

From: Douglas Rand
Sent: Monday, May 6, 2024 9:42 PM
To: Jim Cox
Subject: Urgent Reapplication of RIT-T to HumeLink

To the Australian Energy Regulator

Re: Urgent reassessment of the HumeLink project in a reapplication of the RIT-T

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It has come to our attention that the Australian Energy Regulator is currently considering if the HumeLink project needs to be reassessed because of the material change in circumstance for the project.

Clearly, this is a critical moment in time for the HumeLink project. It is also a momentous opportunity for the AER to lay a standard once and for all of rational common sense, environmental and social responsibility and natural justice in the decision-making processes surrounding renewable energy in Australia.

There has clearly been a significant shift – a “material change in circumstance” – in the HumeLink project since its inception over 5 years ago. In the interim no sod has yet been turned in construction, and there is still enough time to reassess and reconfigure before irreparable harm is caused. The consequence of inaction is that authorities – not faceless institutions but fellow-Australians – who might approve the project in its original form will carry to their grave the opprobrium and dishonour of having left a permanent scar on our landscape and our people, and betrayed their own countrymen in favour of overseas commercial interests such as the foreign owners of TransGrid.

We list the following key material changes in circumstance which even taken singly, let alone together, present a strong call for a reapplication of the RIT-T, according to the rules of the National Energy Market:

1. **Cost blowout** – from \$1 billion in January 2020, to \$4.92 billion in December 2023.
2. **Delays to Snowy 2.0** – from 1 July 2025 to December 2028 at the earliest (we all know this is a highly optimistic estimate).
3. **Reduction in capacity** – 2,570 MW in July 2021 to 2,200 MW in September 2023.
4. **Change in assumption about other generators** – in July 2021 the Kurri Kurri / Tallawarra B gas-fired power stations were not committed. Now they are.
5. **Proven feasibility of undergrounding HumeLink** – TransGrid maintained that the cost of undergrounding HumeLink would be 10 times the cost of overhead lines, but the Amplitude Consultants review (backed up by expert opinion in TWO Parliamentary enquiries) shows undergrounding can be delivered for 1.05 to 1.4 times the cost of the overhead option.

Australia is wavering at the precipice of a catastrophic error of economic, social and environmental judgment. With HumeLink the vanguard project of a proposed rollout of over 10,000 kilometres of new transmission lines in our nation, the Australian Energy Regulator has the massive responsibility to avert catastrophe and re-introduce reason to Australia’s energy development planning.

We strongly urge you to hear the calls of ordinary citizens and experts alike and not fail us at this critical time.

Yours sincerely,

Douglas and Berlinde Rand