

Mr David Ray,  
BD Representations,  
Scottish Energy Consents Unit  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Meridian Court  
5 Cadogan Street  
Glasgow G2 6AT

11 December 005

Dear Sirs

***Proposed Beauly to Denny Transmission Line***

The Cairngorms Campaign wishes to register its objection to the above proposal. On the following grounds:-

*1. Impacts on Landscape*

The pylon lines of the Beauly to Denny proposals will transect large areas of land that have been designated for their landscape value as National Scenic Areas or as part of the Cairngorms National Park.

Within the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, tourism is by far the most important industry, earning the area a massive £606 million plus a further £317 million in day trips in one year alone. Repeatedly, surveys have shown that the chief feature on which this industry is based is the Highland landscape, particularly its wild qualities set in an uncluttered landscape. Even that part of the population most strongly attracted by this feature, hillwalkers and mountaineers, have been shown to create over 6,000 jobs and a spend of £152 million annually, as well as attracting to the area many who subsequently create businesses and employment.

***These proposals would result in massive landscape impacts on the areas specified above including major parts of the Cairngorms including extensive distances close to the most important tourist entry route to the Northern Highlands!***

## *2. Failure to Justify the Proposed Power Line by Setting the Development in the Context of an Integrated and Well Founded Energy Plan*

We are supportive of government intention to substantially increase Scotland's capacity for renewable energy development as part of a wider programme of actions that reduce energy consumption and substantially increase energy conservation. These intentions should be set within a strategic plan which indicates how much energy should be generated from which sources of renewable energy in different parts of the UK. Such a plan is lacking and government should not permit any body to embark on proposals with such potentially damaging implications without the justification that only such a plan could supply.

Further, the Beaulieu to Denny proposals are based on the strategy of creating a major part of the nation's renewable energy through large scale landbased windfarms. We think this policy is mistaken due to the intermittent nature of wind and the need to run some form of fossil-fuel based spinning reserve the efficiency of wind power is not very encouraging. Compared to forms of renewable energy that are predictable, like tidal energy, the widespread use of wind in the diversity of energy supply would make the national grid inherently unstable. The proposed Beaulieu to Denny transmission line is therefore dependent on an intermittent, unreliable and controversial source of power. We do not believe that this is a sound basis for making this kind of major investment decision.

We believe that for the next ten to twenty years there should be an emphasis on small-scale renewable energy, energy conservation, and long-term planning for truly large-scale renewables. In our view this would be a far better policy to follow than the current emphasis on onshore wind, which creates substantial income generation opportunities for power companies, but promises very little in the way of reducing our dependency on fossil fuels.

In our view electricity from the north of Scotland, and the seas surrounding Scotland, should be transmitted to England and the south of Scotland via subsea cables. The level of investment would be proportional to the amount of energy produced, and it is on this basis that the current proposal is the cheapest option because it is being designed to carry a relatively small amount of power. If a larger amount of power was being generated in the Western Isles then factors other than cost would be taken into consideration and any extra investment required for a subsea cable would be more readily found. As well as wishing to see subsea cabling being preferred to the current proposal to use overhead transmission lines, we also believe that subsea cabling would be far more realistic and less damaging to the landscape and other industries, than the undergrounding of high voltage cables. Furthermore, we understand that the costs of subsea cabling would actually be not dissimilar to the cost of over ground transmission costs between Stornoway and the north of England. Taking

the importance of landscape and tourism into account it would appear entirely sensible to give the subsea cabling option serious consideration before committing to the much more damaging overland option.

If the Scottish Executive really is committed to renewable energy we would like to see it assisting householders and small businesses to generate their own micro-scale renewable energy projects to a much greater extent and this may even lead to them giving up their connection to the grid. Allied to this we would like to see a longer-term approach to renewables being taken whereby truly massive amounts of power could be harnessed from the seas, as and when the civil engineering capability is available to build the necessary structures in tidal waters.

We feel that the current concentration on onshore wind is a temporary measure that is saddled with inefficiencies, inevitable major damage to our landscapes, which are a major economic resource. This is a huge price to pay for a very small amount of power and minimal saving of fossil fuels compared to the savings that could be made by following other policy routes. For instance, we believe that large scale marine renewables would, over time, represent a far more productive policy to follow than the temporary interim measure of onshore wind that is proving increasingly unpopular with the public, and has led to local opposition along the length of the proposed transmission line.

***We therefore object to this proposal on the grounds that it is not part of a properly thought through strategic renewable energy plan developed through proper consultation with all the stakeholders and not just the energy companies.***

Yours sincerely,

R Drennan Watson (Convenor, Cairngorms Campaign)

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