

Dear Planning Inspector,

OBJECTION to: Berden Hall solar Farm  
Application : S62A/22/0006

I object to the application by Statera Energy Limited under the name of Berden Solar Limited for a 177 acre ground mounted solar installation on the land off Ginns Road, Berden between the villages of Stocking Pelham and Berden on the following grounds.

**1. The loss of Best and Most Versatile land.**

The land is in vast majority high grade farmland, grades 2 and 3a. Berden Solar are obliged, according to governmental policy (NPPF) and good practice to seek lower grade land in the first instance to make any application of this kind. There is no evidence they have done this. High grade farmland is a precious resource, especially in our modern times of war in Europe, climate change and loss of land to rising water levels, housing and industrial development. The CPRE in their research have stated that 35,830 acres of prime agricultural land has been lost to development in the last decade. Prime land for growing food and grain is a precious resource that is not replaceable. We would do well to preserve it for our descendants bearing in mind we already need to import 40% of our food. Ground Mounted Solar can be placed on less damaging sites. Any mitigation of climate change is seriously eroded by the loss of our Best and Most Versatile land.

In the FAQ document published by Statera they admit they considered no other sites before making their proposal.

I believe Berden Solar have chosen this site to make savings for themselves and their investors, not in the best interests of local residents, heritage, conservation, recreational interests, history of agricultural landscape and jobs. I reiterate, there are better more intelligently chosen sites for ground mounted solar.

**2. Impact on residents and recreational interests. In accordance with ENV15 Uttlesford. "should not adversely impact on i) the character of sensitive landscapes ii) nature, conservation interests ii) residential and recreational interests.**

The many footpaths criss-crossing the proposed site are used daily by local residents and those from neighbouring villages. The rural, undulating location with hedgerows and wild life offer a tranquillity and connection with nature that is essential to the well-being of those that have chosen to live and spend their leisure time within the locality. 100,368 black glass solar panels mounted on metal framework at 2.5m in height, with 2m high deer fencing, security cameras and inverters with cooling systems will entirely destroy that. Creating fenced corridors for PRowS (footpath 25) will make an industrialised access route, which has nothing in common with an open countryside public path. The proposed mitigation from listed buildings will take many years to become effective if ever and the impact of the

setting of these historical sites of the proposed development will diminish them and their setting. Leaves fall from trees in the autumn. There are better sites further away from active communities, listed properties and with no footpaths running through them, on less undulating ground. This system is not essential on this site and impacts the residents and their recreational interests adversely.

### **3. Transport to and from the site.**

I would firstly like to draw your attention to the invalidity of Berden Solar's proposed transport route plan. Namely, there is no slip road from the new A120 Little Hadham bypass onto the Albury road as assumed by Berden Solar route map **(4/22 Traffic Construction Report Management Plan)**. In fact, all HGVs will need to travel westwards from the Tesco roundabout directly to Little Hadham village cross roads and traffic lights where they will then be able to turn right onto the Albury Road Northwards, or continue down the hill eastwards from the **(11/22 "Roundabout on the new A120 bypass" TCRMP)** to Little Hadham village crossroads and traffic lights where they will then be able to turn left onto the Albury Road.

The Albury Road at this point is congested and narrowed, by resident parking, to a single lane and is therefore unsuitable for heavy construction traffic as it would put local residents and road users at unnecessary risk.

Albury village itself has roadside housing and narrows to single lane width at points. There are many residents that use the road for horse riding, dog walking and general moving around in the village, to go to the local pub, access public rights of way. Construction traffic that seeks to avoid oncoming traffic and other road users in these narrow lanes pose a risk to the public.

Moving further northwards onto Ginns Road there are two points where the road is subsiding into the roadside stream that is 1.5m in depth. Just beyond Clay Chimneys and again slightly further northwards same side (please see attached photographs). The large amount of heavy traffic required to service Berden Solar's application will further erode and could collapse our local lane.

There are further dangers where the sides of Ginns road rise almost vertically upwards on both sides **(see HCC Highways consultee comment photo 3)** as well as being less than two cars width near The Wash. There are equestrian stables nearby that use this section of the road on a daily basis moving horses from stables to pasture. There are bike riders, dog walkers and a great deal of school/work traffic that all combine to make a complicated and diverse road use that would be vulnerable to heavy construction traffic.

Pelhams Pre-School is sited at Stocking Pelham Village Hall on Ginns Road SG9 0HZ, just several meters from a blind bend and junction (please see attached photographs).

The **Pelham Solar Limited CTMP Traffic Construction Report Management Plan page 15/22 Ginns Road coming through Stocking Pelham**, shows the point before the pre-school and the blind bend.

The following image, page **16/22** depicts the point beyond the blind bend and past the entrance and built-up area of the Pre-School / Village Hall. This gives the impression of a straight road with few dwellings, which is not the case.

Parents drop children off and pick them up at four times in the day 9am, 9.15am, 12.15pm, 1.15pm and 2.30pm. The road is already narrow at this point and there is nowhere else to park other than on the road. The congestion and further narrowing of the road due to this essential community service is already considerable taking into account other school traffic, public transport and private access to driveways.

Looking at the consultant, **Bruce Bamber's Traffic Consultant report**, commissioned by Protect the Pelhams, Pelham Solar Limited have considerably underestimated the number of HGVs that will be required in the construction of the Berden Hall Farm site. For example, they have not included the necessary number of HGVs to construct the access road on site. Parents, children and pre-school workers will be put at considerable extra risk from this heavy, wide-load traffic as they exit and enter their cars to deliver their very young children to the pre-school, sometimes carrying car seats with younger siblings in.

The applicant also states there will be 50 construction workers on site, this will increase traffic through this pinch point further "mini buses" and private cars.

There are three schools sited in the villages along the route, Albury Primary School, Furneux Pelham JMI and the Penguins Pre-School.

I hope I have been able to demonstrate that the proposed access route is wholly unsuitable for heavy construction traffic needed at the levels any large development like Berden Hall Solar Farm would require and will put residents and their children at unnecessary risk.

This route is also proposed for **two** other applications currently with East Herts Planning:

50MW Lithium-ion battery energy storage system Greens Farm, Stocking Pelham, SG9 0JU. **3/21/0969/FUL**

Crabbs Lane, Stocking Pelham, Herts. 50MW Lithium-ion battery energy storage system. **3/22/0806/FUL**

There is great potential for overwhelming cumulative impact on our communities, way of life and safety.

I notice Adrain McHale, Herts County Council Development Officer, in his consultee comment demonstrates the unsuitability of the proposed access route and has Googled alternative routes. If the planning Inspector has opportunity to visit the

locality, they will find that our narrow lanes, some protected, are all similar in the region with many pinch points and are unsuited to the necessary required HGV traffic for this kind of development. The alternative routes proposed by Adrian McHale fall under a different county authority, Essex Highways.

I recognise Statera's desire to make the most of their potential profits and also recognise that renewables must play a major part in the future of energy production. Indeed, my own house generates enough solar power and FIT payment to cover my council tax annually. However, in my opinion it is extremely important that at this juncture of enormous change we make intelligent and truly sustainable choices that do not create more problems than they solve. We do not need to choose between BMV (food) and renewable energy, we can have both if we are measured in our actions and mindful of our descendants.

Best regards

Sarah Wright (neighbour)



Just before The Wash  
Ginns Road Northwards



Ginns Road Southwards  
Before Clay Chimneys.  
Broken fencing already  
damaged and leaning into  
the deep stream.



Clay Chimneys to left.  
Southwards. Damaged  
fencing and stream to  
right.



Ginns Road Northwards  
Damaged road falling into  
the stream.





Ginns Road Northwards.  
Damaged road subsiding  
into stream.



Ginns rd. Stocking Pelham.  
Blind bend Southwards. Just  
before Pre-School



Ginns rd. Stocking Pelham.  
Northwards. Just beyond  
Pre-School.  
Point between images  
p15/22 & 16/22 Pelham  
Solar TCRMP