



**PENNY MORDAUNT MP**  
**MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR PORTSMOUTH NORTH**  
**Ground Floor, 1000 Lakeside**  
**North Harbour**  
**Portsmouth**  
**Hampshire PO6 3EN**

The Rt Hon Claire Coutinho MP  
Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero  
Department for Energy Security and Net Zero  
1 Victoria Street  
London  
SW1H 0ET

Our Ref: PM20773

22nd September 2023

Dear The Rt.Hon Claire Couthino MP

***Re: National Infrastructure Planning Aquind Interconnector Scheme***

I wrote to your predecessor to express my concerns about the Aquind Interconnector project and its potential impact on Portsmouth if approved and I thought it would be helpful if I wrote to reiterate not only my own concerns about this project but also those of the local community, given your recent appointment.

I would expect that you have already been briefed by your Department so I will not detail all of the concerns I and the local community have – these are a matter of public record, but I did wish to particularly impress upon you my specific concern that the project is seeking to conceal a secondary function to accommodate cabling, which is not dependent on the projects primary purpose. I am very concerned that the application is not only being misused but that the true motives of the applicant are questionable.

No doubt you will be aware of the Portsmouth community's strong opposition to the project. The community remains of the view that there would be little benefit in Portsmouth being the landfall site for the project, nor do they believe that the case has been sufficiently made for Portsmouth being selected. Given my own concerns about the misuse of the application, and the communities the question therefore must be – why Portsmouth?

I was supportive of the Government's previous decision to refuse consent, and this remains the case, despite the recent judgment set down by the High Court. Throughout Aquind has done little to reassure the local community of its intentions resulting in a lack of transparency, which calls into question not only the scheme's viability but also its integrity.

I am aware of your predecessor's communication with the Local Authority regarding an update in respect of the requirement for a Co-Operation Agreement between the Council and Aquind if Aquind successfully achieves development consent. Whilst there is good reasoning for seeking this update, I am concerned that Aquind is attempting to portray this as an acceptance of the project, and that this must mean a favourable decision is due. This

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requires careful management and handling as it has alarmed some within the local community, many of whom will be hoping that a decision will be reached shortly.

I would ask that this decision be made as soon as possible after careful consideration of the facts. It is now nearly five years since I first became aware of this project and the alarm it was causing; the local community is waiting for a decision, and I would ask that this is made swiftly.

Yours sincerely



Penny Mordaunt MP

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