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**BY EMAIL**

Date: 25/10/2024

Dear Mr Murray,

**The solar energy supply chain: a request to ensure solar Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) have no links to modern slavery**

I am writing to you following the Secretary of State's granting of the Development Consent Order for the Sunnica Solar Farm, which sits partially in the west of our county.

The County Council has strong concerns over the solar supply chain and the use of modern-day slavery. Reasonable estimates suggest the People's Republic of China is responsible for the production of upwards of 80 percent of the world's solar panels, and that 45 percent of the world's supply of polysilicon<sup>1</sup>, an essential component for solar panels, is produced using Uyghur forced labour camps in Xinjiang<sup>2</sup>.

We recognise that some very tentative attempts to resolve these matters have been taken by the solar industry. The publication some time ago of the solar stewardship initiative ESG standard and just last month the publication of a draft supply chain traceability standard, that may, eventually, operationalise genuinely effective environmental and social governance of solar supply chains, are welcome steps. However, I am sure you will agree the pace is unacceptably slow and appears not to be driven with any determination.

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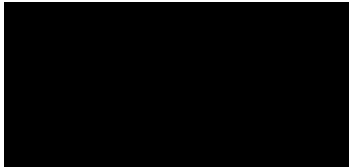
<sup>1</sup> <https://www.unison.org.uk/content/uploads/2022/08/Clean-dirty-energy-1.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/apr/23/revealed-uk-solar-projects-using-panels-from-firms-linked-to-xinjiang-forced-labour>

While regulation in this area is very much a matter for government<sup>3</sup> and the Secretary of State, to whom we have also written, I am sure that as a responsible developer you will want to go much further and deliver a transparent supply chain that clearly demonstrates no links to polysilicon manufactured in Xinjiang or to forced labour elsewhere in the world. We recognise, having worked on our own solar initiatives and on compliance with our own Modern Day Slavery Policy<sup>4</sup>, that this is not easy. However, it is incumbent on both the private and public sector to act on this important issue.

I would be grateful if you could reply to this letter setting out how you will categorically rule out any links between your scheme and forced labour and offering a guarantee to the people of Suffolk that the Sunnica Solar Farm will not be built on the back of the abuse of persecuted peoples overseas.

Yours sincerely,



Richard Rout

Deputy Cabinet Member Nationally  
Significant Infrastructure Projects

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/solar-taskforce-meets-in-drive-for-clean-power>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/our-aims-and-transformation-programmes/modern-slavery-statement>