

By email: Econsents_Admin@gov.scot

Energy Consents Unit
The Scottish Government
5 Atlantic Quay
150 Broomielaw
Glasgow
G2 8LU

14 November 2022

Dear Sir/Madam

Skye Reinforcement Project Consultation

ECU Reference ECU00003395

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on your proposed route options for the Skye transmission line reinforcement project.

Mountaineering Scotland is a membership organisation with more than 15,000 members and is the only recognised representative organisation for hill walkers, climbers, mountaineers and skitourers who live in Scotland or who enjoy Scotland's mountains. We represent, support and promote Scottish mountaineering, and provide training and information to mountain users for safety, self-reliance and the enjoyment of our mountain environment.

Our interests lie with the perceptions of landscape and its wild qualities. Walkers and climbers move through the landscape to mountain destinations, they are not static observers of landscape. It is therefore the overall effect of the proposed project as it is viewed in the landscape that is important.

We welcome the Draft Outdoor Access Management Plan that identifies popular hill routes as well as statutory paths in the Annex, and states management advice for the construction phase to enable recreational access to continue.

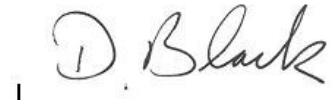
We commented on the previous proposed route options. We note that the proposed route selected in Section 4 follows closely the existing 132kV OHL through the National Scenic Area and Wild Land Area. Our opinion is that the section of the route from Gleann Beag to Loch Cuaich is a very sensitive area for the potential visual impact from access tracks for construction and restoration.

A key receptor in this section is hillwalkers gaining the summit of the Corbett, Beinn nan Caorach, and the views north and south-east of the summit, where construction impacts are likely to be noticeable in the long view.

The Site Restoration Plan is an important document for contractors to follow, but it is only as good as the physical implementation on the ground of the guidance, and effective monitoring for any remedial action required. We support the statements for track restoration that specify track width, turf replacement and surface reseeding. It is essential that a monitoring regime is agreed and enforced by the designated Planning Authority. A Construction Method Statement that includes these points is an essential part of the process.

We trust that these comments prove helpful in your consideration of the project.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "D. Black". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small vertical line to the left of the first letter.

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Mountaineering Scotland

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