

Ben Wallace MP  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA

23 December 2011

Dear Mr Wallace

**Planning Act 2008 (“PA 2008”) Section 55 (Acceptance of Application)**

**Proposed Application for a Development Consent Order for an Underground Gas Storage Facility at Preesall Saltfield, Lancashire (“the development”)**

**Proposal by Halite Energy Group Ltd**

**IPC Reference: EN030001**

I write with reference to your letter dated 14 December 2011 relating to the proposed underground gas storage development at Preesall Saltfield, Lancashire.

As you may be aware, on 1 December 2011 we received an application for the proposed development from Halite Energy Group Ltd. On 23 December 2011, this application was accepted by the IPC as adequate to proceed to examination. This means that the IPC will shortly commence the examination process, and you and your constituents will have an opportunity to comment directly to the IPC on the proposed development.

When considering whether or not to accept the application for examination the IPC, in accordance with section 55 of the PA 2008, had regard to a range of issues including the application documents submitted, any adequacy of consultation representations received from local authorities, and the extent to which the developer has had regard to any guidance issued. At the acceptance stage, the IPC does not assess the merits of proposed projects.

The acceptance decision and a copy of the application documents can be viewed at the Preesall Saltfield underground gas storage project page on the IPC website at <http://infrastructure.independent.gov.uk/projects/>.

It is now for Halite Energy Group Ltd to publicise the fact that its application has been accepted to proceed to examination and announce the start of the

registration period. People who are interested in the proposal will then be able to register as an interested party with the IPC and make a relevant representation. You will be able to register quickly and easily online, at our website: [www.independent.gov.uk/infrastructure](http://www.independent.gov.uk/infrastructure). Alternatively, you may call our dedicated helpline on: 0303 444 5000 or email: [Preesall@infrastructure.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Preesall@infrastructure.gsi.gov.uk) and ask for a hard copy registration form to be sent to you.

The matters raised in your letter relate to the merits of the proposed project. Registering as an interested party and making a relevant representation as explained above is your first opportunity to put these views to the IPC. Registering as an interested party will also enable you to take part in the IPC examination, make further written submissions and take part in any public hearings at the discretion of the Commissioner or panel of Commissioners appointed to examine the application.

The IPC Advice Note 8 series (enclosed) provides a summary of the IPC process, explaining how and when people can have their say on a proposed project. This may be useful to you when making your relevant representation and also in responding to any enquiries from your constituents about the proposal and/or the role of the IPC. The IPC is also proposing to hold 'drop-in' sessions in the area of the proposed development in the New Year where people can seek help and advice on the IPC process and completion of the registration form.

Please do not hesitate to contact Eleri Davies, the Case Manager, using the contact details below, if you would like any further information or if you would like to arrange a meeting to discuss the IPC process.

Yours sincerely



*JP* John Saunders OBE  
Chief Executive

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