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Correspondence from Torcuil Crichton MP FAO Sai Wing Lo

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Sai Wing Lo

Office of Gas and Electricity Markets

10 South Colonnade

Canary Wharf

London, E14 4PU

12/02/25

Dear Sir,

I write to add my support to the ambition of SSEN for an optimisation loop as part of the new Skye-Uist subsea project.

It is my view that the installation of an optimisation (mitigation) loop from Ardmore to Loch Pooltiel is the most appropriate option as any onshore works required to connect the subsea cable to Dunvegan GSP via onshore infrastructure could result in considerable delays, primarily caused by consenting issues.

Should the subsea optimisation loop not be deemed favourable by OFGEM, I am concerned that this could extend the project delivery date from 2026/27 to 2027/28, perhaps even beyond this timeframe.

There is a pressing need for a replacement connection as the subsea cable being substituted is now of a similar age to the Skye-Harris subsea cable which failed in 2020. The current Skye-Uist subsea cable is at the end of its operational life and has a high risk of failure, it is therefore appropriate to seek a prompt replacement at this time.

Given the complex land ownership structures in the north part of Skye, the process of carrying out the necessary onshore installation of pylons or underground cables could become significantly protracted resulting in a delay to delivery, this would, in turn, potentially threaten the energy security of my constituents in the Western Isles.

In the event of the current Skye-Uist subsea cable failing, embedded diesel generation stations on Uist would be required to provide power to residents on Uist, with the carbon emissions and running costs associated. It would also have significant negative financial implications for renewable energy generators on Uist who would likely be unable to export for the duration of any fault and the installation of a subsequent replacement.

For all these reasons I urge you to look favourably upon the application from SSEN for an optimisation loop solution in order to avoid undue delay to this project.

Is mise,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Torcuil Crichton', on a light background.

Torcuil Crichton MP

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