

Comments on dDCO articles (ISH1 Issue 3f).

... a gross electrical output capacity of over 50 megawatts ...

SCHEDULE 1. 2.—(2)

Suggestion: ... a gross electrical output capacity of over 800 megawatts ...

The 50 MW figure is just the threshold in England for consideration as an NSIP application.

If the ExA recommends this dDCO to the Secretary of State, it will have determined that 840 MW is a satisfactory generator output for the land area contained within the Order limits. Consistent with the 'Rochdale envelope' principle, it would be sensible to stipulate a slightly lower figure of 800 MW.

An applicant might become tempted to save on construction costs by installing fewer/cheaper panels and/or making economies that reduce the export power rating. As the dDCO is currently worded, a Botley West installation that achieved a peak output of 51 MW would be compliant with the proposed DCO legislation.

The authorised development must not begin after the expiration of five years from the date this Order comes into force.

SCHEDULE 2. 2.

Suggestion: ... the expiration of one year from ...

In general, the SoS is agnostic concerning the timeframe of an NSIP, whereas the applicant is keen to get going. The expiration limit empowers the SoS to revisit a proposal in the light of changed circumstances, if a start has not been made.

The situation for NPS applications is the reverse. Successive government publications emphasise the urgency of installing solar power, whereas an applicant might be tempted to delay while PV costs continue to fall. An unscrupulous applicant seeking to sell its DCO in the marketplace will cling to an extended timeframe, in order to secure the best possible price.

Fortunately, PVDP anticipates construction start in July 2026, which is an impressive two months after the scheduled SoS decision date.

The SoS might welcome an additional article to secure the *production* start date, currently October 2028. This is the key date for the SoS's strategic planning purposes. In the event of an unavoidable schedule slippage, the SoS would likely be sympathetic and issue an amended DCO.