

JIM ALLISTER IN SUPPORT OF UNDERGROUNDING.

All MEP's back SEAT campaign.

April 30th 2009

SEAT representatives, Isobel Todd and Julianne Denvir met with MEP Jim Allister today to update him on campaign progress so far. Mr Allister has been involved in discussions with SEAT for some time and has been supportive of affected residents along the proposed line of the North South Interconnector from the early days of this campaign in 2007. This is the third meeting that SEAT representatives have held with MEP's in the last few weeks. They met with Jim Nicholson on 15th April and Bairbre De Brun on the 21st. All three MEP's are in support of undergrounding this 400KV 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 informed the MEP that this 400 KV powerline will be the first of its kind in Northern Ireland – the next strongest powerline in existence is 275KV. SEAT represents the thousands of anxious residents living near this proposed line who are extremely concerned about the well documented health and environmental effects of such a high voltage cable. SEAT believes that undergrounding this line will be cheaper in the long run, more reliable and significantly safer. In addition all the associated environmental risks will be minimised.

Mr Allister 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. (Askon Report October 2009 www.pylonpressure.ie) Mr Allister was very concerned that the Utilities Regulator – Mr Iain Osbourne – has not yet been in contact with SEAT regarding his views on the above figures.

SEAT requested the Regulator’s views on the Askon Report on 19th March 2009. The Regulator’s office assured SEAT representatives that this information would be forthcoming. As

yet they have received no communication from him regarding this issue.

Mr Allister was very encouraging on hearing SEAT campaign progress so far and assured the group that he would be asking the Regulator to comment on the Askon Report himself.

SEAT are hosting an information evening on the 14th May 2009 at 8 pm in the Armagh City Hotel. All are welcome to attend. Contact the SEAT helpline for more information - 07549171023.