

Submission No 5

Noeleen Keavey

Subject: FW: Submission: PO 738/03
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From: Wexford Receptionist
Sent: 23 May 2014 11:53
To: Licensing Staff
Subject: FW: Submission: PO 738/03

Rec'd at info today

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23 MAY 2014

From: Imelda Moran [<mailto:imeldamoran@gmail.com>]
Sent: 23 May 2014 11:51
To: Wexford Receptionist
Subject: Submission: PO 738/03

Please print the attached submission and refer to the relevant inspector for inclusion on PO 738/03 file.

Imelda Moran

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Environmental
Protection Agency
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Chapel Street,
Belmullet, Co.
Mayo.
23rd May, 2014.

Environmental Protection Agency,
Johnstown Castle Estate,
Wexford.

Dear Sirs,

Re: Application No. PO 738/03 for review of IPPC Licence No. PO 738/01

Since the current Application requires *ab initio* review it is essential that deficiencies, defects and omissions evident in the previous licence be rectified; and that the propensity for the current application process to merely facilitate SEPIL's surreptitious undermining of crucial safeguards be forestalled. Second onslaughts, building on previous gains, can be the most destructive.

In this light the fact that the EPA has finally been compelled to conduct an Environmental Impact Assessment may prove a pyrrhic victory for good planning if the attitudes and culture which permeated the previous application process do not changed fundamentally: e.g. An Bord Pleanála 'Request for Observation' Ref PL.16.207212 dated 23 July '04,

...you are requested to make...observations to the Board in relation to: 1. The general suitability of the Bellanaboy Bridge site for the proposed construction works and the operation of the proposed gas terminal having regard to the nature and extent of the proposal, the characteristics of the receiving environment and the Agency's potential to control emissions through an IPPC Licence during the operational phase"

The EPA response dated 4th August '04 speaks volumes:

"I am to advise that we have yet to receive an application for this activity".

Not only did this not comply with the essence of Integrated Pollution Prevention but failed in relation to requirements of several other European Directives - passive collusion, effectively.

To be specific, prior to commencement of SEPIL activities Carramore Lake had an Oligotrophic classification yet within a very few years it had become strongly Euthrophic. While this was not directly attributable to SEPIL activities, it is indicative of the phenomenon of 'preparatory degradation' evident as precursor to extractive industry activities internationally, and frequently tracable to agencies open to both commercial and State influence or pressure.

Bearing in mind that Carramore Lake SAC is the EU-funded source of drinking water supply for Erris and reputed as "one of the finest lake salmon fisheries nationally and ... internationally" according to the 2005 N W Regional Fisheries Board Report. Furthermore, the same Report noted "generally lower stocks of salmonids than expected for the Ballinaboy River and ... that since 2003 the summer angling season collapsed ... as a direct result of the deterioration in water quality." Note also Annex II, Habitats Directive.

Nevertheless, in 2007 the EPA granted a generous ELV for suspended solids of 5mg/l to be discharged via the Ballinaboy River into Carramore Lake. SEPIL did not challenge that decision then but now, incredibly, it wants suspended solids increased by 600% to 30mg/l. This kind of incremental erosion of already established standards reveals most significantly the aggressive persistence of SEPIL and the fragmented passivity of the protective agencies, in particular the EPA. It is precisely because those agencies claim not to be empowered individually to address the broader context (as adverted to above) that inter-agency integrated approach is so crucial- otherwise extractive industries with their battallions of consultants run rings around them.

No discharge whatsoever should be permitted from this industrial site into so sensitive an environmental asset as Carramore Lake SAC, Erris domestic-water source and salmon fishing resource - but on no account should the original 5mg/l be exceeded. Furthermore, it would be outrageous to sanction an additional two months period of exceptional effluence into this lake merely to facilitate pre-commissioning of the unfinished plant using BGE gas when permission to

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make such discharge into Broadhaven Bay is intrinsic to the plants fully authorized functioning.

Another instance of SEPIL's surreptitious undermining of crucial safeguards is evidenced by the fact that the installation is now acknowledged to be an Upper-Tier SEVESO site. This issue was the subject of intense argument through both written and oral submissions prior to the issuance of the IPPC Licence in 2007. Culmination was reached when the EPA wrongly ignored the recent 2007 ATEX Directive. The situation now requires that either a less explosive hydrate inhibitor be substituted or that the amount of methanol stored on site be very substantially reduced. Bear in mind that there has already been a well-documented very large spill of methanol at wellhead.

Another instance of incremental erosion of already established standards is evidenced by SEPIL's submission in relation to condensate. From the outset SEPIL sought to dispose of condensate by incinerating it in the Heating Medium Heater, regardless of pollution - and despite having a ready supply of 'clean' natural gas at hand. It is clear that incineration remains their objection: in response to EPA Question 9 (Information Requested) SEPIL responded:

"as gas production from the Corrib well has not commenced, no hydrocarbon condensate has been generated on-site. Once the plant is operational and the wells have been flowing for a period of time, the specification of the condensate can be determined. Only then will sufficient information be available for SEPIL to make notification under Article 27 (i) to the Agency".

Effectively this places the cart before the horse by seeking to obtain permission in advance of providing evidential verification. It amounts to surreptitious undermining of crucial safeguards, as adverted to above, and typical of so many other such instances throughout the multiple stages of this project. Off-site disposal of condensate was the standard established after

earlier exhaustive written and oral exchanges. To have that underemined now would be entirely pernicious.

One final example of the myriad instances of incremental erosion of hard-won established standards centres on emissions to air. From an early stage, SEPIL denied that venting of gas would be practised. After much controversy, through written and oral submissions, SEPIL belatedly admitted that venting was indeed intended. Consequent outcry was such that flaring was partially substituted. When the implications of this in turn were teased out and the excessive noise levels of flaring were realised, the EPA oral hearing chairman effectively guillitioned the issue, as clearly recorded on the OH audio tapes. In reply to the current EPA Request for Further Information, Q. 6 in relation to evening noise levels, SEPIL responded, in Appendix E 2.3:

Although the process is designed for daytime and evening use only, operation of the ground flare would be theoretically possible during the night-time.

This again highlights SEPIL's surreptitious undermining of crucial safeguards. By contrast with recent US required practice, even small 'fracking' gasfields must capture rather than vent or flare.

In the interim since the previous Application process, we all have good reason to recognise that the root causes of so many of the ills in our society are down to 'light touch regulation'. We have, likewise, more recently seen that there are a few who are willing to risk great personal adversity in order to set things to right. I am hopeful that the increased awareness of both trends will indeed increasingly hold the line against 'surreptitious undermining of crucial safeguards' and 'incremental erosion of already established standards'. Many people who have put huge effort into ensuring the establishment of such safeguards and standards, depend now on the EPA to protect what has been so painstakingly achieved from 'the aggressive persistence of extractive industry practices' on the one hand; and from 'fragmented passivity of the protective agencies on the other'.

Yours faithfully,

Imelda Moran

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