

## Atkins, Caelan

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**From:** Stephen Cutler <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** 17 April 2023 11:03  
**To:** Aquind Interconnector  
**Subject:** Objection to the Aquind interconnector project

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Completed

**Categories:** Consultation Response

Dear Secretary of State

It would like to voice my very strong opposition to the proposed Aquind Interconnector project. As you know, it was originally rejected by the then minister for BEISS and Aquind are now re-applying following a judicial review. There are many compelling reasons why this project should be rejected once again and I would like to reiterate these. As you will be aware, there is strong local feeling against this proposal which is shared by everyone from the local MPs (both Conservative and Labour) and Portsmouth City Council to countless ordinary people from the area, including myself.

As I see it, there are three main considerations regarding the proposal. Firstly, is such an interconnector from France to the UK necessary? Secondly, is the proposed landing point and route through Portsmouth to Lovedean appropriate? Finally, are Aquind a credible and legitimate company to run this project? To accept this proposal, all three points would need to be accepted and I believe this is clearly not the case.

Regarding the first point, while there may be a case for certain kinds of interconnector as part of an overall government strategy to secure energy supplies, the proposed version does not appear to fit the requirements. There is no guarantee of energy security from the French nuclear estate which has serious maintenance issues, and France is committed to providing any excess energy to the EU (which we are no longer a member of). In any case, nuclear energy is a non-eco power source which would not support the government's commitment to 100% sustainable green energy by 2030. The proposed interconnector is not a multi-purpose interconnector (MPI) which could also source energy from off-shore wind farms or solar farms. So, the case for this particular interconnector is by no means clear, especially here are other alternatives (e.g. the Xlinks project) which are linked to sustainable energy.

Regarding the proposed landing site and route, this clearly does not make sense. Portsmouth is an island and one of the most densely populated areas in the UK. The potential pollution, environmental damage and chaos to the city resulting from the project have been well documented. These include the gridlock caused by partly closing one of only three main roads out of the city; the significant environmental harm of digging up Milton Common disturbing dormant toxic waste in the process; cutting through Langstone Harbour, an area of special scientific interest; the increased pollution (in direct contradiction of the government's own directive towards enhancing clean air in the city) caused by the substantial cabling and wide trenches that need to be dug and the ensuing traffic chaos; compulsory purchase orders and the removal of listed trees etc.

Another argument against this route which has become clearer following the examination of the proposal is that the cable would not be leaving France from Le Havre (opposite Portsmouth) but from further along the coast near Dieppe. Since a major point of Aquind's submission was the necessity of the shortest possible cable route, the Portsmouth route makes even less sense now. The logical route would be further to the east in a far less densely populated area. In any case, the route from any location has not been agreed by France and there is considerable opposition there suggesting it may never be.

The final consideration is as to whether Aquind are an appropriate company to run such a large-scale national project. This is a company specifically formed to propose and undertake this project with no previous track record. It has been well documented that the company is controlled by Viktor Fedetov, a Russian oil tycoon who it is reported (by the Good Law Project) to have made at least £72m from an off-shore financial structure that appears to have

funnelled money from Russian companies. Fedetov has donated £42,000 to the Conservative party in the past 14 months, including a £10,000 cash donation to Liam Fox MP reported in January this month. Alexander Temerko, a senior director of Aquind has donated over £700,000 to the Conservatives. While this is not illegal, it is reasonable to question the motives and methodology of the company. The suspicion that this is a project conceived purely for the potential profit and power rather than any concern for benefit of the country (or indeed for the local area) is further supported by the proposal to include an Open-Access Data Link in the cabling. This raises a major national security issue and was supposed to be disallowed under the terms of the DCO. The company has made no concessions to local objections or proposed any benefits to the local community (apart from a risible '£3.15 reduction in energy bills'). There is a strong sense that, due to their financial backing and connections with the government, they feel they can steam-roller this through despite the long-term damage to the area and the obvious inadequacy of the proposal (and its previous rejection).

I hope very much that you will listen to the widespread voices of objection, including those in your own party, and show personal integrity in your decision making. This case has been widely documented and people really do understand and care about this. Please make the right and obvious decision and reject this terrible proposal again.

Regards

Stephen Cutler

**Stephen F Cutler PhD**

