WORD VERSION - TEMPLATE 1

To: The Rt Hon Miatta Fahnbulleh MP, Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero,
c/o: Energy Infrastructure Planning Delivery Team, DESNZ
Via Email: SouthEastAngliaLink@planninginspectorate.gov.uk
Subject: Sea Link (EN020026) – Request for Information –
Laura Fagg
54 Linden Close Aldeburgh IP15 5JL.

Dear Secretary of State,

LION LINK – THERE'S A CHEAPER, FASTER ALTERNATIVE

I am writing following your letter of 28 August requesting further information from several parties in relation to the Sea Link DCO. Although I am not a listed recipient, I feel compelled to write in light of two recent and significant reports from Ofgem and the National Audit Office, which raise serious questions about the cost, deliverability and value for money of the proposed Sea Link project.

I welcome the Government's commitment to reducing household energy costs. With billions of pounds now being invested in the Great Grid Upgrade, it is essential that major projects are necessary, proportionate and provide genuine value for money for consumers.

The National Audit Office's recent report, **Value for Money – Upgrading the Electricity Transmission Network**, makes this particularly important. I am therefore writing to ask the Government to look closely at the proposed **Sea Link project in East Suffolk**, which appears to illustrate many of the concerns identified by the NAO.

Ofgem has now assessed Sea Link at approximately **£3.2 billion – around three times the cost presented during the DCO examination**.

This raises serious concerns about the reliability and transparency of the information presented during the Examination. **National Grid presented an estimated project cost of approximately £1.1 billion, despite SEAS challenging that figure and presenting evidence that the true cost was likely to be around £3.2 billion. Ofgem has now assessed Sea Link at approximately £3.2 billion, broadly confirming the figure put forward by SEAS.** The £1.1 billion figure presented during the Examination therefore proved wholly unrealistic. It is deeply concerning that a project of this scale was examined without decision-makers and affected communities being given a realistic assessment of its likely cost.

More importantly, the circumstances underpinning the original need for Sea Link have 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) 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.

This is a criminal act of destruction… wildlife, habitat, tourism, lives, the economy and environment.

FAR TOO EXPENSIVE WHEN CHEAPER OPTIONS ARE AVAILABLE.

I fully support the transition to Net Zero and recognise that Britain's electricity network needs substantial investment. But achieving Net Zero should not mean spending billions of pounds on new infrastructure without first properly examining whether the same network need can be met **more quickly and at a fraction of the cost by upgrading existing infrastructure**.

Before consumers are committed to expenditure of £3.2 billion or more on Sea Link, I therefore urge the Government to ensure that the SEAS alternative is **independently and transparently assessed against Sea Link on cost, delivery time, network capacity and environmental impact**.

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 sincerely,

Laura Fagg

54 Linden Close Aldeburgh IP15 5JL