From: [redacted]
To: Aquind Interconnector
Subject: Objection to AQUIND Interconnector
Date: 06 October 2020 00:39:36

Objection to AQUIND Interconnector in Portsmouth 5th October 2020

Dear Sir or Madam,

Re: National Infrastructure Planning AQUIND Interconnector Scheme

I object most strongly to the above proposal.

• AQUIND had previously committed not to touch the allotments in Milton. It's original route mainly only affected roads.

• Plans suggest that the cable will go through allotment patches in Milton and destroy sheds, trees and all wildlife. By destroying the allotments it will destroy patches that A - Have been tended by families and individuals over years and years B – Destroy fresh fruit and veg grown for families and the wider community C – Destroy efforts for healthy eating from home grown veg D – Portsmouth obesity levels are high and allotments help in efforts to prevent this E – Destroy the natural habitat of animals in the area. F – Mental health is an important value of the allotments G – Communities have been built and meet up at the allotments. H – The space is a pleasant green space valued by the local community and valuable for wellbeing.

• There have been many sightings of a species of newt (the Great Crested Newt – Triturus cristatus) all over the allotments. A rapidly declining species. Therefore, this species and its habitat is strongly protected by law (under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981). It is also a priority species under the UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework and is listed as a European Protected Species under Annex IV of the European Habitats Directive. On the government's own website, there is a page dedicated to the great crested newt and some of the activities the government themselves have said could harm great crested newts includes: excavating the ground, filling in or destroying ponds, removing materials such as dead wood on the ground, removing dense vegetation and disturbing the ground. Natural England need to be informed of this and a report needed from an ecologist with regards to the planning inspectorate documents and if necessary, there must be a mitigation license produced. The government's own rules state a need to protect rare species that AQUIND cannot ignore and must abide by in any proposals. These laws were made for a good purpose.

• Extensive pollution, disruption and added traffic. Portsea Island has three access points to the mainland and this Project will drastically reduce the throughput along one of them; for a considerable length of time all the while causing massive disruption across the City. It will cause traffic to detour to the other two points both of which lead into a clean air zone (CAZ) soon to be implemented.

• AQUIND and its Directors have made large donations to the Conservative Party and possibly a process that may well be hurried through with regard to this. I cannot believe landing AQUIND cables directly onto the mainland as opposed to the southernmost point of an Island (which is one of the most densely populated places in Britain), is in anyones interest?

• AQUIND have not consulted widely enough. Their activity regarding consultation has been to a very small Milton based area. Where was the consultation to the wider directly effected area? Effectively the whole Eastern side of the City.

• The recent Covid crisis has made it very difficult indeed to find out about recent changes to AQUIND plans. This must be taken into account and could be seen as deliberately advantageous to AQUIND. Residents have not been informed and kept in touch with the proposed plans or changes.

What is more important, the promise of cheap electricity or what we are to leave future generations? Money or a Green bio diverse Planet. I like to think we are all now fully aware of how our climate is in change and it needs us to support what really is important to nurture and protect. What guarantee is there when depending on the nature of our BREXIT this might never be used.

In Portsmouth we are so lucky to have such a vast range of wildlife along this waterside area. Many shellfish will die, as they perish when the mud and silt beds are disturbed, many land creatures too - not just our newts - will disappear as their habitats are disturbed. If we have learnt anything surely it is to protect and support nature over profit.

If this Project is to go ahead let it be with the least disruption to all forms of Life wild or otherwise. So alternative routes to the National Grid connection point at Lovedean less disruptive should be considered before any decision is made.

Thank you for considering this objection.

Yours sincerely

John Cullen
[redacted]