The Rt Hon Edward Miliband MP
Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero
Department for Energy Security and Net Zero
1 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0ET

2nd May 2025

Dear Secretary of State,

We write as Members of Parliament representing East Anglian and Essex constituencies, concerned about National Grid's proposed pylon route through Norwich to Tilbury.

We recognise the mounting pressures to expand grid capacity; however, the current extensive pylon network proposed for this route is flawed; it would lock us into a legacy of visual and environmental degradation, whilst damaging house prices and disrupting many farms, businesses, and community spaces when there are alternative, cost comparable options available.

Recent developments have lent weight to our concerns. The National Energy System Operator recently confirmed that the Centralised Strategic Network Plan will evaluate all transmission options objectively, marking a significant shift away from the long-standing 'pylon presumption' and allowing for greater transparency on future projects. Unfortunately, for Norwich to Tilbury, a pylon-presumption was rigidly and blindly followed. It is also worth noting NESO's East Anglia Network Study from March last year which showed that an underground HVDC system, based on a 2034 delivery baseline, is ultimately more cost-effective than the pylon option. There are also significant arguments to be made for the benefits of undergrounding energy infrastructure in terms of national security.

Furthermore, many residents view the recently proposed financial incentive as a blatant bribe intended to mask the lack of proper consultation and buy their silence and agreement. The assumption that any such payment will deliver tangible benefits in time for the current proposals remains unproven, and the opacity surrounding this process only deepens mistrust. Our communities, already struggling under burdensome policies like the Family Farm Tax, are concerned that the current approach fails to consider the realities of rural livelihoods. This is

particularly disappointing considering that whilst substantial investments are being made to deliver offshore infrastructure in other regions, East Anglia has not been afforded equivalent consideration of alternatives to overgrounding.

We have seen from your media appearances over the last few months that you don't seem to care about the impact of these pylons on rural communities nor understand them. In light of the technical evidence and overwhelming local support for an alternative to pylons, we call on your department to promote an independent and serious evaluation of HVDC. Overly stringent and arbitrary Net Zero targets should not be allowed to obscure more community-minded, long-term solutions to our grid expansion.

We expect your confirmation that all alternatives will now be re-assessed fairly. East Anglia deserves a balanced, transparent process—one that respects residents, businesses, and the environment, rather than imposing inappropriate infrastructure without proper scrutiny.

Yours sincerely,

Rt Hon Kemi Badenoch MP

Patrick Spencer MP

Alex Burghart MP

Rt Hon John Whittingdale MP

Rt Hon Priti Patel MP

James Cartlidge MP

Rt Hon Richard Holden MP

Sir Bernard Jenkin MP