

John Jones

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20 November 24

OBJECTION TO CONSTRUCTION OF NATIONAL GRID SUB-STATION & BATTERY STORAGE IN NAVENBY AND WELLINGORE.

Refs:

24/0075/EIASCRC dated 27 Feb 24

23/0390/EIASCRC dated 2 Aug 23

23/0584/EIASCRC dated 18 May 23

Dear All

I write with reference to the multiple proposed solar energy “investments” in the area within, and adjacent to Navenby & Wellingore. I have included all addressees as the areas of concern involve planning applications in all your areas of responsibility; Lincoln & Sleaford National Parliamentary Constituencies and North Kesteven District Council.

I wrote to Dr Johnson & Cllr Overton earlier this year expressing my concerns for the projects at Fosse Green, Springwell Solar, Navenby National Grid and the Windel Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS). Since then, there has been a change of government & I have attended many of the local meetings providing additional detail of these projects.

I am not re-assured at all by the new government’s distasteful approach to planning and rural affairs. The speed at which the Secretary of State for Energy Security & Net Zero has approved multiple solar investments immediately after the General Election speaks volumes for the limited knowledge, appreciation & understanding the new government has. The budget has created severe pressures on the farming sector, the ill-thought-out Inheritance Tax implications for the agricultural sector are but one example of the many unintended consequences of these new policies that are both inadequately funded and ill-researched.

I am acutely aware of the pressures of energy provision and the consequences of global warming. I agree these should indeed promote a greener approach to energy production in the UK. However, this needs to be part of a GOVERNMENTALLY CO-ORDINATED NATIONAL PLAN and NOT be one that is divided up into individual, overseas-based companies submitting random planning applications with only commercial profit in mind. The proposed solar, battery & associated infra-structure developments are lacking any overall strategic plan resulting in ill-thought plans/ projects being introduced for the wrong reasons. I recently attended a consultation meeting for the Windel BESS in Navenby. A map displaying only SOME of the proposed solar investments was shown. Missing from the map were proposed developments along the A17 in the vicinity of Brant Broughton/ Leadenham and those to the northeast of Metherringham. I am concerned there is no, single holistic approach to these developments & that each one will be considered in isolation. I AM ALSO CONCERNED THAT THESE CONSULTATION EVENTS ARE NOT TELLING THE WHOLE STORY/ TRUTH.

I agree solar generation should be part of the UK's generic plan, but to have virtually the whole of this part of the county's agricultural land replaced and industrialised, feels as though this region is being unfairly targeted. Much is made of the strategic importance of energy generation. **FOOD GENERATION IS OF AT LEAST EQUAL STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE TO THE NATION.** This is especially the case in a world where global isolation & tariff restrictions are looking more & more likely. This part of the country produces a wide variety of food stuffs, playing a massive role in food production for the UK. The industrialisation of agricultural land is NOT a risk I am ready to take. Brownfield sites, rooftops, council buildings etc are a far better location for solar panels. Such locations would not compromise food production in any way. Many of our European colleagues have realised this & prohibit the use of agricultural land for anything else other than food production. Additionally, the countryside should be considered as an amenity in its own right. I have chosen to live in a rural area & do not expect it to become industrialised. Mention is made of returning the land to its previous use – what research has been completed guaranteeing these companies will even be around in 40 years time? Let alone the long-term environmental impact of building, soil compaction and contamination by the building & operational processes; all potentially rendering the subsequent agricultural use of the land as impossible.

The companies involved are claiming there is no or little fire risk involved with these projects & their proximity to (growing) urban centres of population is insignificant. The BESS at Navenby is a mere 1Km from the (current) eastern edge of the village. The Fire Brigade's approach to a fire at such sites is to simply let them burn. There is no easy method of extinguishing a BESS fire. Numerous BESS fires have occurred, all have resulted in **PERMANENT AND SEVERE SOIL AND AEROSOL ENVIRONMENTAL CONTAMINATION.** I have recently discovered there is also a significant noise pollution risk associated with BESS sites, making their location near to population centres even more questionable. Their proximity to households is an unacceptable risk that the nation does not need to take making the situation even more farcical. The investing companies are prepared to reap the profits but not take any risk or even reduce the profit to mitigate the risks I have highlighted. At the recent meetings much has been made of the green, environmental reasons for development. No mention has been made that behind ALL of them is the desire to make **PROFIT** at the expense of our local area. Some of the companies have a UK base but parent companies are all based overseas. This means profits & control will be overseas, making a mockery of any strategic power supply claims.

I have solar panels on my roof, but I have no intention of covering my back garden or vegetable patch in more solar panels. Over the past few weeks, the power generated has been minimal – solar energy in the UK will never be a sole solution. The day length (due to UK's latitude) & climate will always prevent solar energy being the UK's sole solution to energy generation.

I also have severe concerns about the safety of these projects, aside of the fire & environmental concerns I have already highlighted. The additional traffic driving through Navenby onto Green Man Road & the smaller road linking a new housing estate to the A15 will make walking, running & cycling increasingly dangerous. Navenby Primary School is located on the eastern edge of the village, putting their pupils & staff directly in the firing line. Further east is the main Lincoln-Sleaford road, the A15. There have been two deaths on this road in the last month. Increased traffic during construction & the operation of these solar projects will increase the risk to all residents/ commuters further still.

Lastly, I have concerns over local wildlife, flora & fauna. I am not re-assured at all that this has been researched properly & thoroughly enough. This part of the county is not blessed with many coppices or small woodlands. The proposed area of the sub-station & BESS is adjacent to a small, immature woodland. If this is destroyed this will mark the loss of one of

the few woodlands of the future. Please can you send me a copy of the full environmental risk report.

In summary, I am not against solar power but the quantity & size of the proposed developments in the local area is vastly out of proportion with benefits they *may* accrue. I am against the developments because of:

1. The concept of industrialising quality agricultural land is strategically naïve. The strategic importance of farming & food production would be sacrificed at the expense of energy production.
2. There are too many solar farms proposed in the local area. Some investment is acceptable, surrounding numerous whole villages is not.
3. The BESS poses a fire & environmental risk that is unacceptable in a populated area. Numerous battery storage facilities are proposed, with the largest being in Navenby.
4. The increased road accident risk is unacceptable – the A15 to A607 link roads are dangerous enough as they are.
5. There is no co-ordinated national energy policy. Green energy projects are ill-conceived & are being approved for PR & private (largely overseas) profiteering. Their contribution to the national energy deficit is questionable at best. I urge the government to take time to the devise a national policy prior to allowing agricultural land to be industrialised and damaged forever.
6. I question the developers' claims that the land will be returned to its current state after the lease period is complete. This is a very one-sided view through a developer's lens.

I urge that these proposals are immediately halted & additional, independent investigations are completed enabling a more comprehensive and objective decision is reached.

Thank You

Yours faithfully

John Jones