

Solar industry squares off with Warren Buffett, NV Energy

By Kyle Roerink, Las Vegas Sun

One of Warren Buffett's senior vice presidents at Berkshire Hathaway Energy – NV Energy's parent company – warned of the dangers of rooftop solar at an energy conference in July. His message was clear: Rooftop solar programs cut into utility profits.

Nine months later, Nevada's burgeoning rooftop solar industry, 6,000 jobs and carbon-free energy production are facing a roadblock.

The impasse is part of a nationwide battle between solar and power companies that's been fought in public utility commissions, legislatures and courtrooms. In Nevada, there is a debate about utility rates for residential solar producers, pushes for new legislation and questions about the expansion of an industry into territory traditionally dominated by what the solar industry calls NV Energy's regulated monopoly.

At stake is the small share of the utility marketplace that the rooftop solar industry has won thanks to a policy known as net metering.

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