

Martin Broderick
Examining Inspector
The Planning Inspectorate
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Our ref: CE10234RL

4 November 2015

Dear Sir

Brechfa Forest Connection Project

As the elected Member of Parliament for Carmarthen East & Dinefwr I would be grateful if you would consider this letter as a written representation for the above application.

I was also engaged with the consultation process by Western Power Distribution and it was unfortunate that my constituents did not feel that the previous consultation was as open and transparent as they would have expected.

In general terms, I strongly believe that all energy generating and transmission planning matters should be fully devolved to the National Assembly for Wales to prevent such decisions being taken by those completely unaware of the communities such developments affect.

There is no doubt of the strength of feeling by the local community on this matter and I hope that all representations made to you will receive the attention that they deserve.

Undergrounding

I continue to feel strongly that the whole line should be placed underground. This causes minimal damage and avoids destroying landscapes, lives and does not reduce land use. Whilst I acknowledge the cost implications to this, I believe that benefits of an undergrounding project truly outweighs this cost. My constituents have already suffered as a result of major wind farm projects in the area, undergrounding would minimise the effect on the environment and local community.

Tourism and Community Benefit

There are many bed and breakfast facilities in the area and Welsh tourism depends heavily on the country's landscape. The erection of poles risks ruining the beautiful views and the result on the tourism industry will be very damaging. The route chosen which follows the A485 is near a large number of houses. This will have an impact on their enjoyment of the environment, their homes and house price. There is yet to be a positive case put forward regarding the community benefit of this project.

Exit strategy

The wind farm projects have been given permission to operate for 25 years. I have not been provided with any information as to what would happen to the wooden poles after this period. Information needs to be made available regarding the process that will take place at the end of the 25 year period.

Environmental and Health Impact

The Environmental impact of this project could be immeasurable and risks losing a large part of the wildlife currently seen in the area. The character of the landscape will change dramatically as it is farmland with wide open fields and is used for grazing and harvesting silage. The construction of overhead high H-poles cause damage to the ground, take away the harvesting area and are a blight on the landscape.

My constituents continue to be concerned that the above ground cables generate magnetic and electrical fields which are a long term health concern. This is no conclusive evidence that the poles do not pose a risk to health. It is clear that there has not been enough research into the effect on people's health when living next door or near over-ground electricity cables.

Conclusion

I am pleased to see from your timetable that an open floor hearing will be held in the evening to accommodate working constituents. Also, that the site visits will take place over two days, as suggested in the preliminary meeting. I trust that the examination process will be open and transparent and allow my constituents to discuss their concerns fully regarding the project. The only option I have ever advocated as an elected member is the undergrounding of the line, as this is the wish of my constituents.

I trust I will be kept updated with the process as an interested party and look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature area.

RHODRI GLYN THOMAS AM
Carmarthen East & Dinefwr