

MEP's SUPPORT UNDERGROUNDING.

SEAT meet with Bairbre De Brun

Armagh 21st April 2009

SEAT representatives met with Bairbre De Brun recently in Armagh City to discuss their concerns about the proposed Tyrone – Cavan Interconnector. This is the second meeting that SEAT have had with an MEP in two weeks. They have already met with Jim Nicholson on the 15th April and are meeting with Jim Allister on the 30th April. All three MEP's have declared their support for the undergrounding of this line.

SEAT emphasised to the MEP that they are fully supportive of the need to improve the North – South electricity supply. However it is their belief that the project should be undergrounded. SEAT and their southern counterpart NEPP believe that if the interconnector is placed on overhead cables it will be disastrous for the communities of Tyrone, Armagh, Monaghan, Cavan and Meath.

SEAT representatives Julianne Denvir, Isobel Todd and Martin O'Brien told Ms De Brun that this 400 KV powerline will be the first of its kind in Northern Ireland – the next strongest powerline in existence is 275KV. SEAT is a community based action group who are campaigning for this ultra high voltage line to be placed underground in order to minimize environmental and health risks. SEAT and NEPP believe that it will be less expensive to underground these cables if the transmission losses associated with overhead cables are taken into account. Ms De Brun was informed that it is estimated that over the lifespan (approx 40 years) of the powerline the electricity that is "lost" on the overhead line will cost 875 million euro as opposed to 336 million Euro if the line is placed underground.

Speaking after the meeting – Ms De Brun commented "SEAT have put forward a number of health and environmental concerns about the proposed overhead cables and associated pylons.

"At the meeting today, they presented evidence that challenges the Eirgrid/NIE analysis. They pointed to the findings of the Askon Report commissioned by the North East Pylon Pressure group. This report argues that it is both feasible, and in the long term, economically advantageous to underground the cable transmission line for the North South Interconnector project. Sinn Fein MLA Cathal Boylan has recently asked questions of the utility regulator regarding this matter and to date is awaiting a response"

SEAT and NEPP are also awaiting a response from Mr. Iain Osbourne regarding his views on the Askon Report. Mr Osbourne was asked for these views on 19th March at a meeting of the Northern Ireland Assembly Committee in Stormont. As yet we have had no response.

The next SEAT information evening will be held on 14th May at 8 pm in Armagh City Hotel. All welcome. For further details contact the SEAT helpline on 07549171023.