

To: The Rt Hon Miatta Fahnbulleh MP, Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero,

c/o: Energy Infrastructure Planning Delivery Team, DESNZ

Dear Secretary of State,

SEA LINK, LIONLINK - questions of Trust and Value for Money

I am writing following your letter of 28 August requesting further information from several parties in relation to the Sea Link DCO.

Two recent and significant reports from Ofgem and the National Audit Office raise serious questions about the cost, deliverability and value for money of Sea Link and, more widely, the effectiveness of the current regulatory approach in protecting consumers.

1. Erosion of Trust

I fully support the drive to net zero and the consequent need to upgrade our electricity network and generating capacity, but the implementation of this policy depends on trust - and trust has been badly eroded. At a time when the political well-being of our nation is under threat from right-wing extremism it is dangerous to feed us lies about the costs and necessity of these huge infrastructure projects.

Little more than a year ago we were told that Sea Link would cost a billion pounds - now the official estimate is three times that figure, as local critics have argued all along.

Little more than a year ago we were told that Sea Link was needed to transfer excess electrical capacity from Suffolk to the south, but the decision to bring the Nautilus cross-channel cable ashore in Kent has minimised that need.

Sea Link and LionLink have been sold to us as projects vital for our environmental future, with no consideration for the immediate environmental destruction that we are now experiencing here in East Suffolk, as preliminary work wrecks our countryside and destroys our vital tourist economy.

2. Value for Money???

I understand the need to upgrade our electricity network and generating capacity – but at what cost?

it makes no sense to do so by trashing the environment and economy of east Suffolk through hugely expensive and unnecessary infrastructure projects such as Sea Link.

It makes no sense to waste vast sums of government money (our money) on projects which were never properly assessed in the first place and in the case of Sea Link is now expected to cost £3.2 billion - three times the figure presented in the DCO examination.

It makes no sense to continue with a project that has been rendered unnecessary because the assumed export deficit of 1,852 MW at Friston (on which Sea Link's rationale was based) has now been reduced to approx 352 MW following the decision of the Nautilus project to make landfall in Kent rather than East Suffolk.

It makes no sense to spend over £3 billion (plus another £1 billion over ten years in damage to the local economy) when serious questions remain about unresolved harmonic issues which may require additional works elsewhere on the transmission network, and when it has been estimated that an alternative solution (upgrading existing pylon corridors) would cost under £300 million.

When the nation's borrowing costs are rising almost daily, and money is desperately needed to tackle numerous social issues (let alone defence), what possible justification can there be to waste billions on Sea Link?

3. Time for a re-think

Instead of allowing Sea Link and LionLink to proceed as currently planned, I urge the Government to order an independent re-assessment of these projects. Huge and escalating costs combined with serious doubts about the rationale on which they were first proposed, many years ago, should, in my view, be sufficient to call a halt. It is madness, at a time of economic stringency, to allow National Grid to waste public money on such profligate scale, when there are cheaper and better alternatives.

Thank you for your consideration

Yours,

Simon Loftus OBE

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