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Rec'd From: Bernie & James Gunning

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***Evidence to EPA Oral Hearing
for
Fingal Landfill Facility at Nevitt, Lusk,
Waste License Proposed Decision
Registration No. WO231-01
Balbriggan, March 2008***

Statement of Evidence by Bernie & James Gunning

Walshestown, Lusk, Co. Dublin

- **Views**

We currently reside, on the west side of the proposed site in a bungalow overlooking the site, which slopes away towards the M1 motorway. Our views, which we have enjoyed for the last 12 years, are of Lambay Island, the Irish Sea, Donabate, Lusk, Irelands Eye and Howth Head. We choose to build a bungalow in order to blend in with the surrounding area taking account of the green belt and high amenity status placed on the area by Fingal County Council, and rightly so. We positioned our property to the corner of the field equally to minimise the impact and choose a bungalow for this reason also, a two-storey dwelling would have given us far better views but we felt this would be to the detriment of the area. We are very aware of the way a landfill is constructed from information we have sourced, along with living so close to Baleally landfill already and the massive banks of soil created around the site. If this landfill goes ahead these soil banks will obliterate our views leaving us with a totally unnatural landscape and removing something, which is irreplaceable.

- **Traffic**

If the proposed landfill goes ahead, the roads we currently use to get our children to Hedgestown School will be closed, forcing us onto more main roads bringing us into contact with vast numbers of heavy trucks transporting waste to the landfill putting the lives of our children and ourselves at much greater risk, not to mention the increase in diesel fumes from these trucks, dust and pollutants brought to the area by them. Noise levels will also increase impacting on our quality of life and health. There is also the traffic

element along the M1 motorway. Currently traffic levels are very high from the port tunnel right along the motorway, if the landfill goes ahead we are told 500 to 600 waste trucks per day will travel along the motorway. Take a scenario of a ferry docking at 3-4pm on a weekday, more trucks will travel via the port tunnel around 4.30-5.00pm, some will turn for the M50, many more will travel north along the M1, merging with waste trucks converging from all directions to the M1. Also, ordinary heavy traffic volumes of commuters also travelling north during the rush hour and a recipe for complete traffic lockup is made.

- **Water**

In the corner of the field where we live, is a Fingal County Council borehole, which is regularly checked by contractors on behalf of the council checking water levels in the underground water table. We have talked to various people who have dipped the borehole over the years and have been told by these people that beneath our land, house and the surrounding area including the proposed site are vast lakes, their words not ours. They have told us that these lakes are a massive potential water supply the likes of which are extremely hard to find in other areas. If this landfill goes ahead and with the best will in the world by Fingal County Council, lechate cannot be guaranteed from reaching this water source poisoning it, rendering it useless to us and future generations.

- **Wildlife**

The wildlife of the surrounding area is diverse to say the least. Badgers, Hedgehogs, Pheasant, Fox, numerous varieties of birds including Hawks which regularly hunt from Hollywood hill down to the M1 motorway over the proposed site. Bats are also visible at the hours of dusk at various times of the year. Poisoning of these creatures is inevitable if this site goes ahead and many of these creatures are currently under threat as it is. Seagulls will also be drawn to the area, not only causing a nuisance with noise and fouling but more importantly a potential risk to aircraft heading towards Dublin airport. The council have stated that the propose site is not on a flight path to Dublin airport, however as residents we see the aircraft approaching the airport everyday and have noticed that depending on wind direction, fog etc. planes have approached the airport directly over the proposed site, we have also seen when there was a recent fire on board a plane at Dublin airport, the airport was closed temporarily and planes were seen to circle the airport waiting instruction to land. This circling involved

flying over the proposed site. This we feel is a major risk not taken into account by the council. They cannot say planes will never cross the site, nobody knows this for a fact not even the Irish Aviation Authority, nor the airport authorities themselves.

- **Archaeology**

We know from studies carried out that an ancient Celtic site sits beneath the land of the proposed development. Experts tell us that the site could potentially be in the same league as Clonmacnoise and no other site of this nature has been found in north county Dublin to date. Similar sites found throughout Europe have been examined and heritage centres created as they have been seen as such crucial national treasures, something we feel should be seriously considered here. A serious mistake was made with Wood Quay many years ago; we lost a vital part of our heritage despite the so-called excavation and examination prior to the building of the monstrous structures now in place. There we gained glass and concrete but lost an irreplaceable link with the past, we feel a second mistake of this nature cannot be allowed to happen.

- **Health**

Nobody can say what chemical reactions take place in a landfill, what gases are produced, what way the wind will blow on a particular day, where leachate containment measures will fail, all of these affecting the health of the local people, not least the children of Hedgestown School who will spend the early years of their life, day in day out on one side or the other of this poisonous mass. Some studies say there is little risk living next to a landfill many more say it is a serious danger to health, whatever the true position is you cannot assume no risk until definitive proof is shown that no risk exists at all. The use of asbestos years ago is evidence of this. No one knew the risks, too late for the cancer victims who have died and are still dying through the past use of this material. At least with asbestos they did not have the technology to know what they were doing; we do but still choose to place financial gain over peoples health and lives.

- **People and Community**

Within this community there is a bond found only in rural areas. Rural communities as we know are dwindling, not least in county Dublin due to the pressures of development in the country. This is a small community where everybody knows everybody and looks out for each other, particularly the elderly of who there are many in

the area. This proposal will rip the heart out of the community, something that cannot be replaced, devastating the lives of both the people who will potentially be evicted from their homes and the people on the periphery who are left behind to suffer the consequences. Baleally, which Lusk has suffered for the last 30 years continues to pollute and poison Rogerstown estuary will, if this proposal is allowed to happen continue the destruction of another part of Lusk and which is of some of the most fertile and beautiful landscape in the whole of the island of Ireland.

- The council gave assurances that after Baleally closed no more dumps would open in Lusk. A council that will say anything to have its way has broken this commitment by the mere planning application.

Thanking you Mr. Chairman,

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