

[REDACTED]

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: Objection to Pelham Spring Solar Farm UTT/21/3356/FUL and 3/21/278

I am writing to object to the application to construct a solar farm comprising ground mounted solar arrays together with (among other things) battery storage, inverter cabins, a substation, fencing and CCTV cameras on land near Pelham Substation Maggots End Road Manuden CM23 1BJ

My name is Hans van Riemsdijk and I live at [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

The reasons for my objection are as follows:

Farm land should remain as farmland. Here in the East Herts and Essex countryside the arable land is Grade 2 and Grade 3a. The land here is used for growing food. I have significant concerns about the amount of productive farmland being taken out of production in the UK. The UK is already not self sufficient in food production importing around 48% of our food already. As Climate change accelerates areas in Europe and America traditionally used for producing food may be less productive. Taking what we have seen with governments dealing with COVID and the vaccination = they will prioritise feeding their own populations before helping those nations no longer able to produce enough food for themselves. We should be protecting our countryside for the feeding of future generations to prevent food shortages in the UK. I am also not convinced that the farmland will after the 40 years be returned to farmland. In Thaxted there is anecdotal evidence that Low Carbon removed the topsoil and sold it on in order for the wires for the panels to be unobstructed. There is no way that this land will be able to be returned to arable use without top soil. Additionally the soil cannot be immediately returned to effective arable use anyway after years out of production. Low Carbon have not explained what will happen to the solar panels at the end of life - how will these be removed and recycled or destroyed? Who will be responsible for this and who will be responsible for returning the land to previous arable use, will this be a planning condition that cannot be refuted?

Uttlesford have already got a huge amount of land turned to solar farming, we should not allow any more arable land to be taken up in this way. Brownfield sites, Stansted Airport and down the sides of the M11 are where solar panels should be, along with new builds and all public buildings where appropriate. The land shown in the plans for this development is not flat - so again, is totally unsuitable for solar farms which should be on flat land.

Impact on the environment and wildlife: I do not believe that the solar farm is environmentally friendly. I do not believe, as with so many of these solar installations that the carbon footprint will be less than for the existing use when you take into consideration that the panels are mostly manufactured and shipped from China. The solar fields will be contained within very high fences which will mean that the natural migration paths of our local wildlife will be completely disturbed. Are the large numbers of deer expected to share the public footpaths with the local walking population? As a keen walker - I do not relish the idea of walking amongst the solar panels - which are around 3.5 meters off the ground - which is just half a meter shorter than the height of a coach! Our views of the beautiful rolling countryside will be completely destroyed. There is absolutely NO BENEFIT whatsoever to the local community. It will be

detrimental to those living in the nearby properties and villages in terms of loss of view and also our general wellbeing. The other proposed solar projects in Bishops Stortford, Berden and the Pelhams along with this one (which makes 4 separate developments) within a small radius mean a massive cumulative effect on our local area with all entries to villages (especially Stocking Pelham and Berden) meaning encountering a solar farm! The size of these developments put together should require NSIP when you take into consideration the cumulative effect in this locality of Uttlesford and East Herts. Solar farms are inappropriate developments for the countryside. Uttlesford's Policy ENV15 says that small scale renewable energy development schemes to meet local needs will be supported providing it can be demonstrated that they do not adversely affect i) The character of sensitive landscapes; ii) Nature conservation interests; or iii) Residential and recreational amenity. This is not a "small scale" scheme. The land identified by Low Carbon as the site for Pelham Spring solar Farm extends to 196 acres. This important fact is not mentioned in the Planning Statement. If approved, this would be the biggest solar farm in Uttlesford by some margin and one of the biggest in Essex. The visual impact of such a huge solar farm would fundamentally change the character of the area.

Solar farms are not efficient in energy production, particularly in the UK where our weather is dark and inclement for a lot of the year. Anyone who has solar outside lights will be able to see how ineffective they are in the winter months when there is not enough sunlight. This is a short term knee jerk reaction to climate change which will cause more damage than it mitigates against for future generations.

Low Carbon have not taken into consideration the local opinion on this solar farm. The majority of people do not want this, not because of NIMBYISM but because there are so many more suitable sites - brownfield, airports, down sides of motorways and also on the roofs of new builds and public buildings are available before our beautiful arable countryside is industrialised. Uttlesford and East Herts should be protecting this land and its use for future generations.

I hope that this application is refused.

Kind regards

hans

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