

Noeleen Keavey

Subject: FW: W0184-02: Submission for Envva License Review

From: Laura Murphy [redacted]
Sent: 11 July 2016 20:43
To: Licensing Staff
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SCANNED
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To Whom it Concerns,

My family and I have been residents of the Abbeyleix Rd. for 28 years. For about 15 years, we have been experiencing very strong, nauseating odours. These odours would appear for a couple of hours at a time and are comparable to a gassy/oily smell. Sometimes, these odours were so strong that all the windows in the house would need to be closed.

Initially, we did not know where these odours were coming from and we rang Laois County Council on occasion to see if they could investigate/stop the odours, but to no avail. My father was told that there was no problem.

In 2001, I started to work only meters away from the plant and stayed in employment there until 2006. During that time, I remember experiencing the smell going to and from work and while in work and thinking 'this smell is so strong, it's literally like an impenetrable wall keeping out all the fresh oxygen'. During that time, there would be what looked to be frequent 'sandstorms' where all the cars in the car-park would be covered in dust. The dust-cover was so thick, I needed to go get the car washed immediately.

I did not make any complaints at this time, as in my naiveté, I assumed this was par for the course when one works in an industrial estate and didn't realise that these odours could, in fact contain harmful and toxic chemicals. I did experience headaches and nausea at this point but put it down to poor vision, intensive computer work and needing glasses.

It was only upon watching the Prime Time Investigates programme that I became aware of the nature of the emissions – that the content of the emissions may be toxic if over legal limits and especially so if ingested over long periods of time. Upon some further investigation on my own behalf, I became aware of the link between these

type of emissions and health effects – from headaches, asthma, nausea, skin irritation to depression, chronic fatigue, cancer, immune related disorders and so on.

Since 2010, I have been experiencing fatigue that got progressively worse as time went by. It got to the point where normal activities were a challenge and while I was still able to work, evenings and weekends were literally spent resting and recovering in order to be able to perform for the next week ahead. Brain fog was debilitating, food allergies and rashes started to appear.

I've been investigating the cause with my GP for approx. last 4 years, but it's proving very difficult to find causation as for all intents and purposes, I am a very healthy individual.

Coupled with this, my mother has been experiencing chronic headaches for the last 10 years, approximately. Again, there has been no causation identified. Also in 2009, she was diagnosed with MS one of the most serious, progressive auto-immune disorders.

These three health conditions have been linked to over exposure to VOC's, hydrocarbons, PAHs and other waste oil products.

Anecdotally, I have also heard reports via neighbours and friends that there seems to be elevated levels of other health issues in nearby areas such as high levels of miscarriages, migraines, headaches, Motor-Neuron disease, Cancer (incl Lung Cancer), Fibromyalgia, Brain Tumours, Eczema, depression and chronic fatigue.

Of course, this may be a coincidence but I cannot but help thinking that if there is even the smallest chance that there is a link between the emissions coming from the Enva plant and elevated levels of illness, that a Health only investigation should be carried out in the areas that are affected – to determine a whether or not there is a causal link, find appropriate treatments if so and most importantly, ensure that the emissions are significantly reduced/eliminated so as to make a safer environment for local residents of Portlaoise and workers within Clonminam industrial estate.

Professor John Crown, one of the leading Oncologists in Ireland who holds professorships in cancer research from UCD and DCU has called for a 'health only focussed investigation' into the matter. He stated in the Senate that there can be environmental and health consequences from hydrocarbon emissions.

- *"The concerns around specific chemicals associated with hydrocarbon disposal are very real. I would urge that an appropriate HEALTH only focussed investigation take place into the data which has been presented by Senator John Whelan"*

He further states *"If we store up real health disasters now, we will have to pay for them later"*.

Councillor Noel Tuohy proposed the following motion at Laois County Council's meeting. It was adopted unopposed.

In proposing the motion Noel stated that *"While accepting the Environmental Imperative to recycle waste oil it was essential this was done in a safe manner.*

The Health of the Employees of the Plant, other workers in the area and residents of Portlaoise has to be safeguarded. In viewing the recent Prime Time Documentary I could only have great concerns that everything at the plant was not as it should be".

Health studies have been undertaken in the US, most recently in Portland, Oregon where a cancer cluster was found in an area around a glass plant who have been involved in similar pollution controversy to Enva.

It is imperative that as a result of this review we know exactly the content and levels of emissions and ensure they are under recommended/legal limits. If a thermal oxidiser is brought in to minimise emissions, we need to ensure that there are no other harmful incidental emissions arising from that and that emissions (as well as the variable contents of the untreated waste oil) are constantly regulated and monitored.

I thank you sincerely, for welcoming submissions from members of the public and look forward to hearing the proposed determination. I do hope it will be fair and safe one for all and that it will include a recommendation to the HSE for a **health only focussed study** in the area.

Yours Sincerely,
Laura Murphy

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