Dear Sirs,

I have just read an article in my local news feed indicating that you are likely to refuse SSEN’s request, under RIIOED2, to replace the existing subsea electricity supply cable with either two new ones or just a direct replacement. I feel that this , if true , is short sighted.  The risk of failure is getting nearer the longer it is in service and not replaced. The existing Uist Cable was laid in 1990 and has been at the mercy of the Minch currents for thirty two years. As you are no doubt aware, the equivalent cable to Lewis/ Harris, laid at the same time, failed in Oct 2020. The result had a major impact on the environment, local windfarms and the communities and charities that relied on their community funds. I have listed a few things that I’m sure that you are aware of but perhaps have not given them sufficient weighting when coming to your determination.

1. Running the power station in Stornoway resulted on an increase of greenhouse gasses. With us all focussing on Net Zero and reducing CO2 emissions as much as possible, surely a managed replacement of this cable is much better that waiting for it to fail. Two weeks run against a possible twelve months.
2. As the island-based windfarms are restricted off ( can’t generate), they loose their income, this affects their ability to continue as a business. Only the good grace of the institutions who hold their loans, and the knowledge that they would be able to get more interest, probably stopped them foreclosing. This may not be the same for all or any of the Uist windfarms.  So, a managed replacement would reduce this loss of income to a short but manageable period of time.
3. Like all charities the island-based ones rely heavily on fund raising. However, unlike mainland ones, the amount of people and business’s available to give to them is very small. This is where the windfarm community funds are such a fantastic thing. They can support them with what , to many, is a large percentage of their funding. This is especially more important than ever with the “ cost of living” crisis as not only are their costs rising but am sure that many local business and Local Authority grants etc will either be stopped of the level of funding reduced.

Two cables are better than one. So I am not that really bothered if you do not feel that you can support two cables. However, I feel that, for the reason I have listed above, the existing cable does need to be replaced as a matter of urgency. Hopefully, you can take on board my thoughts and concerns and confirm that you will support this cable replacement.

Regards

Donald Mackenzie,