking 7.3 gigawatts installed in 2015," said Mike Munsell in Greentech Media.

Munsell said utility-scale installations will represent 74 percent of the installations for the year, but the [residential](#) and commercial markets will also experience strong growth in 2016. Munsell said that Colorado, Massachusetts and Minnesota will collectively install more than 100 megawatts of community solar this year.

By 2021, GTM Research expects the U.S. solar market to surpass 100 cumulative gigawatts, with an annual install rate of 20 gigawatts or more, according to Munsell.

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