



The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

**Joan McAlpine MSP**  
**South of Scotland Region**

Kersti Berge  
Head of Scotland  
Ofgem  
Cornerstone  
107 West Regent Street  
Glasgow  
G2 2BA

Our ref: JM/LB

22 September 2015

Dear Kersti

I am contacting you with regard to the Scottish Power Energy Networks proposed upgrade to the transmission line from Ayrshire to Carlisle. My response to the stage one consultation on this line is enclosed. Ofgem will have a key role in approving (a) the need for this line and (b) its costings should it go ahead. It is therefore clear that Ofgem need to engage with the affected communities before coming to these decisions.

I would like to invite you to meet my constituents to hear their concerns. I would be happy to facilitate such a meeting. In particular it would be helpful if you could explain whether Dumfries and Galloway will receive money to underground the line - something that I understand has already been done in England and Wales where £500m is allocated to underground new transmission lines through National Parks.

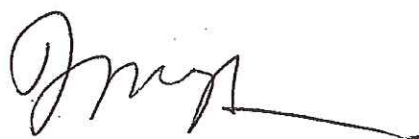
This decision gives my constituents hope that undergrounding is an option and that Ofgem understand the loss of amenity inherent in the siting of large pylons in unspoiled countryside where no transmission lines have been sited before.

Cont/...

Finally can I refer to the evidence (copied below) you gave to the Scottish Parliament's Economy Energy and Tourism Committee this year, in which you said that Ofgem was considering putting new onshore transmission upgrades out to tender. Will you be putting the Dumfries and Galloway proposal out to tender? If so, can I suggest that bids are invited for the undergrounding of the line? This way innovative solutions may be brought forward - which offer a better outcome for my constituents.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely



**Joan McAlpine MSP**

Note: KERSTI BERGE EVIDENCE TO SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT ECONOMY COMMITTEE 3 JUNE 2015

"We also think that things can be done better on the delivery side. That is set out in our proposals. In particular, we think that, to drive down costs to consumers, there is a role for bringing more competition into building onshore transmission network. Therefore, we have said that large new separable transmission projects can potentially be tendered out and delivered by competitive parties. That is a controversial decision, but we looked very carefully at the matter. We looked at evidence of what has happened in the offshore regime here and evidence from other countries, and we came to the firm conclusion that the approach can deliver benefits to consumers not in all projects, such as in small, complicated ones that are part of the very meshed networks, but in very big separable projects. In those projects, there are benefits in bringing more competition into the market and pushing down prices and ultimately consumer bills."

See more at:

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=9997#sthash.AxEhMrB9.dpuf>

Enc.

cc. Alison Hardie, Head of GB External Relations, Ofgem  
cc. Richard Arkless, SNP MP for Dumfries and Galloway  
cc. Aileen McLeod, SNP MSP for South of Scotland