

**Interested Party Reference Number: 20036088. [William John Williams]**

## **WRITTEN SUBMISSION**

### **Mallard Pass Solar Farm.**

I am a farmer and landowner of land included in the proposal. I am opposed to this scheme on the following grounds:

#### **Impact of Design on Landscape.**

The scheme is a ribbon development spreading across a rolling terrain varying from 30m - 60m above sea level. It involves farmable agricultural land, roads, a railway, water courses and residential properties. During both construction and operation, being a ribbon development and not contained within regular boundaries, it will affect the greatest number of people and wildlife and will have maximum impact on the landscape turning what is currently a rural and agricultural landscape into an industrial one.

The scheme has come about because of the potential to link to the National Grid at the sub-station east of Ryhall built on the site of an old railway line. Any proposal should have been limited to a contained site around or adjacent to the sub-station, minimizing all the negative impacts of the proposed scheme.

Not only the solar panels but all the other components of a solar farm, plus the perimeter fencing will have impact on the look and feel of the entire area.

Proposals that trees and hedges will be used to screen various aspects and suggestions as to how quickly they will grow are overconfident. On our farm we have planted well over 100 acres of trees and established miles of hedgerow. We know therefore that management after planting is a permanent major task requiring knowledge and considerable investment in time, also the investment in time and cost essential for pest control [Deer, Badgers, Hare, Rabbits to name a few].

#### **Use of Agricultural Land.**

Built entirely on agricultural land it is in direct contradiction with any idea of national food security and the planning regulations concerning BMV land.

There is no certainty on how the Solar Installation will be decommissioned at the end of the operating period. It may well end up an industrial wasteland if those

with the responsibility for restoration of the land are incapable or unwilling to meet their obligations for whatever reasons.

There is no knowledge on what state the land will be in after 35+ years of a solar farm regime. Any statements that land will be returned to its original agricultural state should be ignored because no one knows.

Compared to other large solar farms Mallard Pass is profligate in its use of land. It plans to produce 350Mw from 2175 acres or 0.16 Mw/Acre, which is 48% less than the Gate Burton Scheme and 66% less than the Springwell Scheme for example.

## **Wildlife**

Deer will be a major problem. They already are. We now regularly see large numbers of Fallow deer, 30 or more in a group, and Fallow deer roam over very large areas and distances. The construction activities will certainly stir them up and any fencing, permanent or temporary, will change their behaviour. Expect to see more of them on the roads and accidents to follow when their usual routes of travel are closed.

It goes without saying that the construction process and the solar farm itself will disturb all animals because, as said before, the scheme is not contained but spread over a very large area affecting a whole range of habitats. Provision of wildlife corridors is proposed but this scheme will destroy the existing ones and interfere with the creation of further ones.

## **Impact of Construction Activities**

A 2 year construction time can only be an hopeful estimate but it indicates it will be at least 2 years of misery for the local population. The local roads, being narrow and in a poor state, cannot cope adequately with existing volumes of traffic so the extra volume of HGV traffic and personnel vehicles generated will make matters considerably worse for all. The Ryhall Road [Great Casterton to Ryhall] is very busy throughout the day. At school time there are long queues either end of Ryhall Road. It is very narrow with sharp bends and this has caused many accidents, some fatal, over the years. Throughout the year farm machinery and grain lorries also make much use of this road.

To gain access to the site will involve the use of unclassified roads, some not surfaced. In winter conditions these will be destroyed by heavy traffic use. Will they be restored ?

### **Impact on health and well-being.**

This whole process has caused no end of mental anguish and anxiety within the community which must in turn have an effect on their physical and mental health. Factors such as:

The complexity of the planning process.

The feeling of futility in taking part in the NSIP process where local democracy counts for nothing and local councils are overloaded but impotent in their involvement.

Threats of compulsory purchase.

Destruction of their environment - the rural environment and landscape in which they chose to live. Many are of an age who will never again see the land as it once was.

### **Sundry Concerns:**

There is no evidence that Windell have the expertise or financial resources to see this scheme through successfully.

Canadian Solar is a Chinese owned company which will have ultimate control over this scheme. Hardly a move for the UK to acquire secure energy.

There are contradictory calculations on whether many solar farm schemes can reach net zero carbon emissions with in their lifetime. As Mallard Pass panels will be manufactured in China using energy provided by coal, plus the whole transport of materials and the entire construction process is it possible this scheme falls short of the net zero mark ?

**Footnote:**

Starting at the age of 37 years I have been farming as a first-generation farmer for 44 years. My motivation was a love of the countryside and a belief that farming was the last honorable profession in producing food for the nation and caring for the land and the landscape.

I understand why neighboring farmers may have signed up for this. Lack of any policies on national food security and farming beyond the EEC system would not give any of us confidence regarding our future financial survival. The possibility of a guaranteed income from solar panels for 35 years, yielding more per acre than any crop that could be grown, makes signing up more than tempting. The threat of compulsory purchase, leaving farmers without the land to farm, nor income from farming or the solar scheme would be another pressure.

I would suggest that an initial indication of interest by neighboring farmers from West to East, including us, has enabled Wyndell to stitch together a hotchpot of land parcels producing the sprawling ribbon development put forward for planning approval.

I sincerely hope that deep down the guardians of the countryside hope this application is turned down by the Minister. This application should be turned down by the Minister.

John Williams.

