

AGENDA ITEM 5

APPENDIX I

2014/0339/DET

REPRESENTATIONS

NORTH EAST MOUNTAIN TRUST

(Scottish Charity No. SC008783 c/o 20 Norfolk Road, Aberdeen AB10 6JR))

*A QUALITY
FUTURE FOR
MOUNTAINEERS
AND HILL-
WALKERS*



Simon Harrison,
Head of Planning,
Cairngorms National Park.

George Allan



24/11/14

Dear Mr. Harrison,

Planning application 2014/0339/DET

I am writing on behalf of the North East Mountain Trust (NEMT). NEMT represents hill walkers, climbers and other groups of people who visit and enjoy wild land. Individual and club membership totals around 800 people. NEMT aims to protect wild land in Scotland from inappropriate developments for all who enjoy visiting such places. NEMT has a particular commitment to the greater Cairngorms area but maintains an interest in Scotland as a whole on behalf of its members.

NEMT remains opposed to the retention of the tracks created to facilitate the construction of the Beauly-Denny power line except where these are needed for the ongoing maintenance. The impact of the tracks on the environment was a material consideration behind the decision to include the requirement for their removal of the tracks. Permission for Beauly-Denny was given because it was considered to be in the national interest. Any applications to retain tracks obviously fails to meet this test.

However, after very careful consideration, NEMT has decided not to object to the application to retain part of the track parallel to the A9 on the Drumochter estate. We would like to stress that we are not objecting because we think that the issues presented by this section of track are unique in respect of the Beauly-Denny tracks within the boundaries of the Park; unique in terms of potential road safety and because the Drumochter corridor will soon be subject to further very significant visual detriment due to the dualling of the A9. It is important to stress that these unique issues do not alter NEMT's strongly held view that the Beauly-Denny tracks should be removed elsewhere.

NEMT would, however, like to make the following points regarding this application:

- The applicant makes play of the fact that the reduced section of track will not be visible from a number of summits. NEMT considers this to be irrelevant as it is visible from large swathes of the surrounding hills.
- Substantial road safety arguments are made by the applicant. NEMT is not in a position to evaluate these arguments and also notes that no decisions have been made regarding how the A9 will be dualled at this point. If the road safety problems can be dealt with in the context of the dualling of the A9, then NEMT believes that the track should be removed as then its existence would merely be for the estate's convenience, a factor which should not over-ride the visual detriment caused.
- The applicant outlines the substantial remedial work which will be undertaken if consent is given. If the application is approved, it would be helpful if the Planning Committee set a date for completion of this work and asked for a further report to ensure that this work has been carried out properly.
- NEMT wonders if the track could be narrowed along the whole length.
- The applicant notes that much of the track is screened from the A9 by a belt of trees and NEMT would like to suggest that, if consent is given to retain this section of track, a condition be included that these trees are not felled.

Yours Sincerely

George Allan [NEMT Vice Chair]

Please address any response to George Allan at the address above.