



**HOUSE OF COMMONS**  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

**Màiri McAllan MSP**  
**Cabinet Secretary for Wellbeing Economy, Net Zero and Energy**  
St Andrew's House  
Regent Road  
Edinburgh  
EH1 3DG

9 February 2024

Dear Màiri,

**Ref: Proposed SSEN 400KV Overhead Line & Associated Infrastructure**

I'm writing in my capacity as Member of Parliament for West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine regarding the ongoing industrialisation of the Scottish countryside in my constituency and across the North and North East of Scotland.

Many of my constituents feel deeply let down by the Scottish Government, which is enabling and encouraging an ongoing drastic, fast paced and poorly thought through changes to rural Scotland's unique landscape.

Recently, Scottish Government and Crown Estate ScotWind Auctions have awarded a substantial number of licenses to companies with a total offshore wind capacity of 27.6GW by 2030. This is far in excess of 2030 target as published in 2020 of 11GW.

I am concerned this was done without any appreciation for the onshore transmission required to deliver. Furthermore, this has placed a tremendous strain on transmission operators to deliver additional network capacity in an unrealistically short timeframe. This means that plans are presented earlier than would be considered prudent, and crucially that constituents have less time to feedback in consultation to any proposals put forward.

None of the above accounts for additional onshore planned wind capacity. Which as well blighting the countryside, will require yet more transmission capacity. The Hill of Fare, for example, is the most recent large-scale application which has been spurred on by Scottish Government onshore wind targets, again with little consideration to the accompanying energy infrastructure required to move the electricity. The UK Government has, as you know, insisted that community consent is required before any onshore wind farm is approved. It is a pity that a similar protection has not been introduced for Scots.

Battery storage facilities are yet another facet of energy infrastructure that my constituents are concerned about, that are being planned in multiple locations around my constituency.

It is clear that the Scottish Government thinks it is appropriate for the burden of nearly all of this onshore infrastructure to fall on the North & North East of Scotland. My constituents in West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine will be particularly impacted. That is unacceptable.

I have regularly met with constituents and action groups across West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine and continue to do so. There is an overwhelming strength of feeling against these proposals.

I understand the role of the Energy System Operator and Ofgem as arms lengths bodies of UK Government. They are responsible for the design and delivery of the National Grid.

But as you are aware, planning and consenting is a fully devolved competency. This means that regardless of the regulatory role of the aforementioned bodies, the final decision for all the plans outlined above will rest with Scottish Government ministers.

I would be grateful if you could outline how the Scottish Government will be using it's fully devolved powers over planning and consenting to stop the current plans for pylons on Deeside and the Mearns, and, separately, the Hill of Fare windfarm from being built.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Andrew Bowie', written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

**Andrew Bowie MP**

Member of Parliament for West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine