

## Aquind Interconnector project

### Letter to the Planning Inspectorate 8<sup>th</sup> March 2023

I now live just outside Portsmouth, which is the city where I grew up. So, I have a long, ongoing association with the city and surrounding countryside, and I care deeply about this awful proposal. So, I am writing to tell you why I and countless others totally oppose Aquind's Interconnector project.

I would like to add that although I am but one person writing this particular letter, I fear many people who would be directly affected by this project are actually unaware of just how big an adverse impact it would have on all counts. On the whole, I believe people expect that our Governing politicians and Civil servants will look after our wellbeing, our environment and our country's security. Sometimes such expectation can be down to a misplaced faith, and sometimes it is just apathy - people do not bother as they may think they are wasting their time anyway!

So, please consider that what I, *and some others*, have to say is also representative of the views of "countless others", the silent majority effectively. Those silent people matter equally, even though they do not always stand up to be counted in this context.

The points I am raising are:

1. **All the city councillors (as I have read) and both MPs in Portsmouth and residents along the proposed route** are opposed to this unnecessary and unsafe project. It will not benefit the city, and will only cause untold permanent damage, and horrendous construction disruption over a long period.
2. There is **documentary evidence of toxic waste**, including lethal asbestos and mercury that was buried beneath in areas where Aquind are proposing to drill.
3. **With regard to potential harms of electromagnetic fields**, the jury is out but as long as there's no conclusive proof either way, why take the risk with the wellbeing of hundreds of people? Think of Thalidomide, initially an unknown risk. We do know that the **electromagnetic waves will adversely affect residents with electronic implants**. Anyone directly affected may well have to move house for their own health reasons.
4. **In response to fierce opposition from Portsmouth allotment holders**, Aquind *now* propose to tunnel beneath their cherished allotments but this raises troubling questions about the possible toxicity of lubricants used when drilling and the risk of contaminating the produce grown there.
5. **Aquind added a data cable to the proposal after their original planning submission**. Under the terms of a DCO is this permissible? Portsmouth MPs Stephen Morgan and Penny Mordaunt are united in their opposition to this project; they have both said repeatedly **the scheme would pose a national security risk. Meon Valley MP Flick Drummond also opposes it (Denmead, in her constituency is affected)**. Aquind's owners come from the former Soviet Union, where they made their money in the arms and oil trades. The company's finances are opaque and Aquind is an empty shell. **This suspect company should NOT be setting up a whole new telecommunication system in the home of the Royal Navy.**
6. **The French have resolutely opposed this scheme from its inception** and are still saying 'Non', at local and national level so, apart from anything else, the scheme does not make business sense.

7. **The pipeline would interfere with the much-needed new sea defences running alongside Langstone Harbour** that are already under construction. There is a serious risk of flooding if this coastal defence work is disrupted.
8. **Aquind claim that electricity from the nuclear power station in Normandy is green but it is not.** Nuclear waste cannot be disposed of safely. As long as nuclear power stations are still in use we are, literally, storing up problems for future generations. We should not be exacerbating this issue.
9. The **cable trenches will be very wide.** This will mean that at least one lane of the Eastern Road will have to be closed. Portsmouth has only three main roads in and out of the city and the Eastern Road is one of them. The result will be gridlock. It will do untold damage to residents' lives and to businesses, not only along the route but throughout our city and beyond.
10. **In my view, it is untenable to consider routing this interconnector through Portsmouth, the second most densely populated UK city after London with already high levels of pollution and very poor air quality.** The traffic tailback often already extends the length of the Eastern Road, and off the island too. Construction delays to the roads mean that the fumes from engines idling will make already unsafe levels of pollution even worse.
11. **The proposed route cuts through an area of special scientific interest at Langstone Harbour,** a feeding ground for rare Brent geese that fly thousands of miles to arrive there every year, and also Portsmouth's only inner-city nature reserve, where groups of children are taken to learn about the natural world. **Further it cuts through a seagrass meadow at Farlington Marshes,** another marine area that is supposed to be protected.
12. **Off Portsea Island the route goes along the busy London Road and Hambledon Road, the only main roads through a densely populated built up area.** This will cause huge disruption.
13. **Aquind want compulsory purchase powers to acquire swathes of land along the route, including 25,000 sq m of woodland near Lovedean where the route ends. There is intense local opposition to this. This would be yet more destruction of the natural environment.**

**Overall, this unnecessary and unsafe interconnector will cause massive disruption and damage to residents and wildlife in our already congested city and its environs, with high costs to the city and its residents with no clear benefits.** It would lead to even more air and noise pollution, loss of wildlife habitats, disruption to residents and businesses, loss of precious green spaces and sports facilities. Disturbing toxic waste in landfill sites will pose a risk to public safety, potentially putting lives at risk.

**Aquind is a company mired in accusations of cronyism and sleaze.** Thirty-four Conservative MPs, including the current PM and the chancellor, have received donations from Aquind and its owners, amounting to at least £1.6m. Co-owner Alexander Temerko is a member of the influential Leaders Group that decides government policy. We want Portsmouth and the surrounding area to be clean in every way, green and safe for ours and future generations.

The so-called "green agenda" is a myth unless such projects are rejected in favour of more sustainable, UK independent solutions. We need to push away dubious foreign investors who could hold UK to ransom at some point in the future, and who may well be national security risks.

Thank you for your considered attention.

Mrs Linda Read [REDACTED]