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EURASIAN SKYLARKS (FELDLERCHEN) ARE NO LONGER A PROJECT BARRIER

SKYLARKS NEED NOT HALT PV DEVELOPMENTS ANYMORE

Kumandra Energy welcomes the new Brandenburg draft decree on the Eurasian skylark (Feldlerche) – and is among the first to apply its principles in practice.

Protecting endangered species remains a key societal task. At the same time, the expansion of renewable energies must continue to accelerate. Until now, these two goals have often been in tension – particularly when it comes to ground-mounted PV plants. In the approval process for such installations, it was common for authorities to require *external compensation areas* – additional plots of land set aside to restore the ecological functions of species such as the *Feldlerche*. In practice, this meant double land consumption, higher planning costs and lengthy approval procedures.

With its new draft “**Erlass zur Berücksichtigung der Feldlerche bei der artenschutzrechtlichen Prüfung zur Planung und Errichtung von Freiflächen-Photovoltaikanlagen**” (*Decree on the consideration of the Eurasian skylark in species protection assessments for the planning and construction of ground-mounted PV plants*, draft as of 30 September 2025), the State of Brandenburg is taking a new approach.

For the first time, the draft sets out specific conditions under which a PV installation itself can be recognised as a functional habitat – for example, through sufficient spacing between module rows, open soil patches and extensive grassland management. This clarification is a crucial step: it provides planning and legal certainty for developers and authorities, reduces the need for additional land and simultaneously strengthens species protection.

Practical Example: Skylarks Along the A8

At a current Kumandra Energy project site along the A8 motorway, these principles are being put into practice for the first time. The project is located on an agricultural field within the privileged 200-metre corridor along the motorway – an area already frequented by many species of open farmland. During the *spezielle artenschutzrechtliche Prüfung* (special species protection assessment), Eurasian skylarks were detected on site. Instead of seeking external compensation areas, the PV layout was designed in accordance with multiple studies, monitoring data and the Brandenburg concept itself – featuring wide module spacing, open ground patches and extensive grassland management.

Kumandra Energy aims to demonstrate in practice that solar energy generation and nature conservation can successfully coexist on the same land. The Brandenburg draft decree provides a solid, science-based framework for achieving this balance, offering clear guidance for project design and implementation. The company now awaits the response of the competent authorities to this pioneering approach.

Our Assessment

The protection of the Eurasian skylark is ecologically important – yet it should not slow down the expansion of renewable energy. When PV areas can simultaneously serve as habitats, this creates a true win-win situation:

- No additional land consumption through external compensation measures
- No duplicate lease or construction costs
- Simplified and accelerated planning processes
- Enhanced ecological value of the project area itself
- Potential improvement of existing skylark habitats

Kumandra Energy therefore supports a nationwide harmonization of these principles, should the Brandenburg draft be adopted. Uniform regulations could ensure both planning and legal certainty while linking the urgently needed solar expansion with effective biodiversity protection.

Conclusion

The Brandenburg draft decree on the Eurasian skylark demonstrates how the energy transition and biodiversity protection can go hand in hand. Ground-mounted PV installations do not necessarily mean a loss of natural habitat – when properly designed, they can become a new opportunity for it.

Note: This article reflects our practical experience and is not a substitute for legal advice.

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