

## Atkins, Caelan

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**From:** DRUMMOND, Flick [REDACTED] >  
**Sent:** 30 March 2023 09:39  
**To:** [REDACTED]; Aquind Interconnector  
**Subject:** Aquind Interconnector

**Categories:** Consultation Response

Dear Secretary of State,

I write with reference to the decision on the Aquind interconnector, which has been referred back to you as a result of the judicial review proceedings at the High Court last year. This is a project which has the potential to cause damage to the environment and massive inconvenience to the lives of people living in my Meon Valley constituency, and those of my neighbouring MPs and local authority areas.

I have followed this process since it began with the Planning Inspectorate, and I made submissions to its examination highlighting concerns my constituents have. It was disappointing that the outcome of that was a recommendation to accept the proposal given the clear weight of evidence against it. I also wrote to the previous Secretary of State, Kwasi Kwarteng, reiterating those concerns and I was pleased that he decided against granting permission.

The original objections to this project still stand, and their weight is not diminished by the decision of the court. These include concerns about the siting of the convertor building and the impact of noise and disruption to local communities during construction and operation; the routing of the cable through environmentally-sensitive environments; the disruption to residents along the route of the cable in a very densely-populated area of Portsmouth and Waterlooville; the impact of this project of views from South Downs National Park southwards; and the availability of more appropriate routes for the cable to make landfall and have the convertor station.

Since the start of the Examination, it has become clear that in fact the cable would not be leaving France from near Le Havre, opposite Portsmouth, but from somewhere near Dieppe, further along the coast. For this point of departure it would make much more sense to bring the cable ashore in East Sussex, on a shorter subsea cable route and with the availability of network infrastructure – for instance at Ninfield and Bexhill. Aquind argued in its submissions to the examiners and to the court that a shorter cable route is critical to the viability of the project. In that case, a shorter route should be preferred and a range of potential sites further east of Portsmouth examined for landfall and the convertor station.

It is not clear at this point that the scheme has permission from the authorities in France for any point of departure, and I would ask you to liaise with your counterparts in the French government to determine what their attitude is to the change of plans Aquind has made since the beginning of this process.

The conclusions of the examiners can no longer remain valid in view of the changes in circumstance and Aquind's intentions since the application was first made.

I would ask you to reject this application and I know many of my constituents will be making similar representations to you on the grounds I mention above. While I appreciate the commitment of the government to securing diversity of supply in our energy market, there are better ways of achieving it than projects like this which come at a high social and environmental cost.

Yours sincerely

Flick

**Flick Drummond MP**

Member of Parliament for Meon Valley



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