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Your ref: **20012643**
Our ref: Thanet Extension Offshore
Windfarm Project (EN010084)

5 February 2019

Dear Sir/Madam

Thanet Extension Offshore Windfarm Project (EN010084)

The Sunk User Group as a principal stakeholder forum chaired by MCA, have considered the applicant responses to the Relevant Representation. At their recent meeting held on Wednesday 30th January 2019, the forum remained concerned with regards to the impact on the safety of navigation and does not believe the forums views have changed in light of the applicant's responses.

Key concerns as justification:

- 1) The expansion of the windfarm will constrict the number of vessels and constrain their available sea room considerably. Vessels embarking pilots need to steer a particular course (to create a Lee for the pilot) and keep a minimum speed (usually of 6-8knots speed). This consequently results in vessels steering at the windfarm at speed. Naturally at present, with the available sea room, this is possible and deemed safe, but will not be possible after the expansion in way towards the pilot station.
- 2) Medway has seen an increase in the number of LNG vessels of min 280 metres LOA and 10 metre draft, boarding pilots in the area. LNG due to its inherent risks, poses a much greater risk navigationally to pilots, crew and surrounding vessels, and the extension will significantly encroach on the pilot's safety parameters.
- 3) There are concerns that simulations and discussions had only taken place with experienced pilots of this area. A master of a vessel who has never been to the NE spit (large or small vessel), will be very much more concerned and warier of transiting the area.



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4) If the NE spit pilot station had to be relocated further seaward, this will unfortunately result in extra costs, not just financially, but also in time, to pilots, and pilot launch transiting times. Being exposed further out to sea, may also have the result of more probable likelihood of unfavourable sea and swell conditions.

This could result in more vessels not being served and having to wait considerable time for wind conditions to be in their favour.

5) There still does not appear to be sufficient safety measures in place to ensure the safe movement of vessels in the area with the reduced sea room. The applicant response states that the risk is ALARP, however the forum does not agree this is the case and if the proximation of vessels is to be reduced, an appropriate system of control is essential.

We hope you find this information useful as part of your Examination of the Thanet Extension.

Yours faithfully,



Heidi Clevett
Chairperson of the Sunk User Group
HMCG Staff Officer Vessel Traffic Management
Maritime and Coastguard Agency