



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Ms Claire Coutinho MP
Secretary of State for Energy Security & Net Zero
1 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0ET

18th September 2023

Dee Crave

RE: NORWICH TO TILBURY

I am writing to you on behalf of all OffSET MPs (Offshore Electricity Grid Taskforce) regarding National Grid's Norwich to Tilbury proposals. First and foremost, we would like to take this opportunity to offer you a warm welcome to your new position.

As regards the work of our group of East of England MPs, we have been pushing for several years now for true consideration of offshore alternatives to proposed pylons across our beautiful countryside, impacting many of the communities that we represent. To be clear, we all support the extraordinary strides that Britain has made - boosting its energy security by massively expanding offshore wind - and we sincerely believe that an offshore grid is in the best interests of the sector itself. However, when it comes to pylons to carry that electricity to London and the SE across our region, we have been frustrated to see billions spent in the North of England and Scotland to carry such electricity offshore, but nothing to date off East Anglia. We simply want fair treatment.

Unfortunately, National Grid - despite pursuing multi-billion-pound undersea options elsewhere in the UK - have repeatedly failed to consider offshore options to any meaningful degree. However, as a result of our campaign, we were delighted when ESO agreed to conduct a study to re-evaluate transmission options (both onshore and offshore), following the Offshore Coordination Support Scheme outcomes. Given the current delays to the OCSS announcement, on which the ESO study is dependent, there is a real risk that the review will not begin for many months.



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We have been assured by National Grid that they will be taking the conclusions of the ESO review into account, with the following commitments made by Project Director Liam Walker on 8th August:

“If the recommendations from the ESO study should indicate alternative infrastructure options, we will review and engage with the impacted communities appropriately. However, to delay development of the proposed option in the meantime would jeopardise the optimum 2030 delivery date, regardless of the outcome of the Study. We expect the Study to conclude before our next public consultation in 2024. We will, of course, carefully consider the findings and ensure the proposals we present next year take them into account.”

Further, we welcome the following in a response from Minister Bowie of 3rd August:

NGET “is acutely aware of the upcoming ESO study and are prepared to reflect changes to the project should any arise from the study outcomes.” Minister Bowie goes on to state, *“It is my understanding that **NGET have committed** to carefully consider the recommendations of the independent ESO study **ahead** of their statutory consultation for this project.”*

Given the continued delays to the OCSS announcement, and these commitments above to carefully consider the findings of the ESO review, we would like you to liaise with National Grid to ensure that their next round of statutory consultation on Norwich to Tilbury will not begin until the ESO study is published. Crucially, this would provide affected communities and stakeholders the adequate time to properly consider the ESO’s findings and respond.

On top of this, East Suffolk also faces the prospect of yet more landfall sites, cable corridors and massive convertor stations as part of the Lionlink and Sealink projects that if constructed will have a devastating impact on the local environment. It is our strong view that onshore connections should be placed on brownfield land where possible. Not least as East Suffolk will already be hosting the new Sizewell C nuclear power station.

We understand that it is now likely that the Nautilus project will be connected via the Isle of Grain, potentially from a modular offshore grid combining North Falls and Five Estuaries. This should also be considered for Lionlink, Sealink and EA1N & EA2 as part of the Offshore Coordination Support Scheme, with a potential connection into the brownfield site of Bradwell.



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We would welcome the opportunity to meet you at your earliest convenience to discuss our concerns about these proposals more fully, and the potential benefits of a coordinated offshore grid off the East of England.

Thank you for your consideration.

Yours ever

Sir Bernard Jenkin MP & OffSET MPs

Alex Burghart MP

Dan Poulter MP

Duncan Baker MP

George Freeman MP

Jerome Mayhew MP

Jo Churchill MP

James Wild MP

Kemi Badenoch MP

Priti Patel MP

Richard Bacon MP

James Cartlidge MP

Therese Coffey MP