



28 April 2023

To whom it may concern

My name is Annie Dorrington, I am a resident of Portsmouth and I wish to register, in the strongest possible terms, my objection to the Aquind interconnector proposal.

There are many reasons why this is the wrong project, in the wrong place, at the wrong time from the wrong company. Here is a list of the many reasons why I object:

**1. Wrong place – disrupting one of the most densely populated areas in the UK**

Any objection to a new development can be dismissed as NIMBYism. As this project involves digging up the Eastern Road in Drayton/Farlington it will be within a few metres of my house and garden and therefore in my back yard. Having lived here for 32 years, I know my back yard well and am aware of the chaos that any disruption on the Eastern Road causes to the city and surrounding areas.

Roadworks, traffic light malfunctions or even a simple breakdown rapidly results in traffic backing up. The Eastern Road is a dual carriageway and is one of only three roads into the city, (I am sure you are aware that Portsmouth is the UK's only island city). The Eastern Road leads directly to the A(M)27 and then onto the A3 and M275 (the remaining two routes into the city). Therefore, any jams on this section of the Eastern Road impact the A27 (heading East to Havant and Chichester) and the M27 west to Fareham, Southampton (docks and airport) and onto the M3. It also blocks traffic entering or exiting the M275 as well as diverting drivers onto other smaller roads which then become gridlocked very quickly. I am not exaggerating when I say I have seen drivers stuck in their vehicles for hours (and have also been one of those drivers on occasion).

Of course, it is not just the people of Portsmouth who will suffer as a result of this project. There are precious few green areas within the city but the ones we have are treasured by locals and are home to a wide variety of wildlife including the Little Tern, a previously endangered species which has only started to "come back from the brink" in the last few years. We have three sites of Special Scientific Interest which are threatened by the Aquind project: Portsdown Hill, Portsmouth Harbour and Langstone Harbour (which forms part of the Solent Maritime Special Area of Conservation).

**2. Wrong time – inhibiting post pandemic recovery**

Prolonged travel chaos over months will not only be miserable for those who have no alternative but to sit in long queues, it will also mean that others will choose to avoid Portsmouth and the surrounding areas. This will have a huge impact on the local economy as it will see customers desert local businesses, choose not to attend major events such as the annual Victorious festival (which bring so much money into the area), disrupt goods travelling to and from the port and kill off the tourist industry (our port has only recently started to welcome large cruise liners as well as the regular crossings to France and the Isle of Wight). We all recognise the need to grow the economy and improve productivity. This level of disruption will ensure there is no growth in the local economy for years to come.

However, economic growth is not the only area that needs to be rebuilt after being so badly affected by the pandemic. Health and education also need help to recover but the travel disruption caused by this problem will also reverse any recovery. Portsmouth's major FE college is sited on the Eastern Road and the other is in Havant. Students and staff of both colleges will face severe travel delays and, of course, many local schools will also be affected.

Portsmouth's major hospital and only A&E department lies on the north of the city – anyone on the island will find it much harder to travel there when traffic on the Eastern Road and the M275 is disrupted.

### **3. Wrong Project – security of supply**

The case for additional interconnectors is not proven. In the current climate it seems especially reckless to consider being reliant upon another country for even part of our energy supplies. Given the Nord Stream attacks, we know that undersea installations can be targeted by those hostile to the UK. In addition, there have been recent reports of suspicious behaviour by Russian "fishing trawlers" close to UK power generating sites.

Both Portsmouth MPs (one a former Defence Secretary, one a previous Shadow Minister for the Armed Forces) have expressed concerns about the national security aspects of this project, especially its proximity to Portsmouth Naval Base. On the Laura Kunesburg show 5 February 2023, Grant Shapps said "we (the UK) are open for business but not in areas that would be a risk to our national security". This was in response to a question about Chinese investment in the UK but the same surely applies to a company owned by Russian oligarchs.

### **4. Wrong Company – controversial connections**

Aquind's owners Viktor Fedotov and Alexander Temerko are both highly controversial figures – facts revealed in the "Pandora papers" cast serious doubt about their suitability to manage a major infrastructure project of such importance. They are also major donors to the Conservative Party, a fact that has been widely publicised and commented on by the Good Law Project and Led by Donkeys amongst others.

In 45+ years of following politics, I have never seen a protest group supported by those across the entire political spectrum. Every elected representative in the area, regardless of party affiliation, vociferously opposes this project along with other important and influential voices within the city such as The News and the university. If the Secretary of State approves this

project in the face of such overwhelming opposition, it will make a mockery of any notion of local democracy and lead many of us to conclude that the government listens more to its donors than those it is elected to represent.