

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

c/o Energy Infrastructure Planning Delivery Team, DESNZ

Sea Link DCO - EN020026

Interested Party No: [REDACTED]

Subject: Response to "Request for information" letter dated 28 August 2026

Date: 18 September 2026

Dear Secretary of State,

SEA LINK – NEW EVIDENCE - QUESTIONS OVER COST, VALUE FOR MONEY AND DELIVERABILITY

As an Interested Party who followed the six-month Sea Link DCO examination, I feel compelled to write to you following two very recent reports which raise new and serious questions about the Sea Link project.

The first is **Ofgem's Sea Link Project Assessment consultation**, published on 1 September, and the second is the **National Audit Office report**, *Upgrading the Electricity Transmission Network*, published on 11 September.

RISING COSTS

The Ofgem consultation puts the current cost of Sea Link at approximately **£3.2 billion**, compared with the figure of around **£1.1 billion** presented during the DCO examination.

This is particularly concerning because Suffolk Energy Action Solutions (SEAS) challenged the £1.1 billion figure during the examination and estimated that the real cost could be around £3 billion or more. National Grid neither confirmed nor denied this figure at the time, meaning that the Examining Authority could not properly take it into account when considering the project.

SEA LINK's REQUIRED CAPACITY IS QUESTIONABLE

There is also the question of how much additional capacity Sea Link is actually needed to provide.

SEAS challenged National Grid's original deficit figure of 1,852MW and, during the examination, this was reduced to around **325MW**. NGET's application (APP320) should have reflected this, considering Nautilus had been shifted to Grain months before they presented their Application to PINS. FYI, that 325MW deficit would only arise when the Sizewell Generation Group is generating at full capacity, which is unusual and certainly not an everyday operating condition.

A CHEAPER ALTERNATIVE

SEAS estimated that upgrading the existing overhead transmission (OHL) infrastructure in Suffolk and Kent, using newer technology, could provide additional capacity at a much lower cost. SEAS estimated the cost at around **£300 million**, potentially saving consumers more than £2.5 billion compared with the current cost of Sea Link.

COMPLIANCE WITH NETS-SQSS

SEAS representations on Sea Link's "need case" calculated that the OHL alternative would meet compliance with NETS-SQSS, whereas Sea Link's 2GW is unable to achieve this.

All the above issues were raised during the examination and are set out in the various SEAS representations.

NEW TECHNICAL PROBLEMS RAISING QUESTIONS OVER DESIGN, COST & DELIVERABILITY

The Ofgem consultation has now also raised another very worrying issue: **harmonics**. It identifies issues concerning whether Sea Link can achieve its full operational 2GW, whether the proposed filtering arrangement will be sufficient to meet network harmonic limits in all circumstances, and indicates that further work, and potentially additional infrastructure, may be required. This raises questions not only about cost but also about the project's design and deliverability and relates to the Secretary of States question 13 on design.

THE NATIONAL AUDIT OFFICE REPORT is about the much wider Great Grid Upgrade rather than Sea Link specifically. However, its findings are highly relevant to Sea Link. The report raises some very important questions about how decisions on major grid projects such as Sea Link have been made. It says that projects were not chosen

following a full assessment of alternatives or overall value for money, and that Ofgem has changed its approach to prioritise faster approvals, with less detailed scrutiny of project costs and risks.

In my view, this makes it particularly important that the Secretary of State now looks closely at whether Sea Link is still needed and represents value for money, rather than simply relying on the previous assessments made by NGET, NESO or Ofgem. This is especially concerning in light of the significant new information about the cost and technical issues that has emerged from Ofgem since the close of the DCO examination. These are matters which should have been transparent during the examination, when the Examining Authority, stakeholders and local residents were being asked to assess the project.

It is very difficult for residents to have confidence in the NSIP process when important information only becomes apparent after the examination has closed.

I fully understand the need to invest in and improve the electricity network. I also support the move towards more renewable energy. But investment on this scale must be properly tested for value for money, particularly when the cost will ultimately be borne by consumers.

There seems little justification for spending billions of pounds on a new project if an existing network can be upgraded to provide the capacity required for a fraction of the cost and with considerably less environmental and community damage.

I therefore ask the Government to:

1. **Seriously consider pausing Sea Link** while the true cost, capacity requirement and outstanding technical issues are properly reviewed.
2. **Give proper consideration to SEAS alternative of upgrading the existing overhead transmission infrastructure** , using the newer technology available to increase its capacity, before committing consumers to a £3.2 billion project.
3. **Revisit the need for Sea Link around 2035** , when there should be much greater certainty about the actual capacity of the Sizewell Generation Group and when Sizewell C is expected to be operational.

If Sea Link really is needed, then it should stand up to proper scrutiny.

STOP, THINK and RE-ASSESS . If the required capacity can be provided by upgrading existing infrastructure for around £300 million rather than spending £3.2 billion on a new link, then a full costing and assessment is urgently required.

Surely it makes sense to establish the facts before spending the money.

Yours sincerely,

Glynis Robertson

Interested Party No: [REDACTED]