

Press Release for immediate dispatch – Nov 16th

***STIRLING BEFORE PYLONS* FEARS THAT PUBLIC CONCERN OVER HEALTH AND THE BEAULY TO DENNY POWERLINE PROPOSAL MAY NOT BE ADDRESSED AT THE STIRLING PUBLIC INQUIRY**

1. **Tuesday (Nov 20th)** at 10.00am marks the start of the Stirling Local Public Inquiry into Scottish Hydro Electric Transmission Ltd and Scottish Powers' Beauly to Denny 400kV high voltage overhead transmission line (HVOTL) proposal. This is the final session of Scotland's longest running public inquiry.

2. Evidence submitted by *Stirling Before Pylons (StBP)* focuses on environmental issues, including the historic and natural landscape (the line would pass through the Sheriffmuir battlefield and destroy the stunning Ochils backdrop to the Wallace Monument) and community amenity issues, with particular reference to the adverse health effects associated with HVOTL. Attached are drafts of giant posters which will be positioned at the Keir roundabout on the M9 (Junction 11) to the west of Stirling to mark the start of the Stirling Session as from Tuesday.

3. One of the key issues in this campaign is the adverse health effect of living in close proximity to HVOTLs. Since 2004 it has been internationally acknowledged that living close to such lines **doubles the risk of childhood leukaemia**. The UK Draper report (BMJ June 2005) quantified a 70% increased risk of the disease within 200m of HVOTLs.

4. Concern for public health has been central to opposition in the Stirling area, with this being the most populated section of the route. The route passes to the east of the City, alongside rural settlements and the Eastern Villages. Hundreds of homes in the area would have serious health effects imposed on them, and thousands of individuals would potentially suffer as a result, with a University Hall of Residence potentially standing at only 200m. The Applicants have underestimated the numbers who would be affected.

5. The reporters were initially reluctant to address this subject, but with government policy currently under review, they allowed the science to be briefly examined in Feb at the Strategic Public Inquiry in Perth.

6. Much has happened since then, including the publication of the **Westminster Cross-Party Inquiry Report (July)**, which recommends a building moratorium of at least 60m extending to 200m for HVOTLs on the basis of childhood leukaemia alone. This call for a moratorium on building in close proximity to HVOTLs is supported by an Early Day Motion in Westminster which already has over 240 MPs signatures. The **BioInitiative Report (Aug)** recommends an interim planning limit of 0.1 microtesla for homes near new lines, (current UK guidelines 100 microtesla), which would equate at a minimum with an avoidance distance of 200m.

Although both these documents have been admitted to the Inquiry process for comment from the principal parties, they have also heightened public concern in Stirling, as the Beauly to Denny proposals would not comply.

7. Health was never a routing consideration for the power companies. They have submitted no evidence for the Stirling Session on health, neither have they rebutted our evidence in this field. **Our fear is that the Applicants will not even address this critical topic** – not even named as such in the timetable, but coming under the heading “communities”. This would suit many, including I suspect the Reporters, who have consistently stated that the issue of EMFs (electric and magnetic fields) will not be revisited at Stirling.

StBPs has no intention of revisiting any in-depth scientific debate, BUT, they do wish to have this major local concern properly addressed. A Public Inquiry should surely investigate an issue of major public concern, such as health. (there were over 14,000 objections to the Scottish Executive raising health as a prime concern). Moreover, any reference to the science has been made only in an attempt to make the reporters aware that these concerns are based on the latest scientific evidence, with precautionary approaches now being adopted throughout the developed world. Young lives are at stake here.

8. Local MSPs will be supporting constituents in giving a voice to these concerns. Former Stirling constituency MSP, Sylvia Jackson, will give independent evidence. Local list MSP, Dr Richard Simpson, (Shadow Health Minister), will be giving evidence on this subject for *StBP*. Bruce Crawford MSP was also prepared to give evidence, but in his ministerial role is now unable. However, SNP colleague Keith Brown MSP for Ochil will be doing so. Indeed this week he submitted a motion on this same topic.

For further details of *StBP*'s health case please read our attached precognitions, visit www.stirlingbeforepylons.org or go to www.beaulydenny.co.uk, or call Caroline/Ian Paterson on 01786 462567.

For further details on landscape issues, see the above websites or contact Peter Pearson or Nicki Baker on 01786 833399.