This proposal will not only destroy perfectly good, productive, food producing land, but it will also ruin the enjoyment of the countryside for residents and wildlife. Just knowing that it is out there gives us pleasure and peace of mind. We chose to live here six years ago because of the location - a quiet village surrounded by woods and fields. Every day there is a new element to experience and enjoy.

If this project goes ahead, this enjoyment will be gone for us. We will be surrounded by an industrial zone of high fences, glass panels on a maze of steel scaffolding, and a mass of portacabin-like structures humming away day and night.

The peace and tranquillity of Glentworth including our own property will be severely impacted during the construction phase of this project.

The movement of heavy vehicle traffic in and around Glentworth will increase noise levels in our quiet village. The dip in the road at the junction of St. George's Hill and Middle Street has already required repair several times in the past six years due to the speed and weight of traffic. This road is not going to stand up to the proposed HGV traffic that is required for the construction of the cable route.

The enjoyment of leisure time in my garden, [redacted] is likely to be severely impacted.

Generally, it takes about 200 acres (80 hectares) to generate the same annual electricity energy through a solar farm as just one offshore wind turbine. This represents a grossly inefficient use of precious land, whatever its quality.

There is no justifiable reason for constructing solar "farms" on fertile and productive farmland. Food security is just as important as energy security and once you remove the land from producing food it will be very difficult to get it back.

Solar energy is highly inefficient and just because it is "renewable" it does not mean it is "zero" carbon. Generating the electricity may be carbon free but the manufacturing and installation process incur the release of an enormous amount of CO2.

The best place for solar panels in the world is usually determined by the amount of sunshine it gets throughout the year. Locations near the equator tend to get more sunlight and efficiency will lag the further north you go. Generally, the most productive places for solar power are those with lots of sunlight and less rain, snow or clouds. The UK is one of the worst places in the world to make use of solar power (see map in appendix).

As I write this today (9/11/2024) the UK is experiencing what the renewable sector calls a "dunkelflaute", which is a period of time in which little or no energy can be generated with wind and solar power. In meteorology this is known as an "anticyclonic gloom". While this might sound like a temporary inconvenience, it does in fact have far reaching consequences for the energy systems in the UK and also for the environment. It means that alternative energy sources will be needed to keep the electricity flowing, i.e. gas or coal generated electricity.

During the first 10 days of November the Met Office have confirmed that England on average saw just 1.7 hours of sunshine and no wind to speak of. This is not exactly the ideal conditions for renewables.

In northern Europe, which includes the UK, dunkelflaute events are fairly common especially in November, December and January. Each event can last from a few hours to a few days. During a dunkelflaute event in December 2022, the UK grid's peak power demand increased by 10% to 45 GW and the National Grid had to lean on gas-fired power plants to meet it. Battery storage could combat the shortfall but, while the technology has advanced significantly, the set up and operational costs remain too high. Coal fired power stations have now gone and gas fired power plants are due to retire in the coming years. Hydro and Neuclear provide some backup but not enough when it is anticipated that electricity demand will rise by 50% by 2035. Therefore, unless something is done to boost the backup of renewables, the only alternative is "Demand-side flexibility" which will aim to reduce consumer's electricity usage at peak demand times. In other words POWER CUTS.

There are other solutions to covering food producing farmland with solar panels.

In France they propose transforming its parking areas into solar farms nationwide.

The French Senate has approved a bill requiring new and existing car parks with more than 80 spaces to be at least half covered with canopies of solar panels that sit over the parking spaces. Assuming the bill comes into effect later this year, car parks with more than 400 spaces must be compliant by 2026; smaller ones with 80 to 400 spaces will be given until 2028.

Installing solar canopies could be helpful for drivers too. They'll provide shade in sunny, warm weather, potentially reducing the need for air conditioning when people jump into their cars, while in winter they'll provide shelter from rain and snow. If the vehicles parked beneath them are electric, the energy generated could also be directly delivered to these cars. At present, most commuters charge their electric vehicles at home, outside of regular working hours. The freedom to charge when shopping or at work could allow them to bypass peak prices.

Hooking up parked EVs to photovoltaic canopies could even help balance the grid. Because the traditional grid doesn't have energy storage capacity, the power fed into it must match the power being consumed—too much power on the grid is a problem. With solar, especially during peak sunshine hours, this can mean that production has to be switched off.

Transmitting rurally generated electricity to urban settings also requires cabling infrastructure, which is expensive, ugly, and inefficient. Even in properly maintained grids, energy is lost when transmitting electricity over long distances, and these losses rise as temperatures increase.

There is a clear benefit to having more solar energy generated closer to where people are.

It makes sense aesthetically and logistically too—mass parking tends to be right next to energy-hungry urban areas, and it's hard to make a vast tarmac car park any uglier.

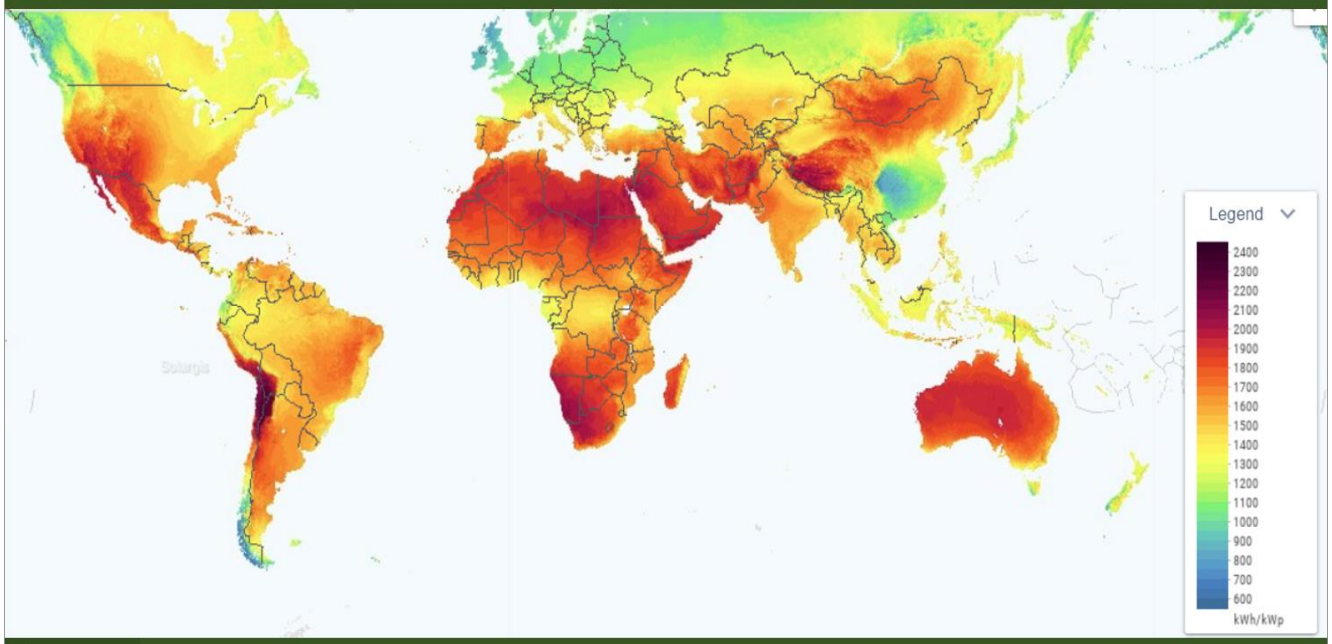
This proposal will ruin our productive and beautiful Lincolnshire countryside. Follow the French example and use car parks instead.

How can anyone justify damaging the environment to protect the environment?

Appendix

World solar photovoltaic power potential

Areas with the highest solar PV potential are Southern Africa, North Africa, Middle East, South America & Australia



REUTERS

Source: SolarGIS