



17 May, 2002

Mr Eamon Ó Duibhir
Chairperson
Erris Inshore Fishermen's Association
Corclough West
Belmullet
Co. Mayo

Dear Mr Ó Duibhir,

Mr Frank Fahey, T.D., Minister for the Marine and Natural Resources, has asked me to respond to your recent letter regarding the proposed Corrib Gas Field Development.

The Minister has asked me to assure you that detailed consideration has been given to all environmental matters relating to the proposed development and that full account was taken of the views expressed by all interested parties, including your Association, in addressing these issues.

You will be aware that the Minister was advised on the environmental aspects of the proposed development by the Marine Licence Vetting Committee (MLVC), an independent expert group. During the one month consultation period for receipt of comments on the proposed development he also arranged for the MLVC to host a public meeting in Co. Mayo. The Minister understands that your Association attended the meeting, had separate discussions subsequently with the MLVC and made a written submission. He is therefore satisfied that full account has been taken of your Association's concerns.

In that context, the Environmental Impact Statement published in respect of the proposed development suggested that the treated effluent should be discharged approximately 7 km offshore at the 40 metre contour within Broadhaven Bay. The MLVC considered that, because of limited water movement within the Bay, the proposed location was unsuitable. Given the fact that the Bay is designated as a candidate Special Area of Conservation the MLVC was further of the view that no discharge should be allowed within the Bay regardless of volume or chemical composition. For these reasons, the MLVC recommended that the outfall should be located not less than 12 kilometres from the landfall and outside the candidate SAC. This recommendation is reflected in the Foreshore Licence granted for the proposed development by the Minister.

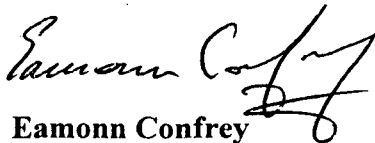
The area within which the discharge will take place is subject to strong water movements in, generally, a north easterly direction which will ensure that it will be unable to re-enter the Bay. The water depth in this area is between 60 and 70 metres.

I should point out also that effluent will be treated to Environmental Quality Standard (EQS) through use of best available technology prior to discharge. EQS is the level of a particular contaminant which the Environmental Protection Agency judges can be discharged without adverse impact on the wider environment. Moreover, the amount of treated effluent to be discharged is small – not more than 3.3 cubic metres per hour of produced water. If rainwater and other neutral additives are included the maximum discharge will be 55.6 cubic metres per hour. On average pump out operations will be required for only two hours out of every twenty-four.

I trust that the foregoing information will allay any concerns your Association may have in relation to the proposed outfall and discharges from it.

You will be aware that the MLVC recommended the establishment of an Environmental Monitoring Group on which local fishing interests would be represented. I am pleased to inform you that arrangements for the setting up of the Group are in train.

Yours sincerely



Eamonn Confrey
Private Secretary

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