From: [redacted]
To: South East Anglia Link
Subject: Sea Link DCO– Request for Independent Assessment of Cheaper Alternative
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To the Rt Hon Matt's Fahnbulleh. Secretary of State for energy security and net zero

I am writing to you as a local resident in East Suffolk regarding the proposed Sea Link project and the significant concerns I have about its cost, need and potentialimpact on our local communities.

I fully support the transition to Net Zero andrecognise that Britain's electricity network requires substantial investment. However, as someone living in an area that couldbe directly affected by the infrastructureassociated with Sea Link, I believe local residents have a right to expect that such a major project is genuinely necessary, proportionate and provides value for money.

I am particularly concerned that Ofgem has now assessed the cost of Sea Link at approximately £3.2 billion, compared with anestimated project cost of approximately £1.1 billion presented during the DCO examination.

This substantial difference raises important questions about whether decision-makers and affected communities were given a realistic understanding of the likely costof the project when it was examined.

There are also questions regarding theoriginal justification for Sea Link.

The project was developed around anassumed 1,852MW export deficit at Friston, associated with the proposed Nautilus interconnector. Nautilus was subsequently relocated away from Friston before the SeaLink application was submitted, reducing theapparent deficit to approximately 352MW.

Furthermore, 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 haveyet to be determined.

There is also an identified reinforcementbetween Richborough and Canterbury in Kent which is excluded from National GridElectricity Transmission's current £3.2 billion Sea Link Project Assessment submission.

As a local resident and electricity consumer, these issues leave me with a very straightforward question:

What is the current need for Sea Link, and what will its true total cost ultimately be to consumers?

I am particularly concerned because analternative has already been identified bySuffolk Energy Action Solutions (SEAS). This involves upgrading and reconductoring theexisting transmission corridor in Suffolk andKent and has been estimated to cost under £300 million, compared with approximately£3.2 billion for Sea Link.

If this alternative is capable of meeting the required network need, the potential difference in cost to consumers is enormous— potentially approaching £3 billion.

There is also the important issue of local impact. A new infrastructure project of thisscale has the potential to cause significant disruption to communities, landowners and the countryside, as well as environmental impacts.

As someone who lives locally, I believe these impacts should only be accepted if theinfrastructure is genuinely required and thereis no credible, substantially cheaper and less disruptive way of achieving the same objective.

I am therefore asking the Governmentto ensure that the SEAS alternative isindependently and transparently assessed against Sea Link before billions of pounds of consumers' money are committed.

In particular, I would ask that the two options are assessed on:

- total cost to consumers;
- speed of delivery;
- required network capacity;
- technical requirements;
- environmental impact; and
- the impact on local communities and landowners.

I am not opposed to investment in the electricity network. I want to see investmentthat is necessary, properly justified anddelivers value for money for consumers.

However, when a project is now assessed at approximately £3.2 billion, while an alternative has been identified at under £300 million, I believe it is entirely reasonablefor the Government to ensure that thecheaper alternative has been properly andindependently examined before further expenditure is committed.

For those of us living in East Suffolk, this is not simply an abstract infrastructure decision. It concerns our homes, our countryside, our communities and ultimately the electricity bills we will all have to pay.

I would therefore respectfully ask you to ensure that the SEAS alternative receives a full, independent and transparent assessment before a decision is made to commit consumers to the cost of Sea Link.

I would also be grateful if you could confirm what steps the Government intends to take to ensure that all credible alternatives have been properly considered.

Thank you for taking the time to consider the concerns of local residents.

Yours sincerely,

Karen Solloway

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