

The CEE Bankwatch Networks Mission is to prevent environmentally and socially harmful impacts of international development finance, and to promote alternative solutions and public participation

Belarus

Ecological Initiative "Belaya Rus"

Bulgaria:

For the Earth
CEIE

Czech Republic:

Hnutí Duha
Centrum pro dopravu a energetiku

Estonia:

Friends of the Earth - Estonia

Georgia

Green Alternative

Hungary:

ETK
Energy Club

Latvia:

VAK

Lithuania:

Atgaja
Lithuanian Green Movement

Poland:

Polish Green Network
Institute for Environmental Tax
Reform

Slovakia:

Center for Environmental Public
Advocacy

Ukraine:

National Ecological Centre of Ukraine

Motoo Konishi

Regional Director for Central Asia

World Bank

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Mkonishi@worldbank.org

June 22, 2009

Dear Mr. Konishi,

We are concerned with recent developments regarding the Moinak Electricity Transmission project in Kazakhstan.

The project has been criticized by national and international NGOs as it will cross the protected natural areas of Charyn and Amtyl-Emel, and Kazakhstani environmental groups are calling on their elected officials and the World Bank to cancel consideration of the project.

However in response to these concerns, project sponsor Kazakhstan Electricity Grid Operating Company (KEGOC) has issued a public statement threatening legal action against civil society groups for disseminating 'false facts' regarding the routing of the transmission line.

The statement, published on the company's website, alleges, *"that spreading of unreliable and improper information through public performance and appealing to the different organizations and officials using mass media, is intended to undermine the business reput, thus allowing to lay a claim in a court of law for official contradiction to and compensation of losses from such information."*

(http://www.kegoc.kz/page.php?page_id=208&lang=2&article_id=21590581)

Yet this 'improper information' originates from the World Bank's own project documentation. The project's Integrated Safeguards Data Sheet, published at the World Bank site on May 13 2009, states the following: *"The transmission lines are expected to partially transit the territory of Charyn and Amtyl-Emel natural reserves."*

The statement by KEGOC is alarming in that it demonstrates that a state-owned company is not willing to engage in proper public discussion about the project. As such, we do not see how such project preparation and consultation can meet World Bank public disclosure policy requirements, when the project sponsor threatens civil society groups with legal action for publicizing more widely World Bank project documentation details.

In this situation the Bank should stop its consideration of the project, as the project sponsor has demonstrated its inability and unwillingness to promote open and informed public discussion and dialogue, as required by Bank policy.

Thank you in advance for your positive consideration of this request, and we look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,



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Central Asia Coordinator

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