

FARMS FOR FARMING

Rt Honourable Claire Coutinho
Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero
Department for Energy Security and Net Zero

[REDACTED]

22 September 2023

Dear Secretary of State,

REF: Sunnica Solar Farm

Farms for Farming are a self interest voluntary group committed to preserving the country's valuable agricultural land for food production. I wish to draw your attention to the recent Guardian on-line article concerning the potential dumping into the UK of cheap [REDACTED] solar panels produced as a result of [REDACTED]. Please study this carefully as this has a potential massive implication for the Department and UK Government.

The proposed legislation only affects solar farms greater than 50 MW in size. The Sunnica project is a massive 500MW so the Due Diligence falls to your Department to prove beyond doubt that [REDACTED] has not been involved. This leaves three options:

- 1) Make planning consent conditional on all solar panels to be 100% sourced and manufactured in Europe and to ensure the developer provides full documented traceability through the supply chain of every component and raw material.
- 2) If the developer does use [REDACTED] sourced solar panels then every panel has to be fully certified with documented traceability for each component and raw material back to the serial number of each individual solar panel.

Further, the life expectancy of a solar panel is 20 to 25 years. This means every panel on this solar farm will have to be replaced at least once so the above must also be applicable to any replacement panels.

Please understand Farms for Farming wish to retain their anonymity to avoid repercussions from solar farm developers. We are committed to renewable energy but solar panels belong on roofs not valuable agricultural land. I have raised this issue now as it could have massive political repercussions for the Department and UK Government as well as potentially huge embarrassment. May I thank you for taking the time to read this and I trust you will address the issues with departmental colleagues and ensure full compliance with UK Government anti-slavery policies.

Yours Sincerely

[REDACTED]

Paul Franks

[REDACTED]



UK solar could be 'dumping ground' for products of [REDACTED]; ministers warned

Energy bill amendment requires large solar energy projects to prove supply chain free of [REDACTED]

The UK risks becoming a dumping ground for the products of [REDACTED] from [REDACTED] if it rejects reforms proposed by members of the foreign affairs select committee with cross-party support, ministers have been warned.

An amendment to the energy bill, due to be debated on Tuesday, would require solar energy companies to prove that their supply chains are free of [REDACTED]. The [REDACTED] is the source of 35%-40% of the world's solar-grade polysilicon, the key raw material in the solar photovoltaic supply chain.

The amendment to the energy bill has been tabled by Alicia Kearns, the chair of the foreign affairs select committee, seven other members of her committee and a host of other senior backbenchers.

It would require the Planning Inspectorate in England to ban any nationally significant infrastructure project over 50MW if it could not be proven beyond doubt that [REDACTED] had not been involved.

The new confrontation between parliament and the executive comes days after the foreign secretary, [James Cleverly](#), returned from [REDACTED] at the centre of the bilateral relationship.

Kearns told the Guardian: "Cleverly talked the talk on the [REDACTED] in [REDACTED]. It's time for the government to put its legislative might behind its strong rhetoric. By adopting this amendment to the energy bill, they can ensure that nationally significant infrastructure projects are far more transparent and become more free from [REDACTED]."

"Taking even this small stand against all forms of [REDACTED] would help put an end to the UK becoming a dumping ground for [REDACTED] produced solar. [REDACTED] must not stain our countryside."

"The fight against [REDACTED] is a collective responsibility. Together, we must pave a path towards a clean energy transition, without becoming complicit in not just [REDACTED]."

A letter signed by 15 [REDACTED] groups in the Coalition to [REDACTED] in the [REDACTED] [REDACTED] says [REDACTED] and sets a high bar, arguing: "Due to systemic use of [REDACTED] in the region, there is no valid means for companies to verify that any workplace in the [REDACTED] region is free of [REDACTED] [REDACTED] or to prevent the use of [REDACTED] in the region in line with [REDACTED] due diligence."

[REDACTED] and parts of the UK's renewable industry will be furious if the UK backs legislation that its detractors say will lead to an effective ban on trade with the [REDACTED] [REDACTED].

Cleverly last week ventured on the first trip to [REDACTED] by a UK foreign secretary in five years in a bid to put relations with [REDACTED] on a better business footing. Cleverly insisted that he had raised [REDACTED] [REDACTED] all his meetings with officials.

But the cross-party determination by British MPs not to abandon the [REDACTED] agenda in [REDACTED] also creates a difficult backdrop for the subsequent visit by the investment minister, Lord Johnson, along with one of the largest British business delegations to a [REDACTED] trade fair.

The [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] requires UK companies to report on what they are doing to free their supply chains from [REDACTED], but places no duty on them to do anything other than report.

The [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] accepts that there has been some movement by solar companies to exit the [REDACTED] in recent years, but says many firms are still operating there, especially with a view to supplying the UK market – where regulations are looser than in the US and EU.

The amendment requires companies to submit a report to the Planning Inspectorate "to demonstrate clear and convincing evidence that the good, or the materials in the good, were not mined, produced or manufactured wholly or in part by [REDACTED]".

Critics will argue that the amendment sets such a high bar in requiring the proof of no forced labour that it would in effect amount to a ban on British trade with [REDACTED]. They claim parallel legislation passed in the US has led to delays in the installation of solar equipment.

The US Bureau of Labor estimates that "[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

in 2021 the US bureau added polysilicon to the list of items "produced by forced labour by [REDACTED] [REDACTED]". It argues that [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Both the Foreign Office and Labour frontbench have been asked to comment.