

From: [S.C](#)
To: [Sunnica Energy Farm](#)
Subject: Sunnica Energy Farm
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The Secretary of State,

Few could argue against a well-designed solar facility that offers even a small chance to counter some of the devastating effects of climate change, as well as offer the country improved energy security. The opportunities are vast with innovative technology and inspirational use of brownfield sites such as contaminated landfill and industrial estates. In striving to deliver a Net Zero NHS, the hospital I work at has photovoltaic roof panels and just up the road solar car ports are being installed at the serving park and ride site. This should become the expectation for any public, industrial or residential new build and replicated at every large carpark, out of town shopping centre, industrial estate, etc. with better connectivity to the National Grid or enable off-grid supply direct to local consumers. Sunnica offers none of this hope, only irreversible devastation of large swathes of the Cambridgeshire / Suffolk countryside and dubious reliance on foreign investment and supply chains, leaving both green and ethical credentials in doubt.

Throughout the process, Sunnica have inspired little confidence with persistent disregard for local communities and little respect for the examination process with their lack of transparency and willingness to engage. Really this comes as no surprise though as ultimately an oversized BESS poorly disguised in 2500 acres of solar panels was never going to be anything more than a profiteering tool for energy trade with the National Grid. Perhaps more concerning is the lack of interest of Natural England in robustly evaluating this proposal, considering their statutory purpose is to 'ensure that the natural environment is conserved, enhanced, and managed for the benefit of present and future generations, thereby contributing to sustainable development'. To engage with only one party and persistently deny opportunity for open discourse is frankly shameful for a public body.

Undoubtedly there is an urgent need for renewable energy, but sustainability also calls for local productivity to reduce the hefty carbon footprint associated with the import and distribution of food. The fields I travel through on a daily basis have not laid bare over the past year, crops have flourished and harvesting has been underway. The livelihoods of farmers is dependent on productivity, not fantasy, yet Sunnica imply ridiculously low potential for an area dominated by agriculture. If the site was truly over 96% poor quality soil, why would anyone even attempt to farm it? Either the data offered is incorrect or something is very wrong with the correlation between soil quality and output. Independent soil sampling and review of productivity might establish a consensus but whilst viable alternatives exist, why take agricultural land out of service? Any Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project should be an opportunity to showcase best practice, not leave people wondering at the wider costs.

Whilst it is appreciated that detailed design details for the BESS may not be known at this stage, I do feel Sunnica should have sufficient knowledge of their own business venture to inspire confidence in their ability to deliver the proposal safely. Even without full details, risks can be acknowledged and potential mitigation discussed. The examination process was an opportunity for Sunnica to reassure local communities alarmed by the rising numbers of BESS fires reported, instead their cavalier approach has generally been dismissive of concerns. It is hard to have confidence that a company showing so little respect for the communities affected here that have the ability to express their concern, show any compassion for those impacted worldwide by the manufacture of solar panels and lithium-ion batteries. Coupled with the potential for exploitation of indigenous populations, including children, dependence on rare resources means Sunnica's financial gain will likely leave a legacy of toxicity that will tarnish the United Kingdom's reputation for years to come.

Kind regards

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