

Objection to application ECU00005165

This response concerns SSEN's application for a Beauly to Peterhead 400 kV overhead line link.

This response is the response of Contin Community Council. The proposed line does not pass through our area, and therefore we offer only brief comments on the framework within which the scheme sits. It is part of a larger scheme that involves the Spittal-Beauly overhead line (ECU00006008, SLBB) and the Western Isles HVDC underground line, both of which pass through our area.

We have objected to SLBB on various grounds, including inadequate justification of need, and significant environmental impacts that cannot be mitigated or which are insufficiently mitigated.

Although remote from our area and therefore not of direct concern to us, we note that this proposed scheme is expected to lead to multiple negative environmental impacts, and that the statement of need is as inadequate as that for SLBB.

We note that the utility of the proposed scheme depends on permission being granted by ECU for SLBB, by The Highland Council for substations at Banniskirk, Carnaig and Fanellan, and permission being granted by the relevant Councils for substations at Arnish, Greens and Netherton Hub. Since we have objected to SLBB, we have effectively also objected to this scheme.

This application is part of a far wider programme that goes beyond the remit of any one consenting authority. We have joined with other community councils and have the support of our elected representatives at Holyrood and Westminster in calling for a Planning Commission Inquiry to consider electricity infrastructure in the Highlands in the round. This is the biggest proposed change for our area since the hydro-electric schemes were built some 70 years ago. The hydro-electric schemes brought the advantages of electricity for the first time, but the electricity infrastructure development now proposed appears to promise nothing more than disruption and destruction; there is no lasting benefit for us. The Scottish Government needs to implement a holistic approach to permitting electricity infrastructure in the north of Scotland, that fully takes into account the total impact of this on the Highlands and is accepted as being in the interests of residents. We will continue to object until this occurs.