

Office

Sub 18

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
19 JAN 2007

Araglen Parent's Association
Maureen Hyland (secretary)
Gortnaskehy
Araglen
Kilworth
Co Cork
15th January 07

Environmental Protection Agency
P.O. Box 3000
Johnstown Castle Estate
Co Wexford

RE: PROPOSED ANAEROBIC DIGESTER at Ballard, Araglen,
Kilworth, Co Cork.

Ref: W0230-01

Dear Sir or Madam

I am making a representation to your offices on behalf of the Araglen Parents' Association. We as a body are not only greatly concerned but also quite sceptical about the proposed development in Ballard.

Araglen National School is situated approximately 500 metres from the proposed operation. We strongly believe that this is not in the best interests first and foremost of our children, and secondly our area as a whole. Araglen is a vibrant and growing rural community. Families which had previously emigrated are returning to raise their children and educate them in what is a safe, friendly and peaceful rural landscape. The numbers in our National School are on the increase and we will shortly have adequate numbers to employ a third teacher. This is something of which we are very proud. Increases in numbers in our primary school has a positive knock on effect through out the whole community setting i.e. the local clubs such as: Pony Club, Youth Club, G.A.A. etc. It is these organisations that depend on the local school for its membership to survive and instil a sense of pride of place in our young people.

We are appalled at the size and scale of this facility, and not impressed with the type of waste that will be transported along our roads or that the destination is so close to our primary school. These huge tankers will be carrying on an annual basis **250, million tons** of toxic waste from various sectors such as: **blood & guts from slaughter houses, meat & bone**

meal, toxic chemical waste from pharmaceutical industries, sludge from breweries & the food industries, fats, grease & oil to name but a few. Mixing all these components together will result in wide range of harmful bacteria. We will be subjected to nauseating stench along the routes which these large and cumbersome vehicles will be travelling. Needless to say, this stench will be ever present on the breeze in and around the facility itself. We are not accustomed to this type industrial emissions or activity on our roads or near our school. This will have a direct and negative impact on the quality of life of most importantly our children while they travel to and attend school, but also on every resident in the Araglin and surrounding areas.

Our concerns regarding the emissions from the plant we feel are well founded. We have been told to expect the likes of the following toxic harmful gasses to be pumped into the clean God given air which we breathe at present: **CARBON DIOXIDE, METHANE, AMMONIA, HYDROGEN SULPHIDE.** Considering the proximity of the school to this development it is a logical assumption that all our children are at a far greater risk of respiratory problems as a direct result of inhaling these odorous emissions, especially those who experience respiratory complaints already.

The children would not be allowed to play outside during break times or engage in any outdoor activities, for fear of exposure to these emissions. Outdoor activities are deemed to be part of the school curriculum. This leaves our teachers in breach of adhering to the designated Department of Education Guidelines with regards to implementing and completion of the required curriculum.

There is no doubt that the proximity of this plant will have a direct negative impact on our school and our children's standard of education. How will it be possible for our teachers to hold the attention of the students when this development will be spewing out noxious emissions? The constant noise and vibrations which will be part of everyday workings of the plant; is in complete contrast to the environment in which our school is at present. It is obvious that the quality of the environment in which one works or learns has a direct impact on their quality of work and learning. We are not willing to compromise our children's standard of health and education for the sake of Valeco's bank balance.

We are not in favour of industrial traffic on our road network as residents and as parents we fear for the safety of our children while they travel to

and from school. What chance would a domestic vehicle have if it is in a collision with one of the heavy goods vehicles travelling to the facility? These concerns are well founded as many of our roads are quite narrow and not suitable for the type of vehicle that the developer will need to transport the waste material.

There is a substantial risk of spillage on the local road network while material is in transit. We have no confidence that his company will clean up all spillages which may occur on our roads if they are not in the immediate vicinity of the plant. This leaves all residents young and old who walk, cycle or ride their horses at risk of contamination.

We have no doubt that if this development is given permission it will have a direct and immediate impact on our primary school. Parents will not risk their children's health and will decide to suffer the inconvenience and have their children educated in neighbouring schools. The numbers in our school will drop significantly and will affect the aforementioned clubs. Our children will lose their sense of pride of place. Eventually as numbers would continue to decline the school would most certainly close. This would have a devastating and irreversible effect on our community. Instead of attracting new families into our lovely valley, young couples starting out in life would opt to move to neighbouring areas safe in the knowledge that the environment in which they live is not being poisoned by harmful and noxious emissions.

Obviously our main concern is the health and safety of our children and the environment in which they live, learn, work and play. We greatly fear the possibility of an explosion or fire in the plant. Valeco have in no way allayed any of our fears. They have no experience in this field. Any expertise they quote is academic. They have never operated such a development and the scale of which they propose is frightening. We do not want to be Bioveda's guinea pigs. We do not want our children to be used as a reference as how they can improve if and when there are complications, errors and a major malfunction. Bioverda seem to work on the presumption that nothing will go wrong, if it does they have emergency plans. But considering they have never done this before, their emergency plan has never been tested so how can we trust it? That is not acceptable to the parents of children in a school situated so close to the development.

We must consider the possibility of complications in the running of this plant and how they affect our school. If there are shutdowns due to a malfunction it is assumed that there is a risk to pollutants being emitted.

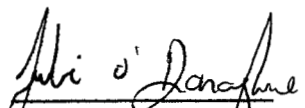
The result of this would mean that the school should and would be closed until the plant is "deemed safe". This leaves our children open to exposure to toxins of a harmful nature until such time as they can be safely removed from the school premises. It also results in lost time in school that will leave them at a disadvantage in comparison to other schools.

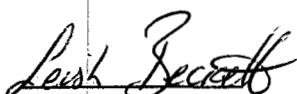
Our children are also at risk with the increased volume of traffic that would be travelling our narrow little roads. We would no longer be able to travel with the same peace of mind as we have at present. Our road infrastructure is not suitable in a lot of cases for two cars to pass, so envisaging these large tankers travelling the roads around our valley and school beggars belief.

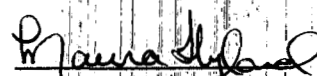
Our children are a God given gift and it is our duty and obligation to ensure that they are kept safe and well in all aspects of their lives. They are entitled to be educated and nurtured into young adults in our local school. This will not be the case if the facility is given a licence. We would be failing in our duty as parents and residents if we were to sit idly by and allow such a monstrosity as is proposed to be developed in our valley and more or less along side our school. We trust that you will give all our concerns due consideration.

We would like to thank you for taking the time to read this submission and hope for the sake of Araglen National School and our children that in your wisdom you will take our concerns on board and see fit to refuse the developer a licence to operate.

Yours sincerely


Julie O'Donoghue
Chairperson


Eilish Beckett
Treasurer


Maura Hyland
Secretary