

Press Release – for immediate dispatch – Dec 3<sup>rd</sup> 2007

**Shadow Health Minister, Dr Richard Simpson MSP calls for precautions in relation to high voltage power lines, and in particular, the threat posed by the proposed Beauly to Denny 400kV line on Stirling's Eastern Villages**

- On Friday 30<sup>th</sup> November Dr Richard Simpson MSP gave evidence to the Beauly to Denny Public Inquiry in Stirling on behalf of *StirlingBeforePylons.org*.
- He drew on his medical expertise to reject the routing of the proposed Beauly to Denny 400kV line in close proximity to houses, educational establishments and care facilities in the Stirling area.
- He stated that the publication of the Draper Report (BMJ June 2005) had changed his view on the dangers of living in close proximity to power lines. He now has serious concerns about their definite/probable health effects.
- He drew an analogy with his work on the dangers of passive smoking – an issue initially hidden by the tobacco industry (SHETL & SP still deny the health risks associated with living in close proximity to high voltage overhead transmission lines (HVOTLs), despite international acknowledgement of the doubled risk of childhood leukaemia associated with those living within c.100m). He believes the weight of scientific evidence points to serious adverse health effects from HVOTLs. Dr Simpson was disallowed from referring specifically to the science – with the reporters claiming this subject was covered at the strategic PI in Perth, with written submissions allowed from the principle parties for publications made since February – none of which Dr Simpson was party to – particularly as no official record is being made of proceedings!
- Although the Draper Report was based on home address at birth, Dr Simpson referred to a report from the Chief Medical Officer last week on the critical environmental effects at the pre-natal stage.
- Dr Simpson referred to adult conditions associated with power line EMFs in addition to childhood leukaemia.
- He expressed particular concern at the close proximity of the proposed line to hundreds of homes in the Eastern Villages (Plean, Fallin, Cowie) of Stirling. These communities, with 7,000 residents, have suffered from unemployment and associated health inequalities since the closure of the mines. Tommy Brookes presented the concerns of the Eastern Villages to the Inquiry on the previous day, with their main concern focussing on health, which could be exacerbated by the ionisation of timbre dust from a local factory.

- Dr Simpson stated that the routing of this line to the east of Stirling went against his principle for social justice, having spent years trying to improve the health and welfare of these disadvantaged communities. This point was repeated by the following witness, Keith Brown MSP, whose cross-examination focussed largely on issues of energy policy and the public inquiry process, than the actual application.
- Dr Simpson recommended that in some areas a precautionary distance of 400m should be respected. He cited the ex-mining village of Fallin, the Alexander Court university halls of residence and the William Simpson Home at Plean, all of which lie within 300-350m of the proposal. The Applicants' schedule of properties has already been found to be inaccurate – and an updated version presented to the Inquiry last week had no mention of the Alexander Court student halls of residence with its 322 students only 300-350 m from the proposed line. Moreover, the Kinbuck community group revealed 27 homes were within 600m of the line, as opposed to the 16 claimed in the desk-top survey by the Applicants.
- *Stirling Before Pylons* suggest that over 2000 people in the Stirling area alone will be within 600m of the line – a distance at which a significant increased risk of childhood leukaemia was reported in the massive Draper study. There are approximately 40 properties within the critical 200m band at which there is a 70% increased risk of childhood leukaemia – SHETL & SP's proposal would therefore not comply with the Westminster Cross-Party Inquiry Report's (July 2007) recommendation of a precautionary distance of 60m extending to 200m for extra HVOTL, such as the Beaully to Denny proposal.
- PE 812 submitted in 2004 on this topic will be reviewed in the Parliament on Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> Dec.
- The Public Inquiry will continue until Dec 20<sup>th</sup>, with the timetable available on *StirlingBeforePylons.org*

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