

The Rt Hon Miatta Fahnbulleh MP, SOS for Energy Security and Net Zero

c/o Energy Infrastructure Delivery Team , DESNZ

Dear Secretary of State

I am writing in light of two reports from Ofgem and the National Audit Office. The National Audit Office report 'Value For Money - Upgrading the Electricity Transmission Network', raises the question as to whether the cost, deliverability and value for money of the proposed Sea Link project in EastSuffolk is a genuine value for money project for consumers.

Ofgem has assessed Sea Link as costing approximately £3.2 billion which is 3 times the cost presented during the DCO examination. National Grid estimated the project cost of approximately £1.1 billion despite being challenged by SEAS who presented evidence that the true likely cost would be around £3.2 billion. National Grid's figures have proved to be totally unrealistic giving the decision makers false information to make a decision on.

The circumstances underpinning the original need for Sea Link have changed hugely. This is important as the project assumed a 1,852MW export deficit at Friston associated with the proposed Nautilus interconnector which had been moved away from Friston before the Sea Link application was submitted, reducing the deficit to approximately 352MW. Ofgem has also identified unresolved harmonic issues which may require work elsewhere on the transmission network, the scope and location not yet determined, before Sea Link can operate at its 2GW capacity.. In addition, identified reinforcement between Richborough and Canterbury in Kent is excluded from NGET's current £3.2 billion Project Assessment submission.

Like so many infrastructure projects in this country the costs are hugely underestimated and the need for the project in the form applied for has not been tested against other ways which are cheaper and quicker to obtain the final result, and as a result the public is left to foot the cost either through taxation or higher bills.

Suffolk Energy Action Solutions identified an alternative to Sea Link based on upgrading and reconductoring the existing pylon corridor in Suffolk and Kent. The cost is estimated to be £300 million pounds making a huge saving, it could also be delivered quicker, be more carbon neutral by using the existing infrastructure and less environmentally damaging. In my area National Grid has adopted this policy on The Weston Marsh to East Leicestershire Line - upgrading the existing overhead line rather than building a new one as was intended. I would urge the Government that, before committing an expenditure of £3.2 billion and likely more on Sea Link, the alternative

suggested by SEAS should be independently and transparently assessed against Sea Link on cost, delivery time, network capacity and environmental impact.

Yours sincerely

Annie Dowling

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