To: The Rt Hon [redacted] MP, Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net

Zero Email: [redacted]

Subject: URGENT OBJECTION: National Grid Sea Link Project (EN020026) – All-Interested-Parties Consultation

Dear Secretary of State,

I am writing to express my formal objection to National Grid's proposed Sea Link project (**DCO Application EN020026**). Specifically, I strongly urge the rejection of the plan to construct a **28-metre-high industrial converter station** spanning **90,000 square metres** on the irreplaceable wetlands of **Minster Marshes** and the tunneling through of **SSSI, Pegwell Bay**.

While I fully support a rapid, necessary transition to green energy, it cannot come at the cost of devastating a highly sensitive ecosystem—especially when viable, cheaper, and far less destructive alternatives exist. I urge you to refuse this Development Consent Order based on the following critical grounds:

1. Catastrophic and Irreversible Ecological Collapse

Minster Marshes is an invaluable, functionally linked wetland supporting **37 red-listed bird species**, European water voles, and a delicate web of biodiversity. Laying **20-metre-deep foundation piles** in a high-water-table marsh environment and constructing a 1km haul road with 27 water crossings will trigger a systemic breakdown of this environment:

- **Destroying the "Natural Sponge" and massively Increasing Flood Risk:** These wetlands act as nature's premier flood defences. Covering 90,000 square metres with concrete and heavy infrastructure will stop the land from absorbing water, forcing it into surrounding drainage channels and drastically increasing the risk of severe localized flooding to nearby homes, farms, and roads.
- **Turning a Carbon Sink into a Carbon Bomb:** This waterlogged, oxygen-deprived marsh safely locks ancient carbon underground. Driving deep piles and digging drainage channels will dry out the marsh, exposing organic matter to oxygen and causing it to rot. This turns a vital carbon sink into a massive source of greenhouse gas emissions, completely undermining the project's "green" credentials.
- **Biological Collapse & Water Pollution:** Minster Marshes is a vital feeding ground for the adjacent RAMSAR, SSSI, and National Nature Reserve at Pegwell Bay. Wildlife cannot simply "move next door"—displacing these species will lead directly to a localized population crash. Furthermore, removing the wetland's natural filtration system means agricultural runoff and construction pollution will flow unfiltered into the River Stour, suffocating marine life.

Corporate promises of "restoration" or "biodiversity offsets" are a fantasy. A wetland is a complex network of hydrology and biology that takes thousands of years to form; once heavy machinery alters the water table, the damage is a permanent ecological scar.

2. Failure to Mitigate Impacts on Public Mental Health and "Solastalgia"

National Grid's corporate assertions that this project is inherently "legally green" completely minimize the profound human and socio-economic cost to the community. For thousands of residents across Thanet, the stillness, open skies, and untamed beauty of Minster Marshes provide a vital mental sanctuary. Replicating heavy industrialization here will inflict severe visual blight and introduces an environment of constant low-frequency noise.

The chronic anxiety of losing an irreplaceable landscape is causing documented, acute **solastalgia**—the psychological distress caused by the unwanted, industrial destruction of one's home environment. Under the National Policy Statements for Energy, developers are required to protect human health and well-being. National Grid has fundamentally failed to provide an honest assessment or adequate mitigation for this severe mental health toll, relying instead on greenwashed boardroom compromises.

3. A Flawed Needs Case and the Overlooked "CAKE" Alternative

The project's underlying Needs Case is structurally inadequate. Sea Link's proposed **2,000 MW capacity** fails to address the wider **6,516 MW grid deficit** in Kent, ensuring that further invasive network upgrades will still be forced upon the region in the future.

National Grid has deliberately bypassed the highly feasible **"CAKE" alternative**—upgrading the existing **400 kV overhead line between Canterbury North and Kemsley**. The CAKE alternative would fully resolve the regional grid issues at less than **10% of Sea Link's astronomical capital cost** (approximately **£90 million** compared to Sea Link's estimated **£1.2–£1.5 billion**) while entirely sparing our coastal wetlands. Choosing the most destructive and expensive route is a failure of regulatory oversight.

Conclusion

We cannot play with fire by putting a corporate price tag on ecological stability. Trashing protected, globally recognized habitats in the "Garden of England" sets a dangerous precedent for the green transition. I ask that you hold National Grid accountable to genuine environmental standards and protect the unique ecosystem and community of Thanet by **refusing consent for the Sea Link route**.

It just isn't worth the cost and cost of our future. We need to work with nature, not against it, if we are to save our homes and our lives.

Yours sincerely,

Hannah Collier

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