

The Rt Hon Edward Miliband MP
Secretary of State for Energy
Security and Net Zero
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Enquiries to: Phil Munday
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Date: 25th November 2024

Dear Mr Miliband,

Re: **STOP AQUIND**

The Aquind interconnector is proposed to enter the UK at Eastney in South Portsmouth and run up the Eastern side of the city then through Waterlooville in Havant Borough and onto the Lovedean sub-station in East Hants.

We, the undersigned Havant Borough Councillors, ask you to deny permission for this project.

The Proposal

A High Voltage Direct Current (HVDC) scheme believed to transmit 17 million MWh of electricity between Britain and France, or about 5% and 3% of consumption respectively. Aquind say it will reduce carbon emissions, integrate more electricity generated from renewables and generate significant amounts of jobs in Britain and France.
<https://aquind.co.uk/>

The Objections:

1. Environmental disturbance

Starting from Eastney where asbestos, heavy metals and toxic contaminants in landfill will be dug up in deep trenches and may be released all along the route in an already polluted and densely populated city with a drastic effect on our biodiversity. Cables under Langstone Harbour may disturb its delicate environment and wildlife as well as at Milton Locks, the only nature reserve in Portsmouth. Milton Common has 200 species of wildlife diversity, some graded as nationally rare.

2. National Security

Former Conservative Portsmouth North MP and Secretary of State for Defence, Penny Mordaunt, called the project “*unnecessary and unsafe*” and warned that it would “*damage national security*”.

On 23 August 2024, the Ministry of Defence wrote to your Department expressing its opposition on national security grounds. The author James Muncie, referring to HMNB in Portsmouth, highlighted, “the wide range of potential threats and vulnerabilities to UK

defence and national security, including but not limited to terrorism, espionage, sabotage, subversion and organised crime.” He went on, “important that new energy infrastructure does not unacceptably impede or compromise the safe and effective use of any defence assets or operations.”

He also referred to the project still needing consents and permissions in France.

3. The disruption.

The 13-15 miles scheme will progress about 100 metres at a time, initially under key roads in Portsmouth, including the Eastern Road, which will be subject to diversions and closures for months, if not years. Portsmouth is an island city with two arterial roads and disruption to any causes severe traffic delays, even gridlock at times. The route also goes under allotments, through a playing field at Farlington and Bransbury Park in Milton. Car parks and parks will be closed for months, compulsory land purchase will be necessary and there will be land grab rights for up to 25 years.

In Havant Borough in Waterlooville, it will affect the Ladybridge roundabout in the busy village of Purbrook where a twin concrete culvert runs right underneath. If Aquind were to install its cables here, as they plan, their weight as they cross over the culverts exceeds the culverts' ability to stay intact. This means they would probably have to be replaced. The whole roundabout would have to be excavated to insert twin coffer dams to contain the stream. This involves rerouting all services - gas, electric, telecoms - with a temporary pumping station for the main sewer i.e. closing both sections of the A3 – Ladybridge/London Road and Purbrook Heath Road, the latter being the access for Rowans Hospice - for at least a year and re-routing buses.

In Waterlooville, the route continues past the Fire Station, the main town centre shopping and retail park. Current electrical works on one lane are causing delays of up to thirty minutes on the northbound route. The route continues past a business park with shops, offices, and eateries then a parade of shops and the turn-off to the recycling tip. Beyond that point, the route is residential and becomes more countrified as it enters East Hants.

From ad hoc discussions with shopkeepers and residents in Waterlooville, most are unaware of this project and the effects it will have.

4. MPs' support

Both Stephen Morgan (Labour MP for Portsmouth South) and Amanda Martin (Labour MP for Portsmouth North) have expressed opposition to the project.

"I've been clear from the outset that this project would bring untold disruption to our daily lives and our city's natural environment, with no clear benefits."

"Having communications and data cables that are "available for hire by third-party clients...raises similar concerns to those about the UK's 5G network and Huawei".

The MP added he would "continue to do everything in my power to ensure this project is stopped once and for all". - Stephen Morgan, Labour MP for Portsmouth South

Amanda Martin is deeply concerned and wrote to you in August, highlighting “national security concerns” raised by the Ministry of Defence, noting that the project could undermine the UK’s energy resilience. Further it would cause “unimaginable” disruption.

Suella Braverman, MP for Fareham & Waterlooville says –

“Aquind’s proposals are detrimental to the people of Hampshire, including many of my constituents in Fareham and Waterlooville.

Building this interconnector means endless gridlock from construction chaos alongside exposure to pollution for many years, the destruction of our green spaces and delicate marine and shoreline wildlife will be put at risk.

We do not have the capacity to accommodate this colossal piece of imposing infrastructure that will decimate Hampshire’s countryside.

This project also threatens our national security. The MoD has ‘serious concerns’ about the proposals, which we mustn’t ignore.

We cannot afford to put our national security at risk for this, or any project.”

5. Aquind and Donations to Conservative MPs

The Led by Donkeys campaign revealed that Aquind donated more than £1.7million to the Conservative Party including 34 MPs and Ministers including Rishi Sunak, Jeremy Hunt, Alok Sharma, Anne-Marie Trevelyan and Lord Callanan. Havant MP, Alan Mak, received £1,500. The previous Conservative Havant Borough Council administration accepted a £30,000 donation towards completing a play park in a ward with three Conservative councillors.

The main forces in Aquind are two Russian expats, Viktor Fedotov and Alexander Temerko, the latter being a former director of a Russian arms company. *Directors of the Aquind Interconnector project have historic ties to Russia, with one having held a senior role in Moscow’s defence ministry.* – The i Newspaper.

We do not believe that the UK should be involved in a major new energy project with Russian nationals in view of the risks to national security and President Putin’s threat to cut off supplies to the west.

6. Need for New Electricity Sources

We appreciate the need to generate additional electricity for the National Grid but encourage development of renewable sources including wind, solar, bioenergy, hydroelectric, tidal, and geothermal power. We salute the Government’s Budget announcement of £2.3 billion in support of 11 new HAR1 green hydrogen plants, among the first commercial scale projects anywhere in the world. This alongside the initial investment into GB Energy.

The UK can be world leaders in renewable energy without seeking financial help from Russian investors bringing French energy to our shores.

We urge you to refuse permission for this project.

Yours sincerely,

Councillor Philip Munday – Leader, Labour
Councillor Philippa Gray – Deputy Leader, Liberal Democrats - Bedhampton
Councillor Antonia Harrison – Liberal Democrats – Purbrook
Councillor Paul Tansom – Liberal Democrats – Purbrook
Councillor Gillian Harris – Labour – St Faiths
Cllr Munazza Faiz – Labour – Leigh Park Central and West Leigh
Cllr Daniel Berwick – Labour – Havant St Faith's
Cllr Jonathan Hulls – Hayling West
Cllr Jason Horton – Labour – Leigh Park Central and West Leigh
Cllr Simon Hagan – Labour - Stakes
Cllr Mark Coates – Labour – Hayling East
Cllr Charles Robert – Green Party - Emsworth
Cllr Paul Gray – Liberal Democrats – Hayling West
Cllr Grainne Rason – Green Party - Emsworth
Cllr Richard Brown – Labour – Leigh Park Hermitage
Cllr Peter Oliver – Labour – Hayling East
Cllr Michael Lind – Liberal Democrats - Bedhampton