



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

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Project TransmIT - Electricity transmission charging: assessment of options for change

I am grateful to Ofgem for this opportunity to respond to the Project Transmit consultation.

I make no claim to specialist knowledge of some of the areas covered in your report, and I hope you will allow me to restrict myself to issues of principle, about which my constituents feel very strongly. Something that I am sure will have come home to Ofgem following the recent meeting held in Inverness between Ofgem, The Scottish Government's Enterprise Minister, Fergus Ewing, and representatives of Scotland's island communities.

As I pointed out in an earlier consultation, Scotland's islands, and the seas around them, are fast becoming recognised as some of the best areas in Scotland and the UK for renewable energy generation.

The proposals in this consultation, however, do little to alleviate the huge imbalance in transmission charges which remains between the Scottish mainland and islands. While I understand that any solution to this problem of necessity involves compromise, I still see no reason why Scotland's islands should be allocated virtually all the costs of interconnectors, etc, as part of their charging regime. This leads to a huge disparity in cost of transmission, which would be easier to understand were it not for the fact that Scotland's islands contain some of the finest potential for renewables in the whole of Europe.

There are, however, a number of issues in remote and rural areas of the Highlands and Islands as regards current transmission charging arrangements, which are well documented.

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I appreciate that any solution must bear in mind consequences of any equation on energy bills in "remote" areas, many of which, like my own, suffer from extreme fuel poverty.

However, there is little attempt in Project Transmit to find imaginative ways in which to offset any such relatively minor increases in fuel bills which might result from a more socialised policy.

There certainly seems no recognition that the islands need economic activity to overcome poverty, or that Scotland's ambitious targets on renewables require a fair system of transmission charges to apply to the whole country.

I would urge you to consider the strength and unanimity of views which you heard at the meeting with the Minister and come back with proposals which reflect the needs of Scotland's islands.

Yours faithfully,

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