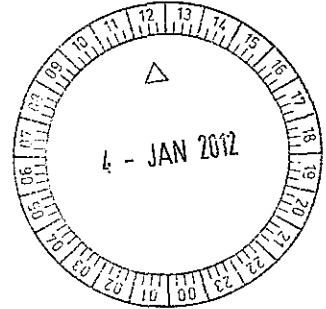




Hon Peter Collier MLC
Minister for Energy; Training and Workforce Development; Indigenous Affairs

Our ref: 34-16017



Hon Brian Ellis MLC
Chair
Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs
Parliament House
PERTH WA 6000

Dear Mr *Brian* Ellis

Thank you for your letter dated 1 December 2011 regarding a petition and correspondence about the possibility that an overhead transmission line will be constructed through the Beachlands area of Geraldton.

I am advised that Western Power is currently assessing options to reinforce the Geraldton CBD and Geraldton Port area. An option under consideration involves installing a new substation in the port area, along with a 132,000 volt (132kV) transmission line between the existing Rangeway Substation and the new port substation. This option would cater for reinforcement of the CBD network, allowing for improved power reliability and the future power requirements of the CBD area.

This project is being strongly driven by Extension Hill Pty Ltd's power requirements and required in-service date. To meet Extension Hill's current required in-service date of 2014, I understand a solution for the line must be identified by late 2012.

I am advised that the 132kV transmission line between Rangeway Substation and the Geraldton Port area would pass along the John Wilcock Link by the entry point into Geraldton from the Brand Highway and may pass through or alongside the Beachlands residential area, depending on the substation site and route selected. The line could be built overhead, underground or a combination of the two.

Western Power has advised that an underground cable connection would be approximately five to six times more expensive than an overhead line. As an indication, a double-circuit overhead line is estimated to cost approximately \$5 million, as opposed to \$25-30 million for double-circuit underground cables.

However, maintenance costs for the coastal environment in Geraldton will be factored into the cost of overhead lines over the life of the asset. Western Power will also consider all technical, environmental and social issues associated with overhead lines, including investments made by the City of Greater Geraldton, when selecting the preferred option.

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Western Power continues to engage with the Geraldton community on this project and has held a series of community sessions – the most recent of which was on 6 December 2011. I understand the discussion focussed on the Port/CBD project and those who attended continued to express concern about the overhead transmission line option and possible substation locations.

I am advised that other options to reinforce the Geraldton CBD and port area are being developed and will be presented to the community for consideration at the next options deliberation engagement session, which is planned for early to mid 2012. Western Power will continue to engage with the community throughout the project.

Thank you again for your letter. I hope this information will assist the committee with its inquiry.

Kind regards



Hon Peter Collier MLC
MINISTER FOR ENERGY

30 DEC 2011

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