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ANDREW WORDEN

CEO, GAMECHANGE RACKING

Pour-In-Place System Helps Landfills Go Solar

Landfills and brownfields have few options for development. Solar is a big exception. Developers are pursuing these areas for solar arrays instead of forest, farm fields or otherwise usable land.

Landfills and brownfields are also typically located in industrial areas or out-of-the-way places where local opposition to solar is limited. In addition, state governments are starting to embrace the development of these sites for PV projects with higher SRECs and other benefits. Utilities often approve these projects faster as well.

The challenge for landfills and brownfields has been the high cost of installing non-penetrating ballasted PV systems with high ground clearance. Labor costs are high for landfill work because union workers are often required, meaning

installation speed is a significant issue. Traditionally, large precast ballast blocks have been used, which can be expensive and slow to install. If the racking system doesn't accommodate for variations in terrain, the blocks must be perfectly leveled and spaced.

Recently, however, racking solutions have emerged using approaches other than precast blocks or ones that allow for adjustments in the racking. For instance, ballast trays for standard pavers and pour-in-place plastic forms let concrete be poured into the forms on-site after racking has been installed. This can reduce install time and racking costs. In these cases, the need to cast the concrete is removed, resulting in lower costs. Also, the racks are assembled first, while they are light. The weight is added after the system is lined up.

Major Construction Considerations For Landfill PV

The United States has more than 3,000 active landfills and over 10,000 old municipal landfills – plenty of room for solar development. Here are some key considerations before starting construction.

- Site preparation and grading requirements and constraints
- Site compaction
- Avoidance of penetrating landfill cap
- Dust control
- Stormwater management
- Site security

Source: EPA

The DuPont solar landfill project was a 548-kW, five-acre solar installation in Newport, Del., on the site of a former landfill. DuPont, which owned the site, wanted to make it productive with solar, according to Terry Gooding, a public affairs manager at the company. Gooding said the panels provide a viable renewable energy option for the Newport community and enough electricity to power 60 homes.

GameChange's first generation ballasted ground racking was used on the site. It was chosen for its low cost (about 40% less than typical precast systems) and ease of deployment. DuPont's thin-film technology panels were also used in the installation. **SPW**

WEBINAR ALERT

Landfill Solar: Be A Part Of The Trend

On March 27, **GameChange Racking** and **PanelClaw** discussed landfill PV development and how thoughtful racking can help projects succeed. Developer **SunEdison** also joined the conversation, discussing other vital aspects of landfill projects.

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