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16<sup>th</sup> October 2025

Project: EN10147 – ExA. 2.11.6

Subject: Update on Northern Land area and soil quality

Dear Planning Inspectorate,

In response to PVDP's answer to D4 REP4-037, page 94 some context needs to be shown. Firstly the response given by PVDP is clearly an AI response to a simple question whereas I am writing with extensive knowledge of this subject matter, indeed I would be classed as a professional given my 25 years' experience not only of this situation but also of the specific ground that is being discussed.

Their response has some merit in that *“Leaving land fallow is a practice which has formed part of agricultural rotations for centuries as it enhances soil quality through natural restoration processes”* but the key word in this statement is “rotations” As a regenerative farmer I practise a wide crop rotation and indeed nearly all farmers in the world have a crop rotation whereby we grow different crops in the same field in each subsequent year. Wikipedia states “Ancient Near Eastern farmers practiced crop rotation in 6000 BC, alternately planting legumes and cereals” and gardeners will do the same, it is one of the most basic practices when it comes to crop or land husbandry. But this all relies on growing different crops each year, If you grow the same crop year after year then this is a monoculture. The solar panels cannot have anything other than the same crop underneath them year after year so the ground will not be fallow as stated but will become a monoculture. This is the exact opposite of what is being claimed and is extremally detrimental to soil health and quality.

The other major issue which is being ignored is the damage that the installation of the panels will do to both the soil structure but also to the drainage schemes that are established under the surface. In the post war period the government recognised the importance of food security in the UK and grant funded the installation of hundreds of thousands of miles of drainage deep under the soil to allow the ground to be used to grow crops. Most of the land that is being put forward by PVDP for the solar development has these land drains underneath the surface and by driving their piles into the ground to support the panels they will destroy these systems. Not only will this make the ground unfarmable when, and if, the panels are removed in 40 years but for the duration of the project the soil will sit waterlogged and anaerobic over the winter months. Pioneering work by the Allerton Project in Leicestershire has shown that compacted wet soils emit elevated levels of nitrous oxide, a greenhouse gas 300 times more potent than carbon dioxide. They are currently funding a research project to update land drains in a field to monitor not only yield but also weed burden, soil health and environmental metrics.

I cannot emphasise enough how detrimental this project is to the soils and biodiversity of this area. Under my care I have transformed this farmland and it is now both productive and biodiverse whilst being resilient to our current weather patterns. We have grey partridge, brown hares and numerous butterflies, birds and

insects that thrive alongside our productive fields which produce food year after year for the UK. This will be destroyed by this solar development, it is nothing but a money making scheme, despite claims to the contrary.

This response was written without any reliance on AI, it has come from my experience and some readily available studies that are in the public domain.

