

Former DHS Official Echols - Musk's Puerto Rico Proposal Irresponsible

A Plan Using Existing Infrastructure Is Already On The Table.

WASHINGTON, DC, US, October 8, 2017 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Elon Musk, the brilliant billionaire behind SpaceX, Tesla, and Solar City, has recently said he wants to make Puerto Rico a 100% solar island. This is an incredible plan, but for an island \$80B in debt and on the verge of bankruptcy the plan is entirely irresponsible. The distraction caused by the declaration by Musk slows an already life-threatening situation.



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Mike Echols

Puerto Rico is still attempting to recover from the devastation from Hurricane Maria. Island residents are for the most part, without power. Power is required to run critical infrastructure such as water filtration and systems that assure communications with the outside world. Current estimates show Puerto Rico restoring power in four to six months. In

that time, there could be widespread death from public health issues exacerbated by a lack of access to medicines, communications, and sanitation systems. America has the technology, experience and spirit to bring significant power generation to Puerto Rico's residents in half the time (four to six months) previously projected by Government Officials.

According to [Mike Echols](#), former DHS Official and now CEO of MAX Cybersecurity (dba MAX Services), a solution, that would restore power quickly, has been presented to Puerto Rico Electric Power Authority (PREPA) and representatives from Puerto Rico's Governor's Office. "The plan uses existing infrastructure as an opportunity to restore power quickly with new equipment that reducing the cost of power generation in the long-term. People are suffering now, what are we going to do about it?" said Echols.

Here is how the price of solar adds up. Single Axis tracking solar, according to the EIA, costs \$1.15/watt to install. The Island currently uses 20 billion kWhs per year with a single axis tracking solar panel per kW generating 1,826 kWh/year. This means that total installed capacity just to generate the electricity required, with no line losses worked in, would be 10,954,402 kW installed capacity, at a cost of \$12.7 billion. The total space required for this would be 35,000 acres, or 1% of the island's landmass. This alone is a great cost for the power production, and doesn't factor in storage and peaking needs.

As most people are aware, "power demand" does not follow the solar generation curve and solar does not generate electricity at night. Additionally, there will be times when generation will be lower due to cloud coverage so we need at least two days of stored power. What Musk did not say is at the lowest possible cost of storage possible, \$285/kWh for Lithium Ion, the cost of storage would be \$31.3 billion, which is extremely expensive.

It is true there are no fossil fuel costs associated with solar, however there are operating costs for

cleaning and maintenance. Additionally, there are Insurance costs, for when a future hurricane destroys hundreds of panels that will need to be replaced. Operations and Maintenance costs for solar typically costs \$20/kW installed on an annual basis. Amortizing the equipment over 20 years, there is a total annual cost for solar of \$2.0 billion, or approximately 10 cents per kWh. This will not help the massive debt issue Puerto Rico will need to manage when the power finally comes back on.

Puerto Rico has another option to Musk's expensive plan. It isn't as sexy as solar, but it is considerably better than the oil and diesel they have been burning. Natural gas is 50-60% less polluting, and is a considerably better option from a financial prospective. Elon Musk should be applauded for thought provoking initiatives, but his expensive plan would be much better served if implemented over the next 20-30 years with development of a true distributed grid format; and not attempted in an emergency situation.

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