

From: Chris Simpson [REDACTED]

Sent: 30 August 2022 17:53

Subject: S62A/22/0006 - Development of the Ground Mounted Solar Farm with Associated Infrastructure & Landscaping - OBJECTION

Dear Sirs,

I am writing in order to voice my strong objection to the proposed Berden Hall Solar Factory on land between Stocking Pelham and Berden. I attended a presentation conducted by Statera earlier this year and was firstly angered to find out that only 25% of the local residents received an invitation to this event, (of which I also wasn't one). This I put down to a disingenuous attempt on the part of Statera to minimise large scale objection in order to push the project through the back door. And also to give the representatives an easy ride on the day of the event so that they could then report back to their superiors to state there were no major objections.

Unfortunately for Statera, their concept of a Solar factory on the outskirts of Berden on Grade 2/3 prime farmland have since been overtaken by unforeseen global events, namely the impact of the war within the Ukraine. Together, Ukraine and Russia account for over 1/3 of the world's grain production and 1/4 of the world's corn production. Therefore, it would appear that in the future, Britain will need to become more self-sufficient in the production of its own cereal crops, for which purpose the land on the proposed development site is primarily used for. This means that the farmland in and around Berden will be at a "premium". And as someone at the presentation so rightly said to me "*You can't eat electricity*".

The interactions I had with the Statera representative and the visual boards they had on display raised a number of serious questions.

1) The scale of the development:

The first red flag which came to my attention was when I raised concern at the scale of the development. I have learnt that **1 wind turbine** would generate (on average) over the course of a year the same amount of electricity as the **entire 177 acre proposed Solar Factory development combined**, with a miniscule fraction of the land area footprint that the Solar Factory would use. I therefore asked the Statera representative why this was never considered? Surely this would have been a "**win win**" for everyone concerned. The farmland would still be intact for crop farming, people would have access to the local countryside, minimal impact on local wildlife, and we would have a means of generating electricity on the same level (if not better) as the entire Solar Factory.

The response I received was two-fold. Firstly the power station would not be the ideal location as this location was not deemed to generate the high wind speeds required for a wind turbine. And secondly, the wind turbines (which are manufactured in Northumberland), would be far more expensive than 177 acres worth of Solar Panels manufactured in China..!! This raises a number of questions:

- a) How can 177 acres of solar panels manufactured and then shipped across half the planet from China be either cheaper or greener than obtaining a wind turbine from Northern England?
- b) The land on which Stocking Pelham power station stands on is some of the highest ground in the whole of East Anglia. A wind turbine farm exists only 15 miles to the North East at Great Wilbraham in Cambridgeshire on land that is almost at sea level. If the airflow speed there were considered adequate for a wind turbine, why wasn't Stocking Pelham? Is the air different there?

With regards to point a) anyone with a brain cell on active duty will know that the solar panels can only be manufactured and shipped from China cheaper than a wind turbine from Northumberland, England because the panels are manufactured using virtually slave labour. It has been well documented that the Uighur people have been used to do this under horrific conditions, which begs the question, is this project even ethical?

It had also been stated at the presentation that this land will always be on the Solar Factory developer's radar due to its proximity to the power station. Again this is nonsense, as the Solar Factory at Great Wilbraham already has an electricity power connection to Stocking Pelham, which also has connections to other substations in and around Cambridge (see below). If more panels are required, then just develop the existing Great Wilbraham site where Solar Arrays already exist. Saying therefore, that a "solar factory needs to be close to the power station" was both a disingenuous and incorrect comment by the Statera representative.

Source: geograph.org.uk/photo/970623



400 kV power line near Great Wilbraham

This NG circuit joins the [TL4528 : Electricity Transformer Station](#) at **Stocking Pelham** to [TL5767 : Burwell Main substation](#). From there, power is fed to [TL4956 : Electricity sub-station, Fulbourn Old Drift](#) and [TL4561 : Arbury Grid Substation Project](#) on the outskirts of Cambridge.

I do not believe the representatives were telling the full truth about all of these points at the presentation and I am highly sceptical that the procurement of these panels is either ethical or green. The irony of obtaining these panels from CHINA, which is responsible for more destruction of the global environment than any other country on Earth doesn't escape me...!!!

My second red flag is a project that already exists. With the building of the electricity storage units at Stocking Pelham in 2016, we have a glimpse into the future for what Statera envisage for the

remaining 177 acres of land. We were promised that these units would blend into the surrounding environment using dark green materials, and would almost be invisible from 200 yards. This would then be surrounded with screening which would obscure this from the surrounding environment. What we **ACTUALLY GOT** was this:



This is a complete disgrace and is an eyesore for miles around in nearly every direction. Far from being obscure at 200 yards, it is visible from 3 miles away in Rickling..!!! They say “a picture paints a 1000 words” so I therefore took the liberty of taking pictures around the Electrical storage facility in order to demonstrate the apparently wilful neglect of the site, the surrounding countryside and the residents of this area.

My wife did confront one of the representatives to challenge one of the pictures on display which appeared to show 6ft fencing around the Solar Arrays. The fences shown in the display could in no way have prevent deer crossing the site and he eventually admitted they would have to be higher than shown in the pictures. Therefore we believe the pictures were deliberately intended to be deceiving to minimise the perceived impact this development would have on the surroundings which again is disingenuous.

Pictures taken 28-Mar-2022



Neglected Screening. Planted in 2016...



Neglected area at the service road at the electrical storage facility



Having observed the total neglect of the so-called “screening” for the current storage facility at Stocking Pelham I have absolutely no confidence that Statera will operate in an ethical manner, and that the Solar factory will be an environmental disaster for this corner of Uttlesford for the sole purpose of corporate greed.

2) The Location:

The location of this development is flawed for many of the reasons that the Battles Farm Solar factory had been dismissed. Firstly, access to this site is through very narrow lanes. The Battles Farm plan had been criticised by the Highways agency as the access via the Clavering to Stortford road was inadequate for the number of vehicle movements predicted. From my own experience, the Berden-Stocking Pelham road access to the proposed Solar Factory would present even more challenges than the refused Battles Farm project. I understand that Statera would use the Little Hadham- Stocking Pelham road for this purpose, which, in many locations is

vastly narrower than the Stortford-Clavering road. Sections of road at Albury and close to Furneux Pelham are scarcely 1 car wide. Therefore I cannot see how the highways agency could approve of such a plan.

There also appears to have been no consideration if the impact this project will have on the local wildlife within this vicinity. The representative assured me that an environmental impact assessment had been conducted, but there was no evidence of it at the presentation, and he did not expand on what was carried out. I asked the representative that *"If the Battles Farm, Pelham Spring and Furneux Pelham projects all got the green light, where would the large families of deer that share this area go?"* After all its THEIR environment too.... The reply I got was a shrug of the shoulders, as if to say *"I didn't really think about it.... And I don't really care"*. For a company that is trying to sell itself as green and had assured us that all environmental impacts had been considered, I found this response breath-taking.... But, in a way, not surprising... If money is the main focus, then local wildlife priorities sit bottom of that list. It is clear to anyone who resides in this area that large families of deer live here. If 1000s of acres are fenced off, they will be forced down the small tracks between the fences putting them in conflict with people/dog walkers etc. I took this picture (below) no more 20 yards from the Stocking Pelham Power station, which demonstrates that deer regularly use this area. Therefore one can only conclude the destruction of this area from the Solar Factory would have significant impact on the local wildlife.

Picture taken 28-Mar-2022 at Stocking Pelham Electricity storage facility



3) Solar Panel Technology:

I am aware that the Solar power technology is a highly inefficient and unpredictable means of generating electricity. At best, at the height of summers when the skies are clear, the panels will be working at roughly 11% efficiency. At night, they will be standing dormant doing nothing at all. I find it beyond incredible that there are people walking around in society that would destroy 1000s of acres of prime countryside for this. Now think about what will happen to this site between the months of October to February? 6 hours of daylight (at best) with the sun rising at such a low angle and many days with cloud, no appreciable electricity will be generated at all through the

entirety of this period. And when does everyone switch on their heaters and lights? Yes, during the winter time when electricity consumption is at its highest, with the solar factory sitting dormant and producing no electricity whatsoever..!!!! And what will happen in 2030 when electric cars hit the road and 60 million people are charging their cars? An electrical grid supplied by unreliable solar energy simply will not cope.. So why are we investing in this unreliable and inefficient, soon-to-be-outdated technology?

We also understand that the land would be procured by the Solar Factory for **40 years**..!! Imagine if you will the technology that was available to us 40 years ago (in 1982)? It is considered entirely primitive compared to what is available to us now... Now consider that technology is currently developing at an almost exponential rate. How will Solar Panel technology be perceived in less than 5-10 years' time? It will be completely outdated and superseded, rendering the destruction of the land, the local environment and the wildlife completely pointless and will take years to recover, if it ever can... So I'm very suspicious of why this company is using such primitive technology with no apparent benefit for producing electricity, but which is causing irreversible damage to the local environment for such a long period of time.

I have recently attended another meeting at Berden Hall on Tuesday 16th August 2022 where I had learnt that Statera has not even explored alternative sites to build the Solar Factory which I find totally outrageous! This runs completely counter to Government policy on this matter whereby Brownfield sites **MUST** be considered, and construction on farmland is an absolute last resort.

I find it interesting that during the Conservative hustings in Norwich, both Rishi Sunak and Liz Truss were asked "Do you support gas shale fracking?" To which both replied with the identical answer "Yes but only if the local community support it?" Why is it that local residents opinions can determine whether shale fracking can begin or not? However, when huge swathes of prime farmland (literally on the doorsteps of villages), are going to be earmarked for widespread industrialisation, the opinions of the local residents are almost summarily ignored?

I therefore put forward these arguments as my strong objection of placing an Industrial Solar Factory in such an environmentally sensitive area which is rich in much-needed productive farmland.

Regards,

Mr Christopher Simpson