

James Reilly told not to get involved in row

CLODAGH SHEEHY AND TOM SHIEL – 13 JANUARY 2014

HEALTH Minister [James Reilly](#) has been advised by his Chief Medical Officer that he does not need to become involved in the pylons row.

A spokesman for Dr Reilly said last night: “The CMO (Dr Tony Holohan) has advised the minister that on the basis of international evidence, health considerations relating to electricity pylons do not warrant the involvement of the minister.”

The advice comes amid demands for Dr Reilly to explain a letter he sent to Communications Minister [Pat Rabbitte](#) and Environment Minister [Phil Hogan](#) expressing concern about the “adverse health effects” of high-voltage cables. Communities around the country are becoming increasingly vocal about EirGrid’s plans to build three corridors of pylons across 16 counties.

Dr Reilly has come under pressure to explain a letter he sent in March 2012 to Mr Rabbitte and Mr Hogan complaining about Eirgrid’s east-west connector which runs underground through Rush in his north Dublin constituency.

He quoted an opinion sent to him by Professor Anthony Staines, of [Dublin City University](#), which linked the cables to an increased risk of childhood cancer.

A spokesman for Dr Reilly last night said that the Department of the Environment had responsibility for potential health effects of Electromagnetic Fields.

“National and international health and scientific agencies have reviewed 30 years of research into electromagnetic fields (EMF). None of these agencies has concluded that exposure to EMF from power lines or other electrical sources is a cause of any long-term adverse effects on human, plant or animal health,” the spokesman added.

Meanwhile, communities in Mayo and Roscommon have asked landowners to “lock out” EirGrid personnel from their properties.

They have also set up a text alert system to warn if EirGrid representatives are in the area.

Communities along the Gridwest project corridor want the lines placed underground for health and scenic reasons instead of the planned corridor of 45-metre high pylons – 10 times higher than a normal-sized bungalow.

According to Eirgrid, the next stage of the process involves consultation with landowners, but the umbrella opposition group Roscommon and Mayo Protection is urging landowners to shun all approaches from the company.

The plan will see three pylon corridors. One running from Mayo to Roscommon, one from Louth to Tyrone and one from Cork to Kildare.

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