



PRESS RELEASE Tuesday 18th SEPTEMBER 2007

Scotland Before Pylons calls on Scottish Government to publish a policy for transmitting electricity across Scotland.

David MacLehose, Chairman of Scotland Before Pylons, today reinforced calls made at the Beaully Denny Public Inquiry, for a full appraisal of the options for transmission of electricity from the Highlands to the South. Scotland Before Pylons supports the transmission of electricity from the Highlands but objects to the proposed overhead route.

Speaking in advance of the debate in the Scottish Parliament on Wednesday on the Inquiry into the Application by SHETL and SPT to build the new line, David MacLehose expressed dismay that a full assessment of the options has not been undertaken. “It is frustrating that neither the Scottish Government nor the UK has set out a policy for transmission of electricity across Scotland. It is more than surprising that Scotland’s Government has not even set a benchmark within the planning legislation (Planning is a devolved responsibility) against which the Reporters can judge this application.”

Recent legislation requires a full Strategic Environmental Assessment to be completed for projects of this scale and importance. “ Whatever the legal niceties that the Government and SHETL employ to avoid an SEA, the people of Scotland today and in future generations deserve better.” He claimed “This project should be subjected to third party review and not only through a Public Inquiry”.

The Inquiry has heard evidence that SHETL only summarily reviewed alternatives before determining that old fashioned technology is still the most appropriate. “ The whole Inquiry could have been minimised or even possibly avoided, and millions of £s saved, if the applicants had openly discussed the options. They failed to do so, generating over 18000 objectors to their proposal.”

Ends

Note to editors

18,000 people objected to the proposed route of the line – more than for any previous planning application in Scotland.

The proposed pylons are up to 65 metres high and 7 times the volume of the existing line. The impact of these huge structures will dwarf the pylons which are to be removed.

The Public Inquiry is currently based at Newtonmore considering the proposals for passing through the Cairngorm National Park. The Inquiry is expected to conclude in Stirling on 21st December 2007.

For further information please contact David MacLehose on 07710 891 301.

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