

Great British Energy is at Risk of Relying on Slavery

What is GB Energy and how is it linked to modern slavery

GB Energy is a huge project, introduced by the government, to bring the UK's energy infrastructure under public ownership. This is a major step in bringing the UK closer to net-zero carbon emissions.

It would become the remit of GB Energy to expand the UK's solar power infrastructure and procure such material needed for the instalment of solar panelling. However, a huge amount [\(40%\) of solar panels in the UK are made using forced labour](#). As it stands, the government Bill to set up GB Energy does not explicitly address this problem, which means that the UK's energy industry could end up relying on slavery.

What the Government says

The Government has given verbal support for human rights considerations. But it has also resisted amendments which would ensure a GB Energy company that does not invest in slavery, despite pressure from within its own party.

This is because, the Bill is already subject to other UK statutes such as the Modern Slavery Act 2015, the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Procurement Act 2023.

However, these laws have not been able to prevent the dumping of goods in the UK which made through slavery. In addition, the government's recent trade deal with China - where most of the slave-made solar technology used in the UK comes from – suggests a further unwillingness to seriously engage with the scourge of modern slavery in the UK and wider world today.

What we want

The Bill is soon to finish its time being debated in Parliament, despite considerable concerns being raised from MPs and Lords of all major parties, including Labour. We want the government to commit to due diligence when it comes to public supply chains, this includes training contractors on how to spot red flags in supply chains. This can be done best through amending the Bill. Current legislation does not go far enough in offering protection for enslaved people in the UK or abroad.

We want considerations for due diligence inserted into the GB Energy Bill since the Bill, as it stands, would exacerbate slavery. We believe the House of Commons has one final chance to amend the Bill and ensure that GB Energy is an ethically operated public company which we can all be proud of.