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Sono Motors aims to launch 32,000 solar EVs this decade

Article

The news: German automotive startup **Sono Motors** announced an ambitious goal of putting 32,000 solar-powered electric vehicles on roads by 2030, per Electrek.

Are solar EVs a thing? Sono wants to use its proprietary solar panels to supplement EV range, saying that its panels add 70 to 150 miles of range weekly. **Lightyear**, another startup innovating in the solar EV space, plans a November release of its Lightyear 0.

- **Solar panels are used in conjunction with EV charging**, so the panels work as a hybrid power source rather than a replacement for plugging in.
- The solar panels are integrated into a vehicle's bodywork in the roof, hood, and side panels for optimal solar exposure.
- **Sono has received 20,000 reservations for its Sion solar EV**, a plug-in EV that has a 190-mile range.
- Car subscription platform **FINN** has bought into the concept, reserving 12,600 units. The first 100 EVs are expected to reach Finn in 2024.
- Aside from passenger SUVs, Sono is using its technology to power solar buses for public transportation. Applications can extend to service and delivery vehicles in the future.

The opportunity: As far as renewable energy goes, it's tough to beat what solar energy has to offer.

- **Solar EVs have the potential to counter range anxiety** experienced by electric car drivers by constantly storing enough reserve energy to get to charging stations.
- There's a potential for aftermarket solar roof, hood, and panel attachments that can be made to work with existing EVs for additional range.
- **Solar panels are recyclable and can offset a portion of the environmental impact** that EV batteries have.
- Stanford researchers have invented solar panels that can generate electricity at night, which could amplify power harvesting for solar EVs.

What's the catch? Aside from being a niche submarket of EVs, solar panels require a significant amount of energy to produce. In addition, **solar panels are expensive, and weaving these into the shapes of car panels is complicated**.

- There's also an unequal distribution of sunlight around the world, which makes relying on solar power risky in geographies that are cloudy, rainy, or that just don't get enough sunlight.
- A lot of this technology is proprietary and is unlikely to gain much ground unless it's developed under stricter regulations and standards that can benefit entire industries.

The bigger picture: Solar energy is a vital source of renewable energy and a natural fit for the global transition to EVs. Finding an effective and affordable way to harness it as a power

source will help future EV adoption.

(Source: Sono Motors)

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