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South East Anglia Link

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Dear Secretary of State,

Re: Sea Link (EN020026):

I am writing as a resident of Minster, deeply familiar with Minster Marshes and Pegwell Bay, in response to your invitation to comment on the information submitted following your request of 28 August 2026.

My concerns relate particularly to the adequacy of environmental safeguards, the unresolved design of the proposed converter station and the impact on the landscape and wildlife of East Kent.

I spend considerable time around the former hoverport and Pegwell Bay, walking, photographing, foraging and observing the landscape throughout the changing seasons. I have come to know its coastal plants, from sea beet to sea buckthorn, its saltmarsh and mudflats, and the remarkable diversity of life these habitats support. These places are not empty stretches of land awaiting development. They are living, interconnected ecosystems, whose value becomes increasingly apparent the more closely one pays attention.

Paragraphs 3–5: Marine habitats and irreplaceable chalk

I support the position of Natural England and Kent Wildlife Trust that measures to prevent or mitigate ecological harm must be agreed and secured before damaging works begin, with meaningful monitoring thereafter.

The continuing ecological consequences of the Nemo Link installation raise serious questions about the cumulative impacts of further cable infrastructure at Pegwell Bay. It is difficult to have confidence in proposals for additional works when the consequences of previous interventions remain a concern.

I am particularly troubled by the proposed disturbance and permanent loss of chalk habitat, which National Grid itself recognises as irreplaceable. I ask that the wholly exceptional reasons and compensation requirements of EN-1 paragraph 5.4.53 be explicitly applied.

Paragraph 13: Converter station design

I find it extraordinary that National Grid has sought consent for a development of this magnitude without settling on a preferred converter station design.

The visual consequences for Minster Marshes and its surrounding landscape are considerable. How can the full impact be properly evaluated when four potential designs remain under consideration? I believe the final design and its implications should be subject to adequate scrutiny before consent is determined.

Paragraphs 16, 19 and 32: Protection of birds

Minster Marshes and Pegwell Bay are extraordinary places for birdlife, providing breeding, feeding and overwintering habitat for numerous species.

I support stronger restrictions on construction activity throughout the March to September breeding season, without exceptions that risk undermining the protection intended. I also support bird diverters being installed on overhead lines from the outset, alongside five years of collision monitoring rather than two.

Crucially, the proposed November to February exclusion at Pegwell Bay must apply to all potentially disturbing landfall works, including those around the former hoverport, not merely activities below mean high water springs. Migratory birds do not recognise the administrative boundaries used to define construction activities.

Paragraph 28: Saltmarsh and mudflat access

I am concerned that the location and width of access routes across sensitive mudflats could remain undecided until after consent. These details directly determine the extent of potential disturbance and should be established and assessed beforehand.

Paragraph 44: Tourism and the local economy

I strongly question the adequacy of National Grid's consideration of tourism impacts.

East Kent's appeal is inseparable from its distinctive coast, wildlife, open landscapes and opportunities to experience nature. Pegwell Bay is not simply an area through which infrastructure can be routed. It is a place that people travel to experience, and one that residents value profoundly.

Any assessment of tourism impacts must recognise the importance of these environmental qualities and provide credible, detailed measures to minimise harm, rather than relying on general assurances.

Paragraph 55: Operational noise

I support Kent Wildlife Trust's call for ongoing noise monitoring and enforceable mitigation should the converter station exceed permitted limits. The responsibility to establish and maintain compliance must remain with National Grid throughout the development's operational life.

Across these questions, one concern recurs: too much is being left to future surveys, design decisions, monitoring and mitigation.

I recognise the importance of strengthening our national electricity infrastructure. But environmental protections should be established before harm occurs, not developed in response to damage that may prove irreversible.

I ask that you give particular weight to the outstanding concerns of Natural England and Kent Wildlife Trust and ensure that these matters are satisfactorily resolved before any decision to grant consent.

Yours sincerely,

Sally Gurteen
Minster, Kent

