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Wednesday, March 23, 2005 :

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Landowners contest claims on power line

LANDOWNERS in North Roscommon have vehemently contested claims by the Irish Farmers Association (IFA) that the majority of landowners affected by the new ESB power line from Flagford, County Roscommon to Srananagh, County Sligo have accepted a compensation deal.

The lobby group AMP (Against More Pylons/ Alternative Means of Power), which represents landowners affected by the proposed overhead line and concerned residents in the region, claimed this week that the figures given by the IFA were "inaccurate and misleading".

According to AMP, 126 landowners in the North Roscommon region received wayleave notices regarding the proposed 220 kv power line, but only 16 landowners to date had agreed to allow pylon towers to be constructed on their lands. AMP also stated that the vast majority of landowners had no affiliation with any IFA/ESB agreement.

The group also questioned the number of bases laid in the region and stated that just six bases had been laid in the North Roscommon region, five being on Coillte land. A total of 46 bases are proposed along the Croghan to Boyle part of the power line.

The lobby group, which remains opposed to the power line on health and safety grounds, believes that alternative options were open to the ESB and that there was no real need to construct an overhead power line with pylons ranging from 78 177 feet in height.

A spokesperson for the group said that landowners were not opposed to development but harboured grave health concerns given scientific research, which had shown a link between cancer and pylons.

AMP represents around 500 landowners and concerned residents in the North Roscommon region and will continue to oppose the development of the power line in it's present form.

Meanwhile the IFA this week rejected the assertions made by AMP. Adrian Leddy, IFA Development Officer said that he absolutely stood by the figures and stressed that the majority of landowners had accepted the compensation deal.

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