Dear Sir,

Freebairn Saltfield — Underground Gas Storage Application

I write to set out my objections to the above application:

Lack of Safety

The original applications by Bartex were dismissed 3 times, mainly because of uncertainty about the safety of the subsoil in the Freebairn area. I don't see that can have changed over the years — only got more suspect — and I must again express my objection on the basis of deep concern about the suitability of the geology in this region and the possibility of gas migration leading to explosions. There is certainly plenty of visual evidence of subsidence from salt mining — notably deep lakes — now fenced off — in the Height o’ the Hill farmland.

Need

The situation for the need of gas storage — since the Public Enquiry of 2006 and the Secretary of State’s decision in October 2007 — has indeed changed. Exploration in the Lyell has revealed quantities of shale gas with expectation of supplies being available for up to 70 years. Why then continue to make provision for the storage
of expensive gas from foreign countries - who can charge us what they like and hold us to ransom in the matter of supply? - when we can produce our own, locally.

Should there be a need to store shale gas in the proposed underground caverns, what guarantee is there that "mini-earthquakes" such as occurred from fracking last year, will not lead to fractures of the cavern walls, proof with consequent migration of gas and possible explosions.

NOISE AND DAMAGE TO THE ENVIRONMENT DURING THE COURSE OF CONSTRUCTION

As you will see from my address I live in the Stagnall Lane area and I understand that lorries will be using this narrow lane regularly during the first year of construction, at least. What effect is this going to have on the people and wild life presently living in this peaceful rural area? There is still the risk of gas migrating. There are still the risks of gas migration. Well-head explosions in the area. I remain to be convinced that the geology is safe.

The ecological damage from discharge of vicious lime, destruction of countryside and wildlife, long-term effect on house prices and insurance are all factors which need to be taken in account.
The proposals to interfere with the subsid for storage purposes have been kicked around for years, presumably to make a lot of money for someone. How can we believe that this is the only area in the country which is suitable for underground storage when there are so many long-standing doubts about it in many quarters.

I re-affirm my reservation to Halite’s present proposals.

I am nearing age 85. I have lived in my cottage for 65 years now. I had hoped to end my days here, IN PEACE.

Yours faithfully,

[Signature]

MR TOM CARPENTER
CASE LEADER,
THE PLANNING INSPECTORATE,
TEMPLE QUAY,
BRISTOL.