

ΕΥΡΩΠΕΪΣΚΙ ΠΑΡΛΑΜΕΝΤ PARLAMENTO EUROPEO EVROPSKÝ PARI
 EUROPAISCHES PARLAMENT EUROOPA PARLAMENT EΥΡΩΠΑΪΚΟ ΚΟΙΝΟΒΟΥΛΙΟ
 PARLEMENT EUROPÉEN PARLAIMINT NA ĦEORPA PARLAMENTO EUR.
 EUROPOS PARLAMENTAS EURÓPAI PARLAMENT IL-PARLAMENT EWROPEW
 PARLAMENT EUROPEJSKI PARLAMENTO EUROPEU PARLAMENTUL EUROPEAN
 EURÓPSKY PARLAMENT EVROPSKI PARLAMENT EUROOPAN PARLAMENTTI EUROOPARLAMENTET

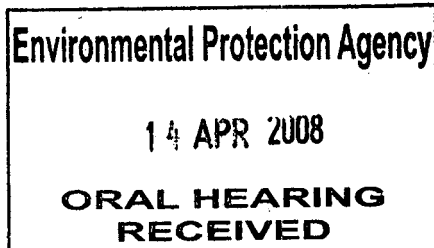
Recd From: D. Cassidy.



Directorate-General for Internal Policies
 Directorate C - Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs
 Committee on Petitions

Brussels April 11, 2008.

Damien Cassidy Esq.
 c/ 26 Westmoreland Street,
 Dublin 2.



Dear Mr Cassidy,

The Chairman has asked me to acknowledge the receipt of your letter concerning the forthcoming meeting to hear an appeal against the licensing of the Poolbeg Incinerator Plant at Ringsend which was visited by the delegation from the Petitions Committee last year.

Your letter was referred to the Committee last week following a brief discussion among the Coordinators representing each political group. The Committee, acting therefore on a proposal from the Coordinators, agreed that the position taken by the Committee was reflected in the report of the Fact-finding visit and that the appeal tribunal should be made aware of the Committee's considered opinion, including the recommendations, as expressed in the report. The report states:

The Poolbeg Peninsula, the proposed Incinerator Plant and the Dublin Waste to Energy Project. (Petition 495/2006)

For a very long time the Poolbeg Peninsular has been the site of various facilities linked to the Port of Dublin and has also included an electricity generating power station - soon to be decommissioned, a water treatment plant as well as small factory units such as for bottle production. It also contains the Irishtown Nature Park which is an area notable for Brent Geese and water fowl. Above all it houses a very tight-knit local community of 70,000 people within 3km of the site. The local community is particularly opposed to the site, according to the petitioners - the *Combined Residents against the Incinerator* - for a number of reasons, the most prominent being the disruption caused by the eventual construction of the site itself, the additional heavy lorry traffic which will be generated by the delivery of refuse for incineration¹, the impact of a substantial new eight-story series of buildings for additional housing, and the fact that the incinerator will pollute and contaminate air and water and be an eyesore on the Dublin Bay skyline.

¹ Lorries would enter and leave the plant by the same route and therefore cause massive traffic jams along the narrow peninsular; there being no practical possibility for a more radial inward and outward traffic system. The Eastern Bypass scheme has been abandoned. This would potentially add considerably to traffic-caused air pollution with harmful effects in particular on the vulnerable sections of the local population.

If the incinerator plant is built it will be one of the largest in the EU, burning 760,000 tonnes of waste each year and local people fear that the odour from the chimneys would seriously compound existing odours about which they have already complained in relation to the existing water treatment plant and the sludge it produces. It remains to be confirmed that an incinerator project of this magnitude would be in conformity with EU Directives on Waste Incineration (2000/76/EC) and on Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control (96/61/EC). There is also some doubt as to whether all the provisions of the EIA Directives have been complied with given the timing of the original impact assessment in 1999, its original scope and the change in circumstances since then, in particular as regards transport and access to the site area.

Dublin Bay itself is an area of high conservation importance and is legally protected under both the EU Habitats Directive and the EU Birds Directive. Specific sites of conservation importance include the Liffey and Tolka Estuaries, and Sandymount Strand, all immediately adjacent to the proposed development. This fact, although acknowledged by the developers has not been an element which has been included in the environment impact assessment which focussed only on the Poolbeg Peninsular itself.

The delegation met with Matt Twomey and Eileen Brady, representing the management of Dublin Council as well as the consultants involved in the public/private partnership which will develop the site if it goes ahead. The meeting was held in the Community Liaison Office which was set up in order to provide information for residents in the area. Chris Andrews TD, one of the petitioners was present, with the members of the delegation for the duration of the visit, including the site inspection.

For the Dublin City Council and the developers, the objectives of the site will also lead to an improvement in recycling of waste (for which they say Dublin already has a good record) and a reduction in landfill requirements for the Dublin area. The thermal treatment facility which will be built as part of the incinerator plant will supply heating and electricity for the local community. As a compensation measure for the local community the national Planning Board imposed a Community Gain Fund which will finance improved social facilities in the area of benefit to the population.

The visit to the proposed site by the delegation, accompanied by the Council management team and the petitioners demonstrated why the site had been chosen as it was clearly a brown-field development within a former and current urban industrial area, with access to dock and quay facilities for sea transport (facilitating the export of the solid ash residues from the plant for example).

Yet, the exiguity of access, the proximity of the housing estates and residential areas, the lack of roads adapted to heavy lorries and the potential for an alternative style of local development designed to improve the quality of life of the local population also showed without doubt just why so many serious and largely unanswered questions have been raised - including within the Dublin City Council and the Dail, about the suitability of Poolbeg, at a time when incineration as a form of waste disposal is being discarded completely by many of Europe's regions - or at least relegated to the last possible waste disposal option.

The delegation therefore considers, and recommends, that further more serious consideration should be given by the Irish Environmental Protection Agency, by the National Planning Board, by Dublin City Council and by the Department of the Environment to these issues and to their level of compliance with the EC Directives mentioned. The European Commission should further review these findings.

The Chairman, Mr Marcin Libicki, has requested that the Committee's reservations about the proposed development, as reflected in the above passage, should be brought to the attention of the appeals tribunal as a means of demonstrating the Committee's support for the petitioners and the local people who stand to be the most affected by such a development.

Yours sincerely



David Lowe.
Head of Secretariat.

For inspection purposes only
Consent of copyright owner required for any other use