

Atkins, Caelan

From: Zoe Porter <[REDACTED]>
Sent: 30 March 2023 17:13
To: Aquind Interconnector
Subject: Objection letter to the Planning Inspectorate

Categories: Consultation Response

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to tell you why I and countless others vehemently oppose Aquind's Interconnector project.

All of our councillors and both MPs in Portsmouth and along the proposed route are opposed to this unnecessary and unsafe project. It will not benefit our city, only cause untold damage and disruption.

I and some others have seen documentary evidence of toxic waste, including heavy metals, asbestos and mercury, that was buried beneath our feet in areas where Aquind are proposing to drill. Some of the evidence to which I refer was deemed inadmissible at the last inspection but there are significant differences this time around.

With regard to potential harms of electromagnetic fields, the jury is out but as long as there is no conclusive proof either way, why take the risk? We do know that residents with electronic implants will be adversely affected. One couple who live along the route have already told us they will have to move house for that reason. There are bound to be others.

In response to fierce opposition from allotment holders Aquind now propose to tunnel beneath these 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.

Aquind added a data cable after its original 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. 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. Is this who should be setting up a whole new telecommunication system in the home of the Royal Navy?

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 and is unlikely to attract investors. Even if they had said 'oui' they have no spare electricity anyway. Aquind has already been granted exemption from pricing regulation, meaning it can make huge profits. The scheme goes against UK energy policy on developing more 'home grown' sustainable energy to achieve energy security.

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 work is disrupted.

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. Also, in the event of a nuclear accident the results would be catastrophic, as we know from what happened at Chernobyl and Fukushima. Therefore, not only will this interconnector be unnecessary and contrary to government energy policy, but it will also pose a danger.

The trenches will be very wide. This will mean that at least one lane of the Eastern Road will be closed. We have only three main roads in and out of the city and this 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.

It is simply ridiculous to consider routing this interconnector through Portsmouth, the second most densely populated city after London with already high levels of pollution and very poor air quality. It is bad enough now, especially on match days when Pompey are playing at home; the tailback often extends the length of the Eastern Road and off the island too. The fumes from engines idling will make already unsafe levels of pollution even worse.

The proposed route cuts through an area of scientific interest at Langstone Harbour, a feeding ground for shoreline wading birds and the Brent geese that fly thousands of miles from Siberia to arrive here every year, and also our only inner-city nature reserve, where groups of children are taken to learn about the natural world. And it cuts through a seagrass meadow at Farlington Marshes, another area that is supposed to be protected.

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.

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.

In short, this unnecessary and unsafe interconnector will cause massive disruption and damage to residents and wildlife in our already congested city with no clear benefits. It will 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 to be clean in every way, green and safe. Aquind have no place in it.

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