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To:	SMART, DOER (ENE)
Subject:	The roles of solar fields vs forests in climate mitigation
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We need the contributions of both solar energy and forests in our efforts to curb global warming. The less they conflict with each other, the faster we'll make headway.

Solar provides electricity without carbon emissions. Forests provide carbon sequestration, and the sequestration provided is related to the age of the trees - and as trees get older the amount of carbon they can sequester grows logarithmically. So in the case of forests, old age is much better than youth.

Given the power of carbon sequestration held by trees, the practice of clearing trees from an area in order to install a large solar field is wasteful from a carbon-accounting perspective. A better way to site solar fields in towns is to find already-open spaces that aren't candidates for growing a forest, spaces like parking lots for supermarkets and business complexes; a growing practice is installing solar fields above the height needed for the 'field' of vehicles below. Putting solar fields on houses and office buildings is a common practice that doesn't conflict with the carbon sequestering done by trees.

Solar fields developed to serve residences that aren't able to mount solar fields on roofs (i.e.community solar) is a practice that can conflict with preserving forests. In such a case, the many positive attributes that forests (or stands of trees) provide should be thoroughly considered. We don't want to cut off what trees contribute to our living places by making a hasty choice.

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