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| |  | | --- | | One increasingly popular policy for promoting renewable energy is a feed-in tariff. Under such a policy, investors on any scale, from large corporations to individual homeowners, produce their own energy from solar panels installed on their property. Electricity companies are then required to purchase the energy through a long-term contract at an increased rate that allows the investors to more than offset the cost over time. There is no denying that the initial cost of solar installation is a burden on the investor. In strenuous economic times, both businesses and homeowners might be reluctant to make the investment due to concern that the payout could be less than sufficient or the plan might prove unfeasible. However, research has shown that a feed-in tariff plan is not only stable but also exceptionally effective and it ought to be more actively pursued.  Write a response in which you examine the stated and/or unstated assumptions of the argument. Be sure to explain how the argument depends on these assumptions and what the implications are for the argument if the assumptions prove unwarranted. | |

The argument makes the conclusion that a feed-in tariff plan should be more actively pursued, due to its stability and efficacy. The author of the argument bases this conclusion on the premise of different research efforts, without stating any explicit details. The argument, in doing so, makes multiple unstated assumptions and is significantly less persuasive than if these assumptions were addressed. There are three such unstated assumptions that must be discussed further, to evaluate the argument.

First, the argument assumes that the research study considered all the economic possibilities. The research has been stated to have shown the stability and efficacy of the feed-in tariff plan, but it may have done so in an idealistic sense. It is possible that the research did not consider scenarios of economic decline. In this case, the homeowner may not get the desired payout, and electricity companies may also be going through an economic dip. If the research did not consider these worries that business owners and homeowners have, then it fails to address the very issue. By not doing so, any efforts to actively pursue a feed-in tariff plan would have no takers.

Second, the argument assumes that the investment-payout time frame would be feasible for individual homeowners. However, it may be the case that the research failed to consider a significant number of homeowners in their study; this would not be a fairly constructed sample space. Assuming that the participants (or the data points) in the research study were representative of the public is incorrect, based on the information provided in the argument. If a representative group of homeowners were not properly considered during the research, it may be possible that there are many people who, although may benefit from the plan over time, may not have the capital to make the huge initial investment. Also, by not stating how big the initial investment exactly is, the author ignores the possibility of the costs being, perhaps, too high even for a small business.

Third, the argument fails to consider the possibility of the research study's scale of conduction of the study, i.e., it may be possible that the research has concluded that the feed-in tariff plan is viable and effective on the long-term. This long-term viability or efficacy would mean little to investors who do not have significant capital. Since the payout takes time to fulfil the initial investment costs, there are many investors whom the research study may have not considered: Small businesses, or people who are just looking for alternative modes of income. It is not uncommon for people looking for alternative modes of income not having the greatest amounts of wealth, working multiple jobs to try and alleviate their situations. For them, this plan may seem like a tempting one, but actively pursuing such people to invest in it may be dangerous, given the state of the economy and enormous initial costs.

In conclusion, the argument, as it stands now, is considerably flawed due to a number of unstated assumptions that it never addresses. If the research study was comprehensive, or its findings were stated in the argument, the author could have strengthened their position. Given the current state of the argument, adhering to its claims without consulting a more thorough study would be devastating at worst, and specious at best.