

June 2009 SafeElectricityArmaghTyrone Press release

DERRYNOOSE JOINS WITH SEAT IN REJECTING PYLONS!

2nd June 2009

On the 2nd June many concerned residents of Derrynoose gathered in the Derrynoose Community Centre to discuss how best to move forward in the campaign to underground the proposed 400kv Tyrone – Cavan interconnector. NIE plan to destroy the countryside and farms of Derrynoose with a chain of ugly and dangerous pylons. This is an area that will be particularly blighted by this extra strong powerline if it is permitted to go overhead.

Those present at the meeting debated the problem of the powerline at length and were advised by SEAT (SafeElectricityArmaghTyrone) representatives that planning permission may be applied for by NIE at any time and it is essential that the Planning Service receives thousands of letters of objection. It was made clear that every member of a household can write a separate objection – even children and infants. Parents may object on their behalf. Visitors to your home and local area are eligible to object. Those from the area living abroad can object as can anyone in Northern Ireland who is concerned about the impact of this extra – strength line on health, agriculture, property valuation and the environment. Individuals can object- as can schools, football clubs, playgroups, businesses etc. SEAT representative will be available to assist all who want help and advice in writing letters of objection. (Phone the SEAT helpline 07549171023). Lists of objections will soon be available on the website – www.seatactiongroup.com .

Jim Lennon of SEAT made it clear that if this overhead powerline goes ahead there will be no guarantee that it will not be extended or enhanced in many ways. NIE would have the right to add extra pylons and spurs to the original line. Those landowners and householders who feel they are lucky in escaping this powerline should object now as their land may not escape when “development” takes place in the future.

A mother of three young children living very close to the proposed route was very emotional as she explained how trapped she feels by these proposals. She talked of how she is unwilling to bring her children up in such close proximity to a powerline that will increase their chance of adult cancer by 500% yet will be unable to sell her home and move with her family as her house may be devalued by as much as 40%. She described her frustration at NIE continuing to push for an overhead line despite the latest evidence suggesting that undergrounding the line is safer, more efficient, more reliable and cheaper in the long run.

One of those present made the point that if this 400kV line - the first in Northern Ireland of that strength- gets passed by planning then the precedent is set for other communities to be subjected to further 400KV lines. It is worth remembering that the majority of lines in Northern Ireland are 110kV or 275 kV at present.

The organiser of the meeting, Rita Keenan, was delighted with the turnout. “The fact that people came to discuss this problem on such a fine evening shows us that the local community of Derrynoose does not want this powerline to ruin our homes and livelihoods. The hall was filled by concerned families, representatives from the football, hurling, camogie, walking and bowling clubs, affected landowners, businessmen, the parish priest, local councillors and local school teachers and playgroup supervisors. The people of Derrynoose want to make it clear to NIE that they will not accept being ‘experimented’ on. No other area on Northern Ireland has been asked to host such a super-strength electricity line. An NIE representative visiting homes in this area has told us that this is exactly that – an ‘experiment’. Derrynoose and the other affected communities along the line are not willing to have their families, homes and farms put at risk and used as guinea-pigs by NIE. The people of Armagh and Tyrone deserve better than this.”

SEAT representatives are delighted at the support they are receiving from the Derrynoose community and landowners. They are appealing for other areas affected by this 400kV powerline to follow the example of Derrynoose and organise similar local meetings. SEAT will attend and provide advice and material for such meetings – phone the helpline 07549171023 for details.