

Stirling Before Pylons



Press Release – immediate effect

New Report shows eleven-fold increased risk of brain tumour for children living alongside high-voltage overhead transmission lines (HVOTL). The Scottish Government officially denies the serious health risks associated with HVOTLs, and will shortly pronounce on the Beauly to Denny proposal, which if approved, will blight hundreds of homes, particularly in the Stirling area.

- A study by the Japanese National Research Institute for Child Health and Development published in the *Journal of Epidemiology* (Nov 14th 2009 - attached) found an association between power line magnetic fields above 0.4 microtesla and an increased risk of brain tumour, equating to an eleven-fold increased risk for children. This is just the latest in a long line of peer-reviewed scientific reports showing serious adverse health effects associated with exposure to HVOTLs.
- The Scottish Government (SG) has recently (Oct 16th Joint Governmental Response - attached) endorsed policy on power lines and public health, which denies meaningful precautions. This response reflects the total failure by the Health Protection Agency to address the last 5 years of evidence in this field, including the UK's publicly funded Draper report which quantified the risk of childhood leukaemia in distance from HVOTLs, with a doubled risk at 100m, a 70% increased risk at 200m etc extending to 600m. The Scottish Government's reliance on the HPA to keep them informed on new scientific developments is therefore deeply misguided.
- This denial of the scientific evidence has been condemned by leading UK academic Professor Denis Henshaw (attached), *Children With Leukaemia* - co-funders of the Stakeholders Advisory Group on ELF EMFs (SAGE - attached) and *Stirling Before Pylons* (StBP) (attached). The governmental response also rejects the Stakeholders Advisory Group on ELF EMFs (SAGE) best option for reducing exposure with a building moratorium along power line corridors.
- The Scottish Government's response is also at odds with the meaningful precautions already adopted by 10 EU member states, including Germany's ENLAG legislation (August 2009), which requires serious consideration to be given to undergrounding should a proposed new line come within 200m of an individual house or 400m of a community. A European Resolution (April 2009) calling for the stricter regulation and protection of residents from the potential risks of EMFs has also been ignored by the Scottish Government.

- Power line health concerns have been actively reviewed through the Scottish Parliament's Petitions Committee since 2004 (PE812 is now one of the longest running petitions and has attracted unprecedented cross-party support). PE812 comes up for review on Tuesday, December 1st at 2pm Committee Rm 1, when responses from the HPA, SG and *StBP* will be addressed. Several MSPs will speak in support of PE812 and members of *StBP* will be present.

Christopher Harvie MSP in relation to the last review of PE812 (May 2009):

"The proposed Beaully to Denny line passes close to many homes, schools and residential zones. If we act with caution and due consideration of potential risks now - undergrounding sections, or at least rerouting the line away from homes and schools - we ensure that we will not create an expensive, long-term health hazard that future generations may rightfully blame us for".

Richard Simpson MSP:

"The Japanese Study of November 2009 is just one more study in a significant and growing body of evidence of health hazards from High Voltage Overhead Transmission Lines. I still hope that the Scottish Government will heed the requirements of the Maastricht Treaty and the Rio Declaration and follow the precautionary principle by requiring the under grounding of the line near any residence."

- The Beaully to Denny 400kV proposal, if approved, would come within 50m of a couple of properties and 200m of over 40 homes within the Stirling area. This will result in magnetic field exposures commensurate with those associated with a doubled risk of childhood leukaemia and Alzheimer's, five-fold increase in adult leukaemias, and other serious illnesses, including the eleven-fold increased risk in brain tumours for children, being imposed on hundreds of people in the Stirling area.
- *Stirling Before Pylons* has been calling for the Beaully to Denny power line proposal to be rerouted away from homes, or failing that, undergrounded, thereby eliminating all adverse health effects. Scottish Natural Heritage submitted an underground route to the west of Stirling to the Public Inquiry.
- If Scottish Ministers fail to address this issue in relation to Beaully to Denny, they will knowingly impose a serious health threat on thousands of people.
- "I am deeply disturbed by the Scottish Government's apparent denial of the scientific evidence which underlies our concerns. I find it hard to believe that a supposedly civilised society can consider threatening the lives of its most vulnerable citizens at any cost, but particularly when viable alternatives exist".
- Kenny Logan: *"I hope Scotland will lead the way not just in generating Renewable Energy, but also in transmitting it using the latest technology. This would mean undergrounding the Beaully to Denny 400kV line through populated areas, because we cannot afford to sacrifice peoples' health. With young twins of my own I can only imagine how devastating it would be to have a child develop leukaemia or a brain tumour, particularly when scientific studies point to significant increased risks associated with living close to high-voltage power lines."*

(Kenny Logan grew up on Powis Mains Farm, which would be within 100m of the proposed line).

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Caroline Paterson, spokesperson for *Stirling Before Pylons*' health case, including PE812 and member of SAGE since 2005.

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