

From: Jo Robinson <Jo.Robinson@visitscotland.com>

Date: 10 May 2016 15:01:14 BST

To:

Subject: RE: Beauly – Blackhillock and the Blackhillock – Kintore reinforcement projects

Dear

Re: Beauly – Blackhillock and the Blackhillock – Kintore reinforcement projects

Thank you for making me aware of the SSE proposal to construct a new double circuit overhead line with lattice steel towers between the existing Beauly, Blackhillock and Kintore substations.

VisitScotland, as Scotland's National Tourism Organisation, has a strategic role to develop Scottish tourism in order to get the maximum economic benefit for the country. It exists to support the development of the tourism industry in Scotland and to market Scotland as a quality destination. While VisitScotland understands and appreciates the importance of a reliable energy supply, tourism is crucial to Scotland's economic and cultural well-being. It sustains a great diversity of businesses throughout the country. According to a recent independent report by Deloitte, tourism generates £11 billion for the economy and employs over 200,000 – which is 9% of the Scottish workforce. Tourism provides jobs in the private sector and stimulates the regeneration of urban and rural areas.

Scenery and the natural environment have become the two most important factors for visitors in recent years when choosing a holiday location. However, energy supply infrastructure is a part of the landscape in nearly every destination in the world. As with any development which could impact on the natural landscape, such projects should be sensitive to their surroundings and involve a full consultation with all interested parties.

The importance of this element to tourism in Scotland cannot be underestimated. The character and visual amenity value of Scotland's landscapes is a key driver of our tourism product: a large

majority of visitors to Scotland come because of the landscape, scenery and the wider environment, which supports important visitor activities such as walking, cycling wildlife watching and visiting historic sites. Given the importance of Scottish tourism to the economy, and of Scotland's landscape in attracting visitors to Scotland, VisitScotland would strongly recommend any potential detrimental impact of the proposed development on tourism - whether visually, environmentally and economically - be identified and considered in full.

I hope this information is helpful to you and that you are able to reach a satisfactory conclusion with SSE.

Best wishes,

Jo

Jo Robinson

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