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South East Anglia Link

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

c/o: Energy Infrastructure Planning Delivery Team, DESNZ

Via Email: SouthEastAngliaLink@planninginspectorate.gov. uk

Subject: Sea Link (EN020026) – Request for Information –

Dear Secretary of State,

SEA LINK, LIONLINK AND VALUE FOR MONEY FOR CONSUMERS

I am writing following your letter of 28 August requesting further information from several

parties in relation to the Sea Link DCO. Although I am not a listed recipient, I feel compelled

to write in light of two recent and significant reports from Ofgem and the National Audit Office, which 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.

I welcome the Government's commitment to reducing household energy costs. With billions

of pounds being invested in energy infrastructure, it is essential that projects are necessary,

proportionate and provide genuine value for money for consumers.

I note the recent National Audit Office (NAO) report, Value for Money – Upgrading the

Electricity Transmission Network, dated 11/09/26. The NAO highlights weaknesses in the

existing system which need to be addressed if the Great Grid Upgrade is to provide value for

money, including the need for stronger oversight, transparent monitoring and sufficient regulatory capability to scrutinise costs. Importantly, the NAO recommends that Ofgem assess the effectiveness of its regulatory approach in protecting consumers while supporting

rapid delivery of network upgrades.

These concerns are particularly relevant to Sea Link, the proposed 2GW transmission project

through East Suffolk.

Ofgem has now assessed Sea Link at approximately £3.2 billion – around three times the

cost presented during the DCO examination.

This raises serious concerns about the reliability and transparency of the information presented during that Examination. National Grid presented an estimated project cost of

approximately £1.1 billion, despite SEAS challenging that figure and presenting evidence

that the true cost was likely to be around £3.2 billion. Ofgem has now assessed Sea Link at approximately £3.2 billion, broadly confirming the figure put forward by SEAS. The £1.1

billion figure presented during the Examination therefore proved wholly unrealistic. It is deeply concerning that a project of this scale was examined without decision-makers and

affected communities being given a realistic assessment of its likely cost.

The circumstances underpinning Sea Link's original need have also changed. Sea Link was

developed around an assumed 1,852MW export deficit at Friston, associated with the proposed Nautilus interconnector. Nautilus was subsequently relocated away from Friston

before the Sea Link application was submitted, reducing the apparent deficit to approximately 352MW.

Ofgem has also identified unresolved harmonic issues which may require additional works

elsewhere on the transmission network before Sea Link can operate compliantly at its intended 2GW capacity. The precise scope and location of these works have yet to be determined. In addition, identified reinforcement between Richborough and Canterbury in

Kent is excluded from NGET's current £3.2 billion Project Assessment submission.

This raises a fundamental question: what is the true need and total cost to consumers of

delivering Sea Link?

During the DCO examination, Suffolk Energy Action Solutions (SEAS) identified an alternative

based on upgrading and reconductoring existing pylon corridors, estimated to cost under

£300 million, potentially saving consumers approaching £3 billion.

The NAO's concerns about consumer protection must also prompt renewed scrutiny of LionLink, National Grid Ventures' proposed commercial multipurpose interconnector affecting the Suffolk coast. LionLink is not part of the Great Grid Upgrade. Ofgem expects

LionLink to operate predominantly as an export route from Great Britain to the

Netherlands, increasing GB wholesale electricity prices compared with the position without

LionLink.

Given the NAO's recommendations, I urge the Government to require an independent and

transparent reassessment of the economic need and consumer case for LionLink against

current 2026 evidence, rather than continuing to regard that case as established by the 2024

regulatory decision.

Furthermore, I would also like to emphasise that in addition to the overall case against LionLink, the latest proposed landfall site in Walberswick (G3) is wholly unsuitable, as it was

with the previous proposed sites at G & G2. Homes sit directly adjacent on two sides of the

landfall site, with nearly half of all village homes within 500 metres with dozens much closer.

This means:

- Unacceptably high levels of noise, vibration and light pollution from construction work lasting for 2 years or more with severe impacts from 24/7 HDD drilling for weeks on end.
- Impacts on elderly residents, children and vulnerable people will still be severe, along

with significant disruption to wildlife on the protected habitats which lie in close proximity.

- Severe traffic disruption and emergency evacuation risks arise from use of the B1387 which is the sole access road for residents and tens of thousands of visitors.

- Significant impacts on recreational tourism, and consequent threats to the viability of local businesses and jobs.

I support offshore wind and the transition to Net Zero. However, achieving Net Zero should

not mean accepting unnecessary expenditure or successive major infrastructure projects

without establishing whether there are cheaper, better coordinated and less environmentally damaging alternatives.

The energy transition needs public support. That support will be much stronger if people can

see that Government is challenging unnecessary expenditure, protecting consumers and

ensuring that the infrastructure being built is genuinely needed.

Before consumers and communities are committed to these projects, I therefore ask the

Government to ensure that:

- Sea Link's cheaper alternative is properly and independently assessed;
- LionLink's economic and consumer case is reassessed using current evidence; and
- coordinated offshore solutions and better use of existing infrastructure are fully considered.

Thank you for reading this.

Yours sincerely

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