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The Planning Inspectorate
National Infrastructure Planning
Temple Quay House
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6th July 2018

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: Deadline 5 Written Submissions- Application by Port of Tilbury London Limited for an Order Granting Development Consent for a Proposed Port Terminal at the Former Tilbury Power Station ('Tilbury2')

Buglife would like to thank the panel for the opportunity to speak at the recent' Issue Specific Hearing on Ecology, Habitats Regulations Assessment, and Traffic and Transportation' on 28th June. This letter is to formalise Buglife's current position as outlined at the recent hearing, but for detailed responses please see the previous submissions dated 16th March and April 30th 2018.

- Buglife maintains its previous positions outlined in previous submissions dated 16th March and 30th April 2018.
- The site is a unique and irreplaceable example of Open mosaic habitat on previously developed land (OMHPDL), a habitat of conservation priority listed under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006.
- The site supports an outstanding invertebrate assemblage of a quality sufficient for the site to be of Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) value. This position and Buglife's submissions have the support of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), Essex Wildlife Trust, Bumblebee Conservation Trust and Essex Field Club. The national significance of the site has also been supported by Natural England's Invertebrate Specialist, David Heaver, and the expert opinion of the entomologists commissioned by the applicant, Colin Plant Associates and Mark Telfer. **The 2016 and 2017 surveys yielded a species list of 1,397, an incredibly high number which includes 159 species of conservation concern**. Modern records for this site since 2007 include 15 species listed in Section 41 of the NERC Act, including: Sea aster mining bee (*Colletes halophilus*); Shrill carder bee (*Bombus sylvarum*); Brown-banded carder bee (*Bombus humilis*); Five-banded weevil wasp (*Cerceris quinquefasciata*); Wall butterfly (*Lasiommata megera*); Saltmarsh shortspur beetle (*Anisodactylus poeciloides*); Hornet robberfly (*Asilus crabroniformis*); Red-shanked carder bee

(*Bombus ruderarius*); Black-headed mason wasp (*Odynerus melanocephalus*); and Four-banded weevil wasp (*Cerceris quadricincta*).

- The Tilbury Power Station site in its entirety, including the Lytag Local Wildlife Site (LoWS) , is comparable to Canvey Wick SSSI and West Thurrock Marshes SSSI/LoWS, which are widely acknowledged to be among the country's best invertebrate sites. This is widely evidenced by the ecological submissions associated with the application and is supported by Natural England's suggestion that the site is in the SSSI designation pipeline, regardless of its current status.
- Buglife reject any suggestions that the site is in some way degraded or at risk of losing interest. The site remains of national importance, as documented by the recent invertebrate surveys, regardless of some recent subtle vegetation changes. This is supported by the invertebrate survey reports of Colin Plant Associates, which state that "*More detailed comparison with the results of a survey conducted on the Lytag Brownfield nine years ago shows that whilst there are small changes to the actual composition of the species list, the overall inventory is more or less unchanged*". It also states "*There is very little difference, and perhaps none of ecological consequence, between the 2008 and 2016 species lists"*.
- The national importance of invertebrate populations in the Thames Gateway area has been increasingly recognised in recent years, including through Buglife's '*All of a Buzz in the Thames Gateway'* project which identified 40% of brownfields being of medium to high potential for nationally rare or scarce invertebrates. The highest quality wildlife-rich brownfield sites are among the UK's most important invertebrate sites and include species with diverse and specialist habitat requirements, many of which have declined drastically across the wider Thames Estuary landscape. However, despite wider recognition of their biodiversity value, brownfields in the Thames Estuary have consistently been lost to development and the current resource in the region is declining. For example, in 2013 Buglife re-visited the 198 sites identified as medium or high potential in the '*All of a Buzz in the Thames Gateway'* project, which revealed that 51% had been identified as either lost, destroyed, damaged or had an outstanding planning permission which would remove the site's interest, within only a six-year period . South Essex in particular seems to be under increasing pressure, following progressive loss of OMHPDL. **The Thurrock corridor along the estuary, which includes the Tilbury Power Station site and surrounding land, now represents the largest stretch of high quality brownfields in the Thames Gateway and is crucial to the long-term survival of the region's nationally important invertebrate interest**. Species such as the Shrill carder bee depend on a network of brownfield sites to support metapopulations in the Thames Gateway, but the progressive loss of resources across the landscape threatens their long-term persistence. Protection of these remnant sites is all the more important due to the impact of modern planning decisions, which more often than not lead to sites being restored to agricultural or grazing use. This makes the limited number of remaining brownfields of utmost importance to invertebrate conservation in the region. Unique and diverse sites such as the Tilbury Power Station need to be recognised both due to their own intrinsic value but also due to their importance within the wider network of sites supporting a nationally important assemblage of invertebrates.
- The proposed off site compensation methods outlined in the updated Ecological Management and Compensation Plan (CMCP) from June 2018 (TILBURY 2 DOCUMENT REF: PoTLL/T2/EX/113) are unproven and lack sufficient evidence for any confidence in their potential success. There have been no previous examples of successful large-scale brownfield habitat recreation. The applicant's examples from the last ten years suggest some limited value, but do not in any way demonstrate that the complicated suite of habitats at Tilbury Power Station can be replicated. Brownfield sites such as those at Tilbury Power Stations have complex mosaics of substrates, topography and

hydrology, creating subtle and intricate landscapes of microscale features which are central to the underlying value of brownfields. These are formed through a history of different industrial activities and processes across the entire site and at different points in time, effectively creating a range of subtle features so complex that we do not yet know how to replicate them with any confidence. The only evidence provided is from short-term monitoring of small-scale habitat creation of PFA habitats, with no indication that a nationally important invertebrate site can be recreated to support a diverse assemblage with multiple habitat requirements and specific niches. This leaves very significant unknowns and a high level of risk.

- The current plan for OMHPDL mitigation and compensation is for 0.3ha to be retained and 10 hectares to be created ex-situ, using existing aggregates where possible. **Reliance on the retention of a 0.3ha fragment of habitat and entirely unproven habitat creation methods, as compensation for the loss of an irreplaceable habitat of SSSI quality is simply unacceptable.**
- The updated EMCP is an improvement on previous versions, in that a potential site has been identified, which is within a reasonable proximity and is Thameside habitat. However, in addition to queries over the potential success, it lacks any significant detail over how the habitats will be created.
- Buglife would also like to query the selection of compensation site as it appears to only be enhancing a site over 10 ha rather than creating a new resource. The Mucking landfill site is largely due to be capped with low nutrient aggregates and restored to low fertility grasslands which will be taken into the stewardship of the Essex Wildlife Trust, as part of a fully funded operation. Effectively what is proposed is enhancing a site already destined to be of nature conservation value- which is insufficient for the loss of a site of such interest. The EMCP does review the current state of the Mucking Landfill area through a brief Phase 1 assessment, but identifies it as high fertility. However, Buglife would suggest that the species identified are actually more indicative of a site which has recently been disturbed rather than indicating high fertility. Many of the species identified are for example found in both high fertility disturbed habitats (e.g. arable field edges) but also in low nutrient disturbed habitats (e.g. brownfields). The site is also currently unrestored, making any baseline assessment misleading as it does not yet represent the low nutrient grasslands which were due to be part of the restoration scheme as far as Buglife is aware.

In summary, Buglife maintains its previous positions as outlined on 16th March and 30th April 2018 and remains opposed to the application.

Please do get in touch if I can be of any further assistance

Yours Sincerely

[redacted]

Jamie Robins
Projects Manager