

From: Rosie Somers [REDACTED]
Sent: 08 February 2023 20:23
To: Section 62A Applications <section62a@planninginspectorate.gov.uk>
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Further Comments Supporting Continued Objection to S62A/22/006 (also referred to as UTT/22/2046/PINS)

Dear Sir/Madam,

Further to my initial objection on 27 August 2022, I am writing again as I still **OBJECT** to the amended proposal ref S62A/22/006 and UTT/22/2046/PINS by Statera to construct a solar factory on 177 acres of BMV agricultural land at Berden Hall Farm

Why? Because...

It is **still too big**

The **site is still flat**

I **still walk my dogs** around these open fields

I **still cycle** around this area

My initial objection went into more detail on all of these points and these comments are still valid, please find attached.

The amended proposal is **still an inappropriate** development in what is generally considered to be **open and rural countryside**. Whilst I am a firm believer and user of renewable energy sources, having switched from oil to an Air Heat Source Pump a few years ago, and retro-fitting solar panels on our roof, it is generally accepted that solar energy is the **least efficient** form of renewable energy, generating power around 10% of the time.

We know from the famous "Essay on the Principle of Population" written by Rev Thomas Malthus back in 1798, so over 220 years ago, that population grows at a faster rate than food production. With the continued growing world population and the pressures on food production, I find it shocking that this is even being considered, when there are so many other alternative sites that could be selected.

Uttlesford is way ahead of its target for the % of renewable energy it needs to generate so it simply doesn't make sense to remove 177 acres of BMV agricultural land that is 100% productive. We are not going to help climate change if we cause more pollution importing food as we have covered our BMV agricultural land in inefficient solar panels. We can actually generate solar power and avoid food poverty still if we site these panels elsewhere such as on warehouse rooves, public buildings, residential homes.

Placing a solar factory on prime agricultural land is also against the aims of the NPPF which is meant to assist in safeguarding the countryside and retain and enhance landscapes, visual amenity and biodiversity. With so many PROW criss-crossing the land, important heritage sites like The Crump, and rare skylarks present, a solar factory here is hardly in accordance with the NPPF and maintaining the distinctive and historic character of England.

Even though I am sure the plan would be to return the area to farmland after 40 years, as the soil structure will have been permanently damaged, in the outset from compaction and then more latterly soil degradation during the lifetime of the solar factory, it will never be as productive as it is currently, even with an enforceable soil management plan in place. So again, is this really wise?

The crops here have never been watered so the soil has good water retention but this soil structure would be permanently destroyed if solar panels were present instead. It is also likely that there would be an increase in surface run-off from the whole solar site, due to a much

reduced water need by the land, and destruction of the soil. This poses an additional flood risk to the surrounding area. I live just above a section of road called "The Wash," named as it frequently floods.

It is generally considered unsound to assume that the rain falling on solar panels would evenly flow into the rain shadow of the solar panels below. Rather, because the panels will follow the contour of the land, rain-water is far more likely to fall in a column from the lowest corner of each panel. This water then forms rivulets flowing down through the rain-shadows of the rows below without utilising their whole area for filtration, thus increasing the water run-off from the site, thus increasing the chance of local flooding.

As a local resident I also hear the noise from the existing BESS and substation and I see that EH have provided readings on the background noise which the applicant has underestimated. With an existing BESS here close to the substation and 2 solar factories in planning (both in Uttlesford, the other is ref S62A/2022/0011 Land east of Pelham substation, Maggotts End Manuden) and 2 further BESS's also in planning (both In Hertfordshire and both very close to the substation refs 3/22/0806/FUL and 3/21/0969/FUL submitted to East Herts), and a 3rd solar farm in consultation, I hope you can appreciate that together the cumulative impact on the landscape as well as the noise will be unbearable.

With the substation straddling the county line between Essex and Hertfordshire, I believe developers are exploiting this location as evidenced by the volume of applications sent to different councils, all of them within a few hundred metres of the same substation. These developers are interested in maximising their profits by developing sites close to the existing substation as it is then a lot cheaper to join the power network. It explains why there are potentially 3 solar factory applications and 3 BESS's so close together on BMV farmland. Different developers, but the cumulative impact is close to a 150MW solar factory (3 x 49.9 MW) and 150MW battery storage in an area with a flaky water supply should there be any fire issues, in what is a rural area on productive farm land. This is not a local small scale development by any stretch of the imagination. Both the substation and existing BESS were supposed to have planting around them as part of the planning conditions but this has not been enforced.

Proximity to a substation is **NOT** a reason to build a solar factory.

Concerns have been raised by local residents on use of the small narrow local lanes that will be needed to access the site. Many of these country lanes are in a poor state of repair - already this year I have had to replace 2 tyres because of punctures caused by different huge potholes. In some places, where there are passing places, these are subsiding into the adjacent river. What happens if a lorry topples off the road and sheds its load of solar panels? A traffic expert has commented in more detail on various aspects of the transport plan, including another underestimate in favour of the developers, this time related to number of HGV journeys. There are primary and pre-schools on the routes suggested and few, if any pavements. There are vulnerable road users such as people out on horseback or pony carriages, dog walkers, cyclists.

There will be no local employment opportunities either during or after construction and the local area will not benefit from this renewable energy as it will go via the substation which serves towns miles away in Essex. We are no longer being dictated to by Europe so the UK government can step in here and now and protect our food supply, countryside and heritage. We have to start respecting our environment and living in a way that is less destructive and more sustainable - destroying farmland, countryside and rural communities is not the way to achieve this, either in the short or long term.

I would like to speak at any hearing PINS sets up or during a public meeting.

Yours faithfully,

Rosie Somers