

Dear Ms. Kulhavy and Mr. Lacey -

Whirlwind Renewables is an independent wind farm developer with a significant presence in the north of Scotland. We currently own and operate Wathegar Wind Farm (10MW) and have planning consent for a further 35.5MW across three projects (Wathegar 2, Achlachan and Hill of Lybster Wind Farms at 22.5MW, 12.5MW and 0.5MW, respectively) in Caithness.

We are currently seeking to build out our consented Caithness projects but are badly affected by the lack of transmission capacity in the area, which may delay the construction of some or all of our projects until additional connection capacity is released through transmission reinforcement.

From the perspective of a wind farm developer, the north of Scotland is exceptional in terms of its suitability for wind farm development. Wind speeds are high, population density is low, the flat landscape is accommodating to large structures and there are no aviation constraints which rule out wind farm development in the rest of the UK. These are some of the reasons why the volume of wind farm development is currently and is likely to continue to be high.

The major advantage of the HVDC solution proposed by SHE Transmission is that it will release badly needed connection capacity in the area relatively early in 2018. As Ofgem recognise, choosing the onshore option would be likely to delay this additional capacity by nearly a decade. This would stymie our projects and many others in the area and may mean they are not built at all: our planning consents will have expired and the regulatory regime that far in the future is very uncertain.

In our view, any onshore solution would reduce the UK's chances of meeting its 2020 renewables targets and would also likely have the effect of significantly increasing constraint costs to the UK until the additional capacity is delivered.

We would strongly urge Ofgem to support SHE Transmissions proposed HVDC solution to unlock further connection capacity in the north of Scotland.

Kind regards,

Thomas Chappell