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Sent: 30 March 2023 21:55
To: Aquind Interconnector
Subject: Department for Energy Security and Net Zero letter 3rd March 2023

Categories: Consultation Response

FOA

Deputy Director, Energy Infrastructure Planning, Department for Energy Security and Net Zero

The following observations are offered in reponce to the letter dated 3rd March 2023:

1. **Ethical Consideration** – The organisation behind this proposal is headed-up by two individuals who played a significant role in Russian state enterprises. First, **Alexander Temerko** held various positions in the Russian Defence Ministry. In 1999 he was a senior executive in the Russian oil company Yukos, until he moved his family to the UK in 2004 following criminal investigations against him. The second is **Viktor Fedotov** who is reported to be a significant backer of the project. He was the head of the Russian Caspian Sea Pipeline enterprise, a project that is surround with reports of major corrupt practices. It is reported that he diverted US\$98m into his personal account.

With his in mind, it is inconceivable that the UK Government is contemplating (subject to planning inspectorate consent), entering into a long-term nationally significant infrastructure project with AQUIND. Is the UK government assured that the funding that will be provided is honest and not obtained criminally from the Russian people? A secondary ethical consideration relates to the donations to the Conservative Party from Temerko, Fedotov and AQUIND?

2. **Private Finance of Public Goods** – Since the time of Margaret Thatcher's premiership the UK government of either brand has favoured the private sector in preference over government managed infrastructure. There may be some benefit in this approach, however there are many examples in which this has back fired. Water is prime case in point. Most of our regional water companies are now owned by foreign enterprises who no doubt sees them as 'cash-cows'. The cash generated been disbursed in dividends to shareholders and inflated executive salaries. At the same time our rivers and beaches are been seriously polluted by raw sewage. You might suggest that the companies are content to pay the fines for polluting, rather than invest the significant funds needed to rectify the issues. At the end of the day, it is UK households that are footing the bill.

Another example is the pseudo-free market in the generation of UK mains electricity. In order to establish a market, the price of electricity is determined by the marginal supplier. In the case of the UK, its natural gas. Gas that we now have to buy on the open market, because we gave up the rights to our nation's oil and gas resources to private enterprise. Putin's war on Ukraine has and is a bonanza for so many private companies involved in the supply chain. Whereas, UK large and small businesses across the board are having to manage the cost increases, along with UK households.

Can the UK government be sure that by relying on private enterprise both directly, in the form of the Interconnector Provider and also the foreign Energy Supplier that UK will not become a hostage to fortune?

3. **Strategic and Vulnerability Issues** – The ability of a country to supply mains electricity is a strategic priority and a responsibility of government to insure. In peacetime the use of interconnectors to form a super-grid result in a reliable and efficient supply solution. However, the downside of an efficiency supply system is that it embodies less redundancy. Hence in times of tension and hostilities the interconnectors themselves are vulnerable to attack. Also, interconnectors can become a bargaining chip in cross border disputes.

Has the National Grid performed a robust Risk Assessment embracing a realistic analysis of the critical risks?

4. **Cable Route Issues** – The task of routing four HV DC cables rated to provide 2,000MW, is a high-risk proposal. The route planned will entail passing through one of the most densely populated areas in the country. It will meet a multitude of obstacles including gas, electric, telephone, data, water and sewage. A civil engineer with 20 years of experience in the 'utilities industry' and lives in Portsmouth and hence knows the area wrote the following observation: "I have knowledge of many similar schemes, and know that you just can't bend the cables when you come across an obstacle. The streets are full of sewer pipes and their manholes, water pipes and cables that supply the houses. Many of these services will need to be moved to give enough room for the trench line.

The space required for the excavation plant and equipment will completely fill the width of the road. All traffic will need to be diverted around the local roads, affecting at least two schools situated in Solent Road and Eveleigh Road.

The damage and disruption will be immense!

Every metre of road surface will need to be re-built. This is NOT a project that should be allowed to proceed in the residential streets of Portsmouth."

Hence, I ask is the government confident that AQUIND has the experience, knowledge and technology to complete the task, without causing, 'immense damage and disruption'? I also add, who is underwriting the risks if AQUIND fail?

Regards
Barry Scott

