



James Cartlidge MP

Member of Parliament for South Suffolk

The Rt. Hon Ed Miliband MP
Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero
3-8 Whitehall Place
London
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31st July 2024

Dear Secretary of State,

RE: NORWICH TO TILBURY STATUTORY CONSULTATION

I am writing to you regarding National Grid's Norwich to Tilbury proposals, but I would firstly like to welcome you to your new position as Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero. As you will be aware, National Grid's statutory consultation on their Norwich to Tilbury pylon proposals closed on Friday 26th July, and you can find my formal response to the consultation attached to this letter.

My main priority has always been to achieve a fair deal for my constituents in East Anglia, we are bill payers too and are in part funding the multi-billion-pound, offshore, non-ylon infrastructure being pursued in Scotland and the north of England, to the benefit of their residents. Crucially, by National Grid's own admission, this offshore infrastructure is being used instead of pylons in order to 'significantly reduce its impact on communities'. I stressed this point with National Grid when I met them just last week – why can't we receive the same treatment when the scale of subsea cabling agreed and proposed is now almost 20:1 in favour of Scotland/North of England compared to East Anglia? The majority of my affected constituents prefer an offshore or underground alternative to proposed pylons, as is self-evident from their many responses to the consultation.

Crucially, through the ESO's East Anglia Network Study, published in March 2024, an underground HVDC (U-DC) alternative was found to be cheaper than pylons, assuming a 2034 baseline, given the greater efficiency of this option and therefore the significantly lower 'constraint payments' involved. I would stress that these findings were retested repeatedly by ESO's senior engineers and found to be fully justified. The proposal was also found to be 'technically feasible in the timescales that the capacity is needed'. Significantly, and as you will be aware, in Germany the U-DC option is the legal default.

With these developments, the previous Government confirmed – at the final Adjournment debate before dissolution – that it would urgently review the 'pylon presumption', in light of the new facts showing the comparable cost competitiveness of U-DC. I would like your confirmation that your department will continue with the previous governments urgent review of the pylon presumption, to fully assess the feasibility of an underground transmission network.

All we want is to be afforded the same protections in East Anglia, as in other parts of the country, and I believe a UK wide review of the pylon presumption would go some way to achieving this.

Thank you in advance for your consideration and I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

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