

**Bea Claydon**

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**From:** Wexford Receptionist  
**Sent:** 22 January 2013 15:50  
**To:** Licensing Staff  
**Subject:** FW: objection to dumping at Sea.  
**Attachments:** Dublin City Council objection Final.doc

Rec'd at [info@epa.ie](mailto:info@epa.ie)

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**From:** Brian Murphy [<mailto:bmurphy@steerclear.ie>]  
**Sent:** 22 January 2013 15:38  
**To:** Wexford Receptionist  
**Subject:** objection to dumping at Sea.

Please find attached my objection to the application by the Dublin City Council to dump spoil in Dublin Bay.

Regards

Brian Murphy  
Oceandivers

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Office of Climate, Licensing & Resource Use  
PO Box 3000 Johnstown Castle Estate  
Co. Wexford

**Re: Application by Dublin City Council for Dumping at Sea Permit.**

To whom it may concern,

We object in the strongest terms possible to the granting of a Dumping at Sea Permit to Dublin City Council for the dumping at sea of spoil generated by the proposed Long Sea Outfall Tunnel project.

Oceandivers are a Professional Association of Diving Instructors (PADI) 5\* Scuba Diving Centre based in Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin. Our livelihood, and the livelihoods of the many scuba professionals we train, depends directly on the water quality in Dublin Bay. We have been delivering reef and wreck dives within the area since 1989 to both local and tourist divers. We have a first hand understanding of the factors that affect the quality of water and marine life in the bay area. We have witnessed the improvement in water quality and the increase in marine life within the greater Dublin Bay area and on wreck sites on the Kish bank and beyond.

**Resource**

Dublin Bay is a natural resource that needs to be protected fully for the benefit of the environment and the people of Ireland. It provides excellent opportunities for marine-based activities including, angling, sailing, windsurfing, kite-boarding, scuba diving, sea kayaking, snorkelling and swimming. The area attracts millions of walkers to its coastline every year to enjoy the views and the panorama that is Dublin Bay.

The quality of the water, including its colour and tone, is of vital importance to all of these users. Clear clean water is attractive and encourages marine activity. Grey, milky, muddy water has the opposite effect. Dumping of spoil with thousands of tonnes of silt and dust mixed with unknown quantities of chemicals will have a major negative impact on the water in Dublin Bay. For the Dublin City Council to state that the proposed dumping will have no adverse effect on the quality of the water in the bay or on marine life is misleading. Failte Ireland are investing heavily in the promotion of Ireland as an outdoor activity destination

with a specific focus on marine activities. How can we hope to promote marine activities in our capital if we turn the bay into a dumping ground?

## **Marine Life**

As divers, we see first hand the range and variety of marine life in Dublin Bay and on the wrecks in the surrounding waters. We observe changes that take place throughout the year and slower changes that place over the years. The islands from Lambay to the north and Dalkey Island to the south provide excellent dive sites with an abundance of marine life. This life includes numerous soft corals, sponges, seaweeds, crustaceans, fish and mammals.

Since the sewerage treatment plants in Dublin were upgraded along with the associated outfall pipelines, we have observed a steady improvement in the quality of the water in the bay. Marine life in the bay has become more prolific. Porpoise are encountered on almost every trip to Dalkey Island and the Muglins. Dolphins have been seen throughout the summer of 2011 and 2012. We now have a number of Blue Flag beaches along the coast between Skerries and Bray.

Water clarity has been better in the last five years than ever before. 2012 was an exception. Clarity declined due to dumping by Dublin Port and works on the Dargle River in Bray causing a significant increase in the amount of suspended particulate matter. Marine life, including plants and animals, is very sensitive to changes in the environment. Filter feeders that are established in their preferred eco system will not tolerate a coating of limestone dust and will slowly die back.

Dumping in the proposed site will certainly result in fine dust being spread over the entire bay area. No where will remain dust free on the sea bed. In the same way that dropping spoil from an aircraft would lead to a massive dust cloud spreading over a vast area as a result of the effects of wind, the tide will do the same as the fine particles remain in suspension for a very long period of time.

The tidal flow on the east coast floods into the Irish Sea from the north and the south and ebbs in the reverse. Consequently the area around Dublin sees little flushing so what ever is held in suspension will drift a little north and then drift back a little south on each tide. Slowly settling all over the bay area. Following a strong easterly wind in Dublin Bay, when the clarity of the water has been reduced, it takes three to four days for the "dust to settle" and conditions to improve. If the Dublin City Council is planning to dump for a period of three years there will be a plume of fine particulate matter constantly in suspension in the water destroying the underwater visibility, coating everything in dust causing unknown damage to the marine life in the bay.

## Special Area of Conservation.

The Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht issued a press release recently proposing six new marine sites for designation as Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) to protect marine habitats and species listed on the 1992 EU Habitats Directive.

“These six SAC sites will protect a range of habitats and species including sandbanks, deep sea coral reefs, dolphins off the Atlantic coast and **harbour porpoises found in Dublin Bay**. These sites are part of a European network of nature conservation sites, known as Natura 2000, which was established with the aim of preserving our rich natural heritage for future generations.

“Ireland currently has four offshore candidate SACs to protect biogenic reefs (reefs formed by living organisms, in this case deep-sea coral). Three new reef SACs are now proposed for designation in the inshore and offshore area.”

One of the proposed SACs is **the area from Rockabill to Dalkey Island**. The site the Dublin City Council wants to use as a dump is right in the middle of this area. It makes no sense that an area that deserves special protection may even be considered as an option for the disposal of spoil that will most certainly have an adverse impact within. **OSPAR Convention**

### [The Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic](#) (the “OSPAR Convention”)

The OSPAR Convention is the current legal instrument guiding international cooperation on the protection of the marine environment of the North-East Atlantic.

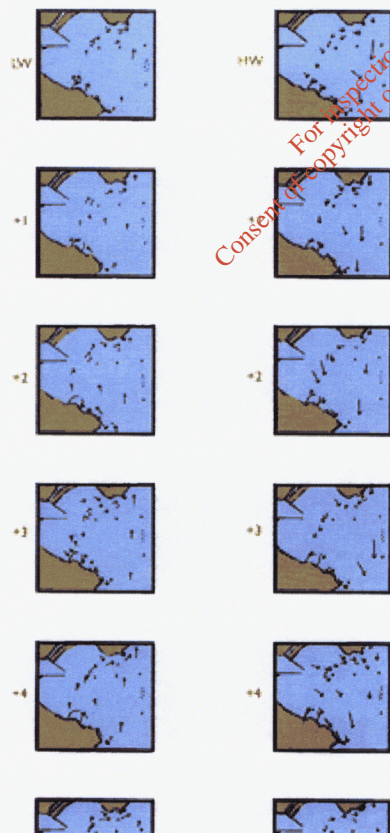
Under the convention, the dumping of all wastes or other matter is prohibited. All countries who have signed up must control deposits to the sea and are only permitted to dispose of the following: Dredged material and inert materials of natural origin, that is solid, chemically unprocessed, geological material the chemical constituents of which are unlikely to be released into the marine environment; and fish waste from industrial processing operations. Ireland is a signatory to the convention.

The waste from the tunnel does not fit into any of these categories as it will be a combination of hard core mixed with thousands of tonnes of mud, silt and limestone dust mixed with the chemical cocktail used in the boring process for lubrication. To allow this material be dumped in Dublin Bay will be in direct contravention of the OSPAR convention.

### Environmental Impact Assessment.

The environmental impact assessment carried out on behalf of Dublin City Council states that there will be no adverse effect on marine life and that most of the spoil will remain within the proposed dumping zone. A desk study was used to collate available information on the ecological environment. A desk study is not adequate to determine the actual effects of such a high volume of material being dumped over a sustained period. It is also stated that the dominant tide runs to the north and that eventually any suspended material will settle in the northern area of the Irish Sea. Even a cursory glance at tidal stream information (see table below) available on the Dun Laoghaire Harbour Website, which conveniently covers the dumping area, shows that the spoil will spread to the entire bay.

Whilst offshore the tides flood and ebb to the north and south, closer to the shore they are greatly affected by the meandering nature of the coastline. There are significant tidal anomalies all along the coast from Wicklow Head to Rockabill that are charted in sailing almanacs. Further, the dump zone's location immediately west of the Burford Bank virtually assures that the suspended particulate matter will be caught in the tidal flows that circulate around Dublin Bay. Our intimate knowledge of the tides in and around Dublin bay, based on over twenty years experience working on and in the Irish Sea, confirms this. The report's claim that "less than 1%" of the dumped material will not remain within the dump zone borders on the ludicrous.



## Dumping at Sea Act 1996 – 2010

It should be noted that the Dumping at Sea act 1996-2010, under which the Dublin City Council is applying for a permit under section 5, would appear to have expired at the end of 2010. If there is no Dumping at Sea act for the next period in force than how can a permit be granted?

### Image from Dublin Bay



Willie Siddall from Oceandivers highlights some of the Soft Corals and Sponges on the "Coral Garden" reef off Dalkey Island in August 2012.

## Ireland's Ocean Economy

The Socio-Economic Marine Research Unit at NUI Galway produced a report on Ireland's Ocean Economy. The report is very comprehensive and deals with all aspects of the Ocean Economy. However, as seen below, it states that water-based tourism and leisure is the largest contributor in terms of turnover and employment. On a national basis, the turnover from this sector was in excess of €900,000,000 and employed over 5,000 people in 2007. Instead of polluting our sea we need to manage it properly so that this important sector can grow and

continue to provide and create employment, attract marine leisure activity tourists and help to promote marine biodiversity.

*“In 2007 the ocean economy had a turnover of €3.4 billion, of which €1.44 billion was direct Gross Value Added. The Irish Marine sector employed approximately 17,000 individuals. Ireland’s total Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2007 was €189.7 billion..*

*The established industries in the marine sector account for 95% of total marine turnover. This category is dominated by **marine tourism** and maritime transport (Table 3.1). Within the established sector, **water-based tourism and leisure; is the largest contributor in terms of turnover, value added, direct and indirect10 gross value added and employment.** “*

	Turnover	Direct GVA	Direct Emolvnm	Direct & Indirect
<b>Established Markets</b>				
Shipping & Maritime Transport	889,018	328,579	2,19	516,929
Water -based Tourism & Cruise	944,380	453,310	5,83	826,650
Other Marine Services	45,323	30,355	0	55,355
Sea-Fisheries	140,110	62,420	569	111,386
Aquaculture	251,000	100,307	2,20	168,347
Seafood Processing	105,700	42,280	1,06	70,959
Oil & Gas	395,593	88,204	2,09	155,239
Marine Manufacturing	197,300	137,117	790	220,758
<b>Established Markets Subtotal</b>	<b>3,233,651</b>	<b>1,353,001</b>	<b>1,600</b>	<b>176,965</b>
<b>Emerging Markets</b>				
High Tech Marine Products & Marine Commerce	43,618	27,299	350	42,796
Marine Biotechnology & Marine Renewable Energy	99,595	47,138	65	78,589
<b>Emerging Markets Subtotal</b>	<b>18,075</b>	<b>8,671</b>	<b>185</b>	<b>14,552</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,218</b>	<b>4,415</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>7,108</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>167,506</b>	<b>87,523</b>	<b>701</b>	<b>143,045</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,401,15</b>	<b>1,440,52</b>	<b>17,0</b>	<b>2,445,633</b>

### Conclusion:

It would be better for the bay and the Irish Sea if this spoil was diverted to a disused quarry or other land fill site. However as stated in the Dublin City Councils application such an operation would require 1000s of movements on our roads causing its own set of problems and with significant cost implications. If there is no other viable option available than to dispose of this material at sea, and if in doing so the Council will not be in breach of the OSPAR convention or any other EU Legislation, then a deep water site at a minimum distance of 25km from the coast could be an option, subject to a comprehensive Environmental Impact Assessment. The use of two barges for transport and dumping would deal with the additional time implications of traveling further to sea thus allowing the removal process to continue without disruption. Whilst there would be additional

cost implication, this would probably be less than the cost of road transport. Dumping further out to sea will significantly reduce the risk of damage within the bay area and the proposed Special Area of Conservation.

On behalf of Oceandivers,

*Brian Murphy.*

Brian Murphy

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