

From: [REDACTED]
To: enquiries@beis.gov.uk
Cc: [Aquind Interconnector](#)
Subject: Proposed Aquind interconnector project
Date: 13 August 2021 12:04:22

The Rt Hon Kwasi Kwarteng MP
Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy

Dear Secretary of State,

I would like to express my very strong objection to the proposed Aquind Interconnector project that you will shortly be making a decision on. The project will undoubtedly cause considerable disruption and environmental harm to the city of Portsmouth and impact negatively on the health and well-being of all the people who live here. At the same time, the purported benefits of the scheme do not add up from any reasonable perspective, and it seems to be motivated purely by the financial gain for its promoters.

I am sure that many people will have already written to you describing the wide range of negative effects the project will have locally: the gridlock caused by partly closing one of only three main roads out of the city; the significant environmental harm of digging up Milton Common and cutting through Langstone Harbour; the increased pollution (in direct contradiction of the government's own directive towards enhancing clean air in the city). You will also be aware of the incredibly unified opposition to the scheme locally – including the LibDem city council (and councillors of all parties), the Conservative and Labour MPs of the city, and pretty much everyone who is aware of it. This is a measure of just how detrimental the scheme will be to the area and the people who live here.

Further, there appears to be no convincing case that the devastating local effects of the scheme are in any way mitigated by an overall national good. Aquind's corporate PR is suitably vague but, from their documentation, the purported benefits are claimed to be: security of energy supply, a social welfare benefit to Europe, lower prices due to increased competition, and CO2 reduction/climate benefits. However, none of these benefits bear a great deal of scrutiny. Becoming more reliant on another country to supply our energy needs would seem to reduce our energy security. It is not clear what social benefit there is to Europe, particularly bearing in mind the emphatic rejection of Aquind in France and, in any case, there is no evidence that any social benefit would extend to the UK and especially not to Portsmouth. Regarding lower electricity prices through increased competition, it is extremely debateable that increased competition between energy companies internally has had that effect (witness the recent price rises again) and it is not clear on the extent to which provision from overseas sources would be subject even to the limited regulations that keep our current providers in check from charging whatever they like. While I am obviously in favour of the UK's net-zero target for carbon emissions, we should be doing this by investing more in our own renewable energy sources. Buying in 'greener' energy (actually derived from nuclear) from Europe does nothing to reduce overall global emissions and is not in our control. Offering this as a way for the UK government to avoid its responsibilities for constructively reducing carbon emissions through proper internal investment seems simply opportunistic by Aquind and not evidence of any genuine concern to alleviate climate change.

Bearing in mind the extremely negative consequences of building the interconnector through Portsmouth and the lack of obvious benefits, it is hard not to conclude that the main motivation of Aquind is financial. This conclusion is supported by a number of clearly dubious aspects of the project. A prime example is Aquind's attempt to include a lucrative high-speed data link, a purely commercial venture which would never be allowed to proceed on its own. As I understand it, under UK planning laws, associated developments must support the construction or operation of the principal development, in this case the proposed power link. This is clearly not the case – and also must be a source of potential data security. It also worrying that the owner of Aquind [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. Establishing close relations with senior people in the party and especially with the BEIS would seem to be a strategy by Aquind to push forward their interests. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. It has been widely reported that this project was surprisingly made an NSIP (thereby taking any decision-making

away from local authorities who had already categorically rejected it

I would urge you therefore to act with integrity and consider the proposal purely on its merits, take into account the justified and unanimous local opposition and put aside the self-interested lobbying of individuals motivated only by financial gain. If you do so, there can really be only one conclusion -and that is to reject this terrible proposal.

Regards

Stephen Cutler

[Redacted signature block]