



EASTERN CAPE
PARKS

REF: ESKOM Thyspunt Powerline
ENQ: Dave Balfour
DATE: 29 January 2010

SiVEST Environmental Division
Attention: Chris le Roux or Themba Skonje
Fax: 011 803 7272

Dear Chris le Roux and Themba Skonje

Re: Proposed Thyspunt Transmission Lines Integration Project : Comments on November 2009 Newsletter

This letter is in response to the call for comments on the Newsletter dated November 2009, which was received via email on 4 December 2009 and hard copy in early January 2010.

On 30 June 2009, Eastern Cape Parks (ECP) submitted comments on the Draft Scoping Report, with particular reference to the Northern Corridor (DEAT Ref No: 12/12/20/1212) noting concerns about the proximity of the proposed corridor to Groendal Nature Reserve (see letter attached for ease of reference).

We are therefore dismayed to note in the map attached to your newsletter, that further routes were proposed for the northern corridor, which had not been indicated in previous reports and which cut across the southern section of Stinkhoutberg Nature Reserve. The newsletter offers no explanation for this change, although it does refer to certain other "project changes", namely proposed alternatives near Port Elizabeth, KwaNobuhle, and Humansdorp.

Mr Wayne Erlank, Regional Manager: Western Region met with your consultants and other I&APs on 4 December 2009. Although your minutes note rather oddly that it was "not a formal meeting", the minutes reflect that concerns about the transmission lines crossing the Protected Area were discussed. Mr Erlank has since communicated these concerns to you in a letter dated 28 January 2010 (copy attached for ease of reference).

ECP wish to reiterate that we are opposed to the construction of transmission lines across any portion of the protected areas, or in close proximity to the protected areas, due to their status as nature reserves, wilderness areas and likely future World Heritage Site status.

Thyspunt Transmission Lines: Comment on Newsletter and revised maps: 29 January 2010

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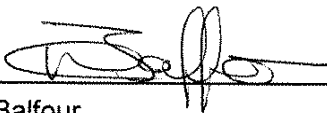
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ECP would like to see these concerns noted explicitly in the final EIR, with the Groendal and Stinkhoutberg Nature Reserves. In addition to this, we would like to bring to your attention the existence of a DEAT (DEA) endorsed National Protected Areas Expansion Strategy (NPAES) which was developed under the National Biodiversity Framework which has been approved by National Cabinet. As part of the intent of the NPAES, the ECP has been engaged in an active programme of protected area expansion in the Baviaanskloof / Groendal region (due to its biodiversity importance). We thus request that any routing of the transmission powerlines take cognizance of this and accommodate an adequate buffer zone around the existing protected areas so as to not foreclose on future expansion possibilities.

Please do not hesitate to contact Dr Dave Balfour (Head: Scientific Services and Acting Executive Director: Conservation (Planning and Policy) at Tel: 043 742 2557, Fax: 086 511 9880, or e-mail: dave.balfour@ecparks.co.za, should you have any queries.

Yours sincerely



Dr D. A. Balfour

Acting Director: Conservation (Policy and Planning)