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First Solar probes potential infringement of TOPCon patents

First Solar says it is evaluating potential infringement of its patents for its tunnel oxide passivated contact (TOPCon) tech, secured through the acquisition of TetraSun in 2013. The US thin-film solar module manufacturer has not named the companies involved or given a timeline for the investigation.

JULY 19, 2024 **EMILIANO BELLINI**

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Image: First Solar

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[First Solar](#) said it is investigating potential violations of the patents it owns for TOPCon solar cell

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"First Solar secured the US patent and related international counterparts through its acquisition of TetraSun, Inc. and has initiated an investigation of several c-Si solar manufacturers for potential infringement of its patents," the company said in a statement. "The patents include issued patents in the United States, Canada, Mexico, China, Malaysia, Vietnam, Japan, and Australia, among other jurisdictions, with validities extending to 2030. It also includes pending patent applications in the European Union and Japan."

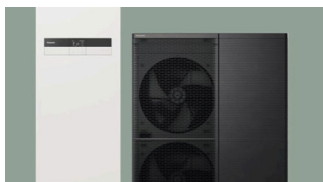
The company has not identified the potential infringers or provided a timeline for the investigation.

"First Solar acquired TetraSun and its intellectual property portfolio in 2013. Prior to its acquisition, the California-based startup had pioneered proprietary cell architecture and manufacturing processes for large-format crystalline silicon wafers," First Solar also said, without providing additional technical details. "If infringement is discovered, we intend to challenge the ability of potential infringers to legally manufacture, assemble, and sell infringing TOPCon technology by pursuing enforcement, licensing, and/or other measures to safeguard our rights."

First Solar produced PV modules using [TetraSun technology](#) at its Malaysian factory until 2016, ending its production of crystalline silicon solar panels.

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Emiliano joined pv magazine in March 2017. He has been reporting on solar and renewable energy since 2009.

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