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Dear Mr Hunt

INCOME ADJUSTING EVENT FOR THE BEAULY-DENNY PUBLIC INQUIRY

I refer to your letter dated 25 June 2007 and I am responding on behalf of the Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA).


The CNPA has been taking part in the Public Inquiry along with three Local Authorities, Scottish Natural Heritage and a number of third parties. The CNPA is meeting its own costs for the Inquiry and this is reflected in the lean level of staff and other resources available to present the CNPA case. The CNPA costs come from its existing budget which is funded by the tax payer.

It is considered that the costs incurred by SHETL are greater than need have been the case for two reasons:

1. Throughout the years of pre-application consultation the CNPA made its position clear and offered to discuss alternatives such as undergrounding with SHETL. SHETL were not willing to do this and it is only now, in the midst of the Inquiry, that these discussions have taken place.
2. Following encouragement from Scottish Executive Reporters, the CNPA had suggested the use of the hearing rather than the more adversarial Inquiry procedure. SHETL have been unwilling to use this procedure. This means that parties are having to employ extremely expensive legal representation, the process is adversarial rather than consensual, and the Inquiry will take longer.

The CNPA would therefore question the need for this level of expenditure given that the process is already hugely expensive for the taxpayer. I will leave it for you to determine the extent to which you wish to take these comments into account in your deliberations.

Yours sincerely


Don McKee
Head of Planning