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**Wednesday, July 06, 2005 :**

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Anti-ylon protest outside ESB office

LANDOWNERS AND concerned residents from North Roscommon and South Sligo staged a protest outside the ESB office in Sligo on Monday morning over plans to erect a new overhead powerline along the county boundary.

The protesters are opposed to the overhead powerline, which will see pylons ranging from 78 177 feet in height being erected from Flagford in County Roscommon to Srananagh, County Sligo. The group now intend to stage more protests as part of a nationwide campaign to stop the line going ahead.

Carrying banners and placards with the message "Bury our powerline, not our people", the protesters hoped to get their message across that there was no need to construct an overhead powerline and that the ESB could go underground with the proposed line.

"We have concerns about the impact of pylons on the health and safety of people living beside them and we also believe that the ESB could go underground with this line," one of the organisers of the protest from North Roscommon said.

"If they went underground they would almost half the distance of the line. By going underground along the N4, they could cut around 15 miles, as well as eliminate the need to pay compensation to land and house owners," he said.

He added that the protest was peaceful and was positively received by members of the public. Also present at the protest was Martina Roddy, wife of landowner Michael Roddy

from Grange, Boyle, both of whom have vowed to go to prison, if necessary, to stop the ESB from installing a pylon on their land.

The Roddy's have repeatedly denied the ESB access to their land and refused to sign the deed of easement which would give the ESB access to land for the construction of a pylon base. "We will be bringing the issue nationwide and staging more peaceful protests in the future.

This is a national and international issue. We have links with similar groups in the US, New Zealand and Scotland and we hope to establish links with a group in Austria. There are many people across the world, who have serious concerns about living close to powerlines. And all of them cannot be wrong," she said. "Health has to come first. Our lives, our neighbours lives and our children's lives are too precious. ... There's no cost involved in going under the road. There is no planning, no way leaves and no compensationit doesn't make sense to go overhead. We can't see why they cannot go underground," she said.

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