

# Comments for Planning Application 2013/0335/DET

## Application Summary

Application Number: 2013/0335/DET

Address: Ben Alder Lodge Dalwhinnie PH19 1AE

Proposal: Permanent retention of section of temporary access track constructed as part of Beaully-Denny power line

Case Officer: Fiona Murphy

## Customer Details

Name: Mr John P Thomas

Address: Tom Mor Easter Breakachy Laggan

## Comment Details

Commenter Type: Member of Public

Stance: Customer objects to the Planning Application

Comment Reasons:

Comment:- If left the access road would be a permanent scar across open hillside of wild land character damaging the environment and scenery. The landscape impact is not insignificant as the applicant attests. It involves a large scale access road running over a bealach at 485mtrs. (1,591ft) visible from several neighbouring Munros, hills over 3,000ft which are popular with walkers, mountaineers, ski tourers and many other outdoor activists.

- It is a Scottish Government condition for the construction of the Beaully-Denny line that the temporary access roads be removed because of their anticipated environmental and scenic impact. As the anticipated impact of these temporary roads was a material consideration of such significance that their removal was a requirement of the project and as nothing has changed to alter that, indeed their impact on the environment and scenery is now self-evident, this continues to be a significant material consideration fully justifying the rejection of this application.

- If the CNPA were to set aside the government condition to remove the roads this would be a significant breach of public trust following such a highly contested major public enquiry unless there is in this instance an overriding public interest in retention sufficient to justify this. In the case of this application there is no overriding public interest in retaining the temporary road. Quite the reverse, in 2010 the Scottish Government considered the public interest was best served by removing the roads. That remains the case and there is nothing in this application to suggest otherwise.

- The assurances from the estate that the environmental and landscape impact of these roads will be all but eliminated by estate work is unconvincing. These unmetalled access roads have been built to carry large mobile cranes and articulated lorries, they are at least one and half lanes wide. No amount of softening around the edges will diminish their impact. All that the estate will be able to afford is some cosmetic modifications which will still leave this scar across the hillside

- This is an Area of Great Landscape Value in which developments should only be permitted if

there is an overwhelming social and/or economic case in their favour. This application does not meet that test.

- It is anything but clear how this extension of the track will, in the words of the application allow improved access to the Couldair plantation when a scrutiny of the map provided and the current 1:25,000 map shows it clearly leading out from the edge of the plantation to an area of non-commercial native woodland over the bealach which will require very minimal management.
- The convenience of staff in managing the sporting interests of the estate is an insufficient reason for overturning a national commitment to remove the roads. As for the prevention of fires, that is achieved by the proper management of muirburn, not by building a track across the hill.
- Regarding access for the public, any hill walkers with an interest in ascending Meall na Ceardaich or Carn na Ceardaich will be quite happy to cover the ground from the track in the forest without the aid of a man made track up to the bealach.
- The temporary road is in the National Park and the government has already proposed that developments that affect the integrity of the area would not be permitted unless any adverse effects were clearly outweighed by national social, environmental or economic benefits. The proposed retention of this section of an access road fails each of these tests,

Details of the condition to remove the temporary access roads are available on the SSE website in the Construction Procedures Handbook- Revision 3rd April 2012 Section 5, Restoration taken with the Planning Consent Conditions in a letter from Head of Energy Markets at the Scottish Government to the CE of SSE on 6 Jan. 2010, para. 8.-(1).