

Atkins, Caelan

From: e-mail claudia.chester <[REDACTED]>
Sent: 30 March 2023 00:14
To: Aquind Interconnector
Subject: Fwd: Re: Objection to Aquind Interconnector

Categories: Consultation Response

Dear Madam/Sir,

The proposal to run the Aquind interconnector through Portsmouth, one of Europe's most densely populated cities, is completely indefensible.

It will cause even more hazardous levels of air pollution in an area that already suffers from very poor air quality, not only from the construction work itself, but also from inevitable traffic disruption.

With only three main routes on and off our island city, one of which will be hugely disrupted by the work, the city will be gridlocked, causing years of delays, misery and pollution affecting not only local services, schools, businesses and residents, but also destroying the tourist trade which is becoming an increasingly important part of our economy. Such traffic congestion will inevitably create downright dangerous conditions for anyone needing to travel off the island to the only A and E department in the area at Queen Alexandra Hospital.

The proposed route travels through Milton Common, which now serves as a wildlife haven and one of our few precious open spaces for outdoor recreation. However, although beautiful and useful in its present state, it was built over the site of Milton Lake, which after draining, was infilled with all kinds of waste, where toxic substances, including asbestos, have been sitting undisturbed for decades. To dig through and unearth whatever is down there would be utterly reckless, and could only be considered a good idea by someone who stands to make massive profit from it, but does not have to live alongside it.

Also in line to suffer huge upheaval from the project would be parks, playing fields and Milton allotments, all precious open spaces that residents of this crowded city so badly need for our mental and physical health. As well as this, it is another pocket of our island where diverse forms of wildlife, including migrating birds, can thrive.

Finally, Aquind does not appear to be a reputable company in whose hands to place such a serious undertaking. The question of national security is an important one when considering unfolding events in Ukraine and evidence of Russian attempts to interfere in the democratic process of other nations. We should ask exactly how Alexander Temerko made his fortune in Russia, and how much of it has been poured into the coffers of the Conservative Party over the years. We should also ask why a plan for a data cable has been added to what was supposed to be an energy interconnector. Has the company overseen a construction project of such magnitude before? What is Aquind's annual turnover? Do they actually make a profit? How long have they been trading? Who are their directors? How many employees do they have? None of these questions seems to have a satisfactory answer.

All of Portsmouth's elected representatives from whichever political party have strenuously objected to this proposal, M.P.s and councillors alike. The process which has led to this project being shoved down the throats of the people of Portsmouth, not to mention those who live along the rest of the route, or our neighbours in France, has been murky to say the least. The wishes of all those affected by this have been overruled and ignored. The Conservative Government has attempted to remove our democratic means of preventing this disaster from happening to our community by taking it out of the hands of our elected councillors.

Can we expect a fair and unbiased decision about the Aquind interconnector when many M.P.s have reaped such huge financial benefits from Aquind and Mr Temerco, a man who has boasted publicly of the influence he has paid for in the Conservative government? Many of us remember that Kwasi Quarteng was shown publicly to make an inaccurate statement to Andrew Marr, saying that he had never commented on this specific project, when there are

two letters in existence, signed by him, which state categorically his support for the Aquind project? This was before Mr Quarteng, under public pressure and scrutiny, thankfully changed his mind and rejected the proposal.

The judicial review that overturned this decision was yet another blow to the democratic rights of the people of Portsmouth, but one which we continue to resist.

This project should have been rejected long ago, as being so obviously damaging to our city. This mess has been dragged out for far too long now, and the longer it goes on, the more disreputable the process looks. Draw a line under this ill conceived plan and reject the proposal for the Aquind interconnector.

Yours Faithfully,

Claudia Chester