

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 – Why waste our money when there is a better, cheaper alternative

I assume you are aware of two powerful reports from Ofgem and the National Audit Office regarding the upgrading of the Electricity Transmission Network which raises serious objections to the massive costs and waste of money that is about to be committed by National Grid for the ill-conceived Sea Link project.

It would be quite bizarre if the Sea Link project were approved when there are better and cheaper alternatives. Especially bearing in mind National Grid pulling the wool over the Examiners eyes regarding the overall costs of the project which have tripled from the costs presented at the Examination.

Please look again at the viability and cost effectiveness of this project as the decision makers may not fare well in a subsequent enquiry which would inevitably result from supporting the project and wasting billions of pounds of taxpayers money.

Ofgem now assesses the cost of Sea Link at approximately **£3.2 billion – around three times the cost presented during the DCO examination** calling into question the reliability and truthfulness of the information presented during the Examination. It is almost criminal that a project of this scale was examined without decision-makers, taxpayers and affected communities being told the truth with respect to the costs.

More importantly, the circumstances underpinning the original need for Sea Link has changed. The project 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** .

There are further concerns. Ofgem has 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?**

Most importantly, **there is a cheaper, faster alternative** .

During the DCO examination, Suffolk Energy Action Solutions (SEAS) which is doing a fantastic job of scrutinising this development identified an alternative based on upgrading and reconductoring existing pylon corridor in Suffolk and Kent. This is estimated to cost **under £300 million** , compared with £3.2 billion for Sea Link – a potential saving to consumers approaching **£3 billion** .

The alternative could also potentially be delivered more quickly, while making better use of infrastructure that already exists and avoiding much of the new onshore infrastructure, environmental damage and disruption to communities associated with Sea Link.

As a resident of Aldeburgh who looks out over the marshes which are going to be decimated by Sealink it is incredible that anyone would propose such a thing. When I first heard about plans to run Sealink directly under the marshes I didn't believe anyone would be so stupid. They couldn't have picked a more picturesque and tranquil spot with a huge number of protected statuses.

It is vital and only right that you fully evaluate the much cheaper alternative that has been identified. If a solution costing under £300 million can deliver the required network reinforcement faster than a £3.2 billion project, **surely it should be properly examined before billions of pounds of consumers' money are committed** .

Yours faithfully

Neil Weston

Aldeburgh Resident