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Akshay Kaul
Interim Director of Infrastructure and Security of Supply
Ofgem
10 South Colonnade.
Canary Wharf,
London,
E14 4PU

By email: connections@ofgem.gov.uk

16 June 2023

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: RES response to Ofgem Open letter on future reform to the electricity connections process

Introduction to RES

RES is the world's largest independent renewable energy company with operations across Europe, the Americas and Asia-Pacific. A British company, at the forefront of renewable energy development for 40 years, RES is responsible for more than 23GW of renewable energy capacity and energy storage projects worldwide. RES is active in a range of renewable energy technologies including onshore wind, offshore, solar and energy storage.

In the UK, RES has developed and/or constructed 1GW of operating wind generation capacity. We provide support services (AM and O&M) to a global operational portfolio of 5.5W of renewable projects and energy storage for a range of third-party clients. We play a critical role in ensuring the provision electricity with our teams on the ground and in our 24/7/365 control centre responsible for keeping 10% (3GW) of the UK's operating renewable capacity running.

RES wants to play an active part in the UK's energy future, ensuring our projects contribute to decarbonising the energy system at least cost to the consumer, in line with RES' vision to be a leader in the transition to a future where everyone has access to affordable zero carbon energy. We therefore welcome this opportunity to respond to the Ofgem open letter on future reform to the electricity connections process and we are happy for our response to be published.

Open letter response

We welcome Ofgem's Open letter on future reform to electricity connections process. We support the intentions and key principles as set out in the consultation and look forward to providing more detailed input into next steps as well as the many "in flight" industry initiatives seeking to make long overdue process into the grid connections process.

We particularly welcome the objective of enabling a timely transition to net zero. In considering this objective it is worth reflecting on the fact that net zero is a whole energy system target and that grid connections must therefore be considered on a whole system basis. Current state grid connections process is deeply fragmented involving very significant process delays arising from interactions between different parties most notably at the transmission and distribution boundary. Addressing these issues is likely to require a clear vision of success and strong regulation to establish the efficient net zero whole energy system connection process that is required.

We believe that it would be useful to understand the quantum of resource that will be required in order to achieve the changes needed, and also to then operate the improved connections process in a manner that will enable decarbonisation by 2035 as well as net zero by 2050. This challenge will need very significant resourcing and we think that this will need particular focus at the right time within your consultation process.

We encourage Ofgem to progress this work in the timeliest manner possible and look forward to supporting you in achieving that aim. We appreciate the clarity provided that connection reform will attempt to align with other reforms that are ongoing, for example REMA and FSO. However, we agree that it is important that this doesn't mean waiting on the outcomes of these reforms.

Given that there are separate workstreams ongoing in this space, RES appreciated the webinar Ofgem chaired that brought these workstreams together, as well as the Open Letter. We suggest that there be other updates of this kind periodically six monthly or annually, that does the same. This will keep momentum and enable transparency.

Yours faithfully,

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Energy Networks Director, UK & Ireland

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