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To: [Aquind Interconnector; enquiries@beis.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@beis.gov.uk)
Subject: Aquind Interconnector - comments on the responses to the Secretary of State's consultation
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1 October 2021

Dear Secretary of State

Clearly, you will be making the final decision on the DCO while we are in the throes of an energy and environmental crisis.

Garages are hiking fuel prices as drivers queue for hours, families are dreading the onset of winter as electricity tariffs rise ever higher, and the wholesale gas price has spiralled out of control. Meanwhile, world leaders prepare for the COP26 summit, as climate change threatens the bleakest future our planet has ever faced.

I am writing to ask you not to use this situation as cover to grant the applicant the DCO.

The Aquind Interconnector is not the "green" answer to this crisis. In fact, it would create an environmental disaster in Portsmouth before a single volt of electricity was transmitted.

The electricity from French nuclear power stations that the Interconnector would distribute is not renewable energy nor is it safe energy - it is part of the problem not the solution.

Generations to come will be saddled with the costs, and risks, of decommissioning the power stations and fuel rods, as we are now dealing with the same issues from our ageing nuclear power plants.

Neither would the electricity transmitted through the Interconnector be cheap for the UK consumer - Aquind Limited wants to sell it at a deregulated price and as a private company, it would profit handsomely from the historic lack of investment in renewable sources in the UK.

Constructing the Interconnector will take 5-7 years, so it would not be a short or medium term fix to the current energy crisis. The answer is right under our noses - state-backed partnerships investing in local wind, wave, solar, bio and tidal power plants would see the UK businesses and consumers benefitting from clean energy at low prices for a generation. This would secure the reliable long term energy sources our society needs and would be truly in the national (and global) interest, not the costly sticking plaster that the Interconnector would represent.

The Interconnector would not be a secure source of energy. Firstly, the French dimension must be considered - now we are separated by Brexit, there is no long term political motive for France to cooperate with the UK. We are already in dispute with France over fishing rights and the AUKUS submarine deal. The proposed cable originates on French soil, if it is able to carry as much power as Aquind claims, how long before that is used to put pressure on the UK?

Due diligence on Aquind Limited must be your highest consideration - putting the key infrastructure in any private hands, let alone under the control of this bizarre company, with its

secretive structure and unknown sources of finance, would be a grave threat to national security.

Consider the kinds of companies capable of delivering a cross channel engineering project costed at £1.2 billion, and compare them to the applicant:

- Costain plc: established 1865, turnover of £1.16 billion, 3,400 employees
- Bosch Corporation: established 1886, turnover of £63.6 billion 34,600 employees
- Siemens AG: established 1847, turnover of £47.2 billion, 293,000 employees
- Aquind Limited: established 2008, turnover £Nil, 7 employees

Regardless of the environmental case against the Interconnector, how is it possible that Aquind is even considered to be suitable to manage an infrastructure project of national significance? Many will point to its relentless use of donations to gain firstly political access, then political influence.

The last three months have seen one revelation after another as the sheer scale of Aquind's financial support for the Conservative Party has come to light. The number of donations made by Aquind to MP's, Lords and ministers already posed a frighteningly high risk of a conflict of interest, but this risk has been ramped up even further now a former director of Aquind Limited has a ministerial post in the very department that will take the final decision on whether to grant the Development Consent Order sought by... Aquind Limited.

In July this year, the company, owned by former Russian citizen and Oil Executive Viktor Fedotov and the Ukrainian-born rising star of the Conservative Party Alexander Temerko, released its accounts for the year ending 30 June 2020. The company, which will attempt to raise as much as £1.2 billion to complete the Interconnector project if it goes ahead, has never recorded any trading income and has historically been kept afloat by financing ultimately provided by a web of offshore holding and investment companies. The accounts showed that the company, despite accumulated debts of over £36 million and no income other than loans from its Luxembourg based parent, was still able to afford donations of £261,000 to the Conservative Party.

The total amount donated to the Conservatives by current and former directors of Aquind and the company itself is now widely believed to be £1.6 million in the last 10 years. The recipients included the constituency associations of:

- A large number of Conservative MP's such as Jeremy Hunt, Simon Hart, David Morris, Nigel Adams, Brandon Lewis, Liam Fox, Andrew Percy and Simon Clarke (in an unguarded moment, Alexander Temerko once claimed to "have" as many as 37 MP's).
- James Wharton, former MP for Stockton South and Northern Powerhouse Minister, who went on to become Baron Wharton of Yarm and a paid consultant to Aquind Limited.
- Business Secretary Alok Sharma, who has had to recuse himself from decisions involving Aquind.
- Energy minister Anne-Marie Trevelyan, who was also unable to answer Parliamentary questions about the company.
- Martin, now Lord, Callanan the Minister for Business, Energy and Corporate Responsibility was a former director of Aquind (between May 2016 and June 2017).

This extraordinarily broad political patronage, almost exclusively directed to your colleagues in the Conservative party, amounts to what Portsmouth South MP Stephen Morgan called "a coordinated and concerted effort (to) influence British political figures" including "substantial financial donations to current and former BEIS Ministers directly involved in whether the project goes ahead."

For our environment, for national security and in the name of good government and a transparent democracy, the Development Consent Order must be thrown out.

I implore you to be on the right side of history - STOP AQUIND.

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Jonathan Walker

