

**Electricity Act 1989-Section 37  
Inquiries Procedure (Scotland) Rules 1997, as amended  
Proposed Beauly to Denny 400kV transmission line.**

**SUMMARY PRECOGNITION**

**on behalf of**

**STIRLING BEFORE PYLONS**

**By Ian Paterson MRCVS  
with regard to**

**LOCAL HEALTH CONCERNS**

**To be presented at the Stirling area Session of the  
Public Inquiry due to commence on 21<sup>st</sup> November 2007.**

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He has 26 years experience of mixed and small animal practice. He is  
chairman of the community group Stirling Before Pylons.**

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

1.1 Following the first pre-inquiry meeting on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2006 it was agreed that Stirling Before Pylons would lead evidence at the Strategic Session of the Inquiry on EMF and potential health impacts. It was agreed we would lead this evidence on behalf of Scotland Before Pylons to avoid unnecessary repetition.

1.2 Stirling Before Pylons is now presenting evidence on behalf of people in the Stirling area. The evidence given in this precognition is based partly on communications that I and my colleagues have had, with hundreds, if not thousands of Stirling residents over the last three years. These people wish their views to be presented to the Inquiry. We understand and agree with the Reporters wish not to explore further the scientific evidence dealt with at the Strategic session. Only brief reference will be made to the science in a local context.

## **2.0 REASONS FOR LOCAL HEALTH CONCERNS**

2.1 StBP has held regular meetings since it was constituted in December 2004. These have been attended by representatives from Braco, Kinbuck, Dunblane, Sherriffmuir, Logie, Powis, Fallin, Cowie, Plean, Throsk and Denny. Since August 2005 these people have been joined by Community Council committee members from ten Stirling Community Councils who support StBP.

2.2 At these meetings participants have relayed information from their communities and following meetings information is fed back to those communities. StBP has around one thousand paid up members and many more supporters.

We have learnt that many Stirling area citizens believe this overhead power line development poses a threat to the health and wellbeing of themselves, their families, their neighbours and the wider community. We have had strong support from all our constituency and list MSPs on this issue.

2.3 Some of the public concern comes from science based evidence; some is based on common sense and anecdotal evidence. Common sense appreciation of what is likely to be dangerous must not be dismissed. History has shown many times that the informed public has often been well ahead of the “experts” in knowing when a serious public health problem exists.

### **3.0 PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT**

3.1 Missing from the Environmental Statement is any acknowledgment of the long term consequences of altering the environment of those communities affected by the proposed pylons. There is no health without mental health. Factors which considerably alter our quality of life, and fall outside our ability to control, will invariably impact on our mental wellbeing; this in turn has major social and financial costs.

3.2 We know that a large number of people living in the villages and settlements along the route of the line around Stirling have serious concerns about the risk this proposed power line poses to their health and that this is a source of anxiety for them. Many other people in the Stirling area, not immediately affected, are still concerned that the lives of children and adults are being threatened.

3.3 Some peoples’ anxiety arises from the effect the proposed development will have on their business or livelihood. Some fear losing their businesses or being forced to leave their home. Many also feel significantly stressed at the thought of our magnificent cultural and natural heritage being degraded so badly.

3.4 Many in the Eastern Villages feel depressed and angry at the thought of their environment being degraded yet further. Even more galling for them, as the proposed route was moved much closer to them after the first “consultation” exercise, to avoid houses that might be built in the future.

3.5 The seven thousand or so people in the eastern village area who would have been very little affected by the applicants' first, "preferred" route, suddenly became very seriously affected by the applicants revised, "indicative proposed", route. By the applicants own admission the chances of altering the "indicative proposed route" were much less (possibly nil chance) than for the "preferred" route". This, despite the fact that thousands more people would be affected, and indeed thousands more people objected to the applicants' second choice of route.

3.6 The proposed power line would have a major impact on the wellbeing of many thousands of people in the Stirling area; this in turn has major social and financial costs for the region.

**3.7 These costs might be very difficult to calculate but very definitely need to be considered.**

**3.8 History has shown many times that when there has been long term public concern over a health issue that it is very often the public who were right and the "experts" with the vested interests who were wrong.** For example decades of evidence were successfully suppressed on the dangers of smoking and asbestos by these powerful industries at huge cost to public health, and still, the tobacco industry denies there is an absolute proven link between its product and disease.

#### **4.0 REASONING FOR CONCLUSIONS**

4.1 A number of people from the Stirling area followed the evidence given by Stirling Before Pylons and the applicants, and have formed opinions on the witnesses, evidence presented and the conclusions drawn from that evidence.

4.2 We wish to make to it absolutely clear what precautions StBP is urging on the Reporters for the Stirling area and why. In order to do this it is necessary to make comments on the witnesses who provided evidence on the health issue and the conclusions drawn from their evidence.

4.3 The author of Chapter 32 was Dr John Swanson of National Grid. As the foremost industry expert in the UK on these matters Stirling observers understand why the applicants chose him for this task.

4.4 It is still not clear to people in Stirling, who, if anyone, the applicants sought advice from before and during the public consultation period. It certainly was not the NRPB who confirmed that they had had no communication from the applicants. Stirling residents find this, and the fact that Dr John Swanson did not appear at the Inquiry to defend his written evidence, disturbing.

4.5 Stirling observers find it interesting that the applicants could find no one in the UK to fill Dr Swanson's shoes, but instead employed Dr Bailey from the USA

4.6 We know that there is hardly ever such a thing as a fully independent witness. Professor Henshaw was honest enough to admit this when he said "are we not all, in a sense, (inadvertent) members of pressure groups advocating particular positions?" It is interesting that Ms Wilson claims to have found this obvious and honest remark "astonishing". Stirling observers are inclined to believe that Dr Bailey, is of course, in a sense, a member of the largest most powerful pressure group of all; the power industry.

4.7 The StBP witnesses were not in attendance for the money. Prof O'Carroll's fee for his time was very modest and Professor Henshaw would accept no payment whatsoever for his appearance. They were there on principle. They believe, along with many other experts that measures to protect lives from ELF-EMF are needed NOW. People in Stirling are outraged that the applicants are seeking to have their £7 million costs paid by the consumer. If that happens it seems right that a full breakdown of the costs including for example Dr Bailey's fee is made public.

4.8 Observers from Stirling did not hear Ms Wilson successfully refute any of the science put forward by the StBP witnesses.

4.9 When the applicants' witness, Dr Bailey was asked in cross examination if he felt the three homes said to be within 100 metres of the whole line were worthy of investigation by the reporters he replied "**absolutely**".

A number of important observations are made by observers from Stirling on this very clear reply from Dr Bailey.

- Two of the supposedly three homes are in the Stirling area.
- In fact not 2 but 19 or even more homes in the Stirling area alone could be within 100 meters of the new line depending on the where the line was built within the deviation corridor applied for in this application.
- Dr Bailey has considerably softened his position since his last appearance at a UK power line public inquiry.
- People in Stirling want to know why homes within 200 or even 600 metres of the proposed power line should not also be "*absolutely worthy of investigation by the reporters?*" After all, the recent and emerging evidence suggests a problem extending beyond 200 metres. e.g. Draper 2005 , Lowenthal 2007

4.10 The Draper report also confirmed that the UKCCS study had found a relative risk of 1.42 for acute lymphocytic leukaemia within 400 m for 275 and 400 kV lines. The applicants have tried to gloss over this finding. We understand that applicants contributed to the funding of the **UKCCS study** in Scotland.

4.11 We believe that enough evidence was presented at the strategic session of the Inquiry to show that the applicants have not taken adequate precautionary measures with regard to potentially very serious health impacts which can now be reasonably foreseen to affect people in the Stirling area. Further important evidence has appeared since the Strategy session which has been accepted by the Inquiry and this adds even more weight to the case.

4.12 The applicants say they made consideration for visual impact and amenity, but it seems in some instances plant and bird life was prioritised over these human impacts. And the applicants admit potential health impacts, per se, were not a consideration in the routing of the line. Possibly considering visual impact and amenity is not the same as making consideration for acute lymphoblastic leukaemia in

children or myeloproliferative cancers in adults for example. The line is too close to too many people in the Stirling area.

## 5.0 CONCLUSIONS

5.1 If the proposed new power line was invisible and the only effect to consider was ELF-EMF effect on health, StBP believes the following precautions would be realistic.

5.2 In line with recommendations from Professor Henshaw, The Westminster Cross Party Inquiry into Childhood Leukaemia (which only considered C.L. and not the adult conditions) and The BioInitiative Report, StBP believes there should be a minimum avoidance distance from dwellings of 200 metres and strenuous efforts should be made to extend this to 600 metres if at all possible and especially from schools, nurseries, other learning institutions or where many people would be affected.

**5.3 If the effort can be made to protect birds and plants it can surely be made to protect humans.** The applicants' assertion that they have considered visual impact and amenity and by extension, potential health impacts, is refuted in the Stirling area.

5.4 The proposed overhead power line will, of course, be far from invisible and in addition to the potential health impacts from ELF-EMF there will be huge visual impacts affecting tourism, recreation, amenity, local economy, and wellbeing.

5.5 Ultimately we are not asking the Reporters to decide on a precautionary distance for the proposed line in the Stirling area. StBP has made it clear since the first pre-inquiry meeting that we are respectfully urging the reporters to recommend undergrounding the whole Stirling section, or to recommend consideration of an alternative transmission route such as sub-sea.

5.6 Many people believe health impacts alone, or tourism impacts alone, for example, are serious enough to warrant refusal of this overhead line application in the

Stirling area, but when all the impacts are added together StBP respectfully submits that the case for undergrounding or seeking an alternative transmission route for the Stirling area section is overwhelming.

5.7 We submit that the Reporters should err on the side of caution when the consequences of not doing so can now be foreseen and could, quite literally, be fatal. Even a small increased risk for cancer and neurodegenerative diseases translates into an enormous public health consequence.