



The Prime Minister,  
10 Downing Street,  
London,  
SW1A 2AA.

11 July 2025

## **Protect our BMV agricultural land from large-area solar farm development**

Dear Prime Minister,

The need for effective policy to transition away from fossil fuels and decarbonise our energy system is clear and indisputable. However, in pursuing this goal, we must not sacrifice our nation's food security or the integrity of our agricultural landscape.

While planning guidance discourages development on Best and Most Versatile (BMV) land, there is no legal ban. The classification of large-area solar farms as Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) and the additional powers granted to them as Critical National Priorities mean the planning process now permits these developments to be approved on the UK's most valuable farmland.

Analysis from SolarQ indicates that solar installations are being disproportionately sited on better quality farmland, Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) Grades 1 to 3 (that includes BMV land Grades 1, 2 and 3a) rather than on poorer-quality land. There is three times more Grade 5 land (the lowest quality) than Grade 1 land in England, yet solar installations occupy over 20 times more Grade 1 land than Grade 5 land (0.68% vs 0.03%). This reflects a seriously flawed approach to land use and planning.

The consequences of continuing on this path are profound. The UK currently imports 46% of its food, making it the world's third-largest food importer. Arable land is already under pressure, having declined to just 14.8 million acres—the lowest level since the Second World War—with nearly 100,000 acres lost annually. Meanwhile the population of the UK continues to rise; it has risen by more than 10 million since 1990. Climate projections suggest the proportion of UK land classified as BMV could fall from 38% today to just 11% by 2050. At such a critical time, large-scale solar farms are removing hundreds of hectares of productive farmland from cultivation.

We are therefore calling for:

1. An unequivocal ban of large-area solar installations on Best and Most Versatile (BMV) agricultural land (ALC grades 1, 2 and 3a).
2. In light of the likely reduction of BMV land as a result of climate change, inclusion of ALC Grade 3b in the BMV category.
3. A policy promoting a rooftop-first and brownfield-first approach to siting solar installations at local, regional and national levels.

The transition to Net Zero must not come at the cost of our food production and proud agricultural industry. We urge you to take immediate action to safeguard the land that will feed future generations.

Yours sincerely,

**Robbie Moore MP**  
**Kevin Hollinrake MP**  
**Sir David Davis MP**  
**Roz Savage MP**  
**Helen Whately MP**  
**Llinos Medi MP**  
**Stuart Andrew MP**  
**Nick Timothy MP**  
**George Freeman MP**  
**Sarah Bool MP**  
**Andrew Rosindell MP**  
**Ben Obese-Jecty MP**  
**Sir Edward Leigh MP**  
**Greg Smith MP**  
**Dame Karen Bradley MP**

**Dr Caroline Johnson MP**  
**Danny Kruger MP**  
**Andrew Snowden MP**  
**Sir Christopher Chope MP**  
**Richard Fuller MP**  
**Lord Mott**  
**Lord Alton of Liverpool**  
**Baroness Hodgson of Abinger**  
**Baroness Redfearn**  
**Lord Curry of Kirkharle**  
**Lord Thurlow**  
**Baroness Meyer**  
**Baroness Harris of Richmond**  
**Baroness Mobarik CBE**  
**Lord Taylor of Holbeach**