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Corrib Onshore Gas Pipeline Community Update

Inside:

Update on onshore pipeline application process

Background to onshore pipeline application

What consents are required for the onshore pipeline?

Route options

Construction methodology options

Impacts associated with construction

How can the public make submissions / observations in regard to the request for further information?

Feedback

Update on onshore pipeline application process

On November 2, 2009, An Bord Pleanála (ABP) wrote to Shell E&P Ireland Limited (SEPIL) requesting further information with respect to SEPIL's application, under the Strategic Infrastructure Act (SIA), for a modified onshore pipeline route.

In the letter, An Bord Pleanála stated that, in light of the strategic national importance of the project and its advanced stage of completion, its provisional view was that "it would be appropriate to approve the proposed onshore pipeline development should alterations be made to the proposed development."

Additionally, SEPIL was invited to modify the route so that it would be in Sruwaddacon Bay.

Since November, SEPIL has been working closely with independent consultants, RPS, assessing the various options open to it in responding to An Bord Pleanála's request and gathering the additional information necessary for the response.

In January, RPS wrote, on SEPIL's behalf, to An Bord Pleanála indicating that good progress was being made in responding positively to the Board's letter. Some additional time was sought to prepare a full response, which is now scheduled to be submitted by May 31, 2010.



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Background to onshore pipeline application

In February 2007, SEPIL appointed RPS to undertake a route selection process. RPS proposed an initial list of eight potential route options and later refined this to a short-list of three, before finally selecting a preferred route, which struck the optimum balance between environmental, community and technical considerations.

During the route selection process, there was widespread consultation with the community. The concerns raised during this extensive public consultation process were noted and taken into account, where appropriate, in the preparation of the Environmental Impact Statement.

An application, under the Strategic Infrastructure Act, for a revised onshore pipeline route was submitted to An Bord Pleanála in February 2009, and an oral hearing took place over 19 days, over a six-week period in May and June 2009.

What consents are required for the onshore pipeline?

Approval for the onshore pipeline is required from the following statutory bodies:

- An Bord Pleanála: under the Planning and Development (Strategic Infrastructure) Act 2006
- The Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources: under the Gas Act 1976
- The Foreshore Unit of the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government: The Foreshore Acts 1933-2005

SEPIL also submitted applications in 2009 under the Gas Act and the Foreshore Act. These applications will be resubmitted as a result of the changes resulting from An Bord Pleanála's request for a route modification.

The Corrib Offshore EIS and the 2009 Supplementary Update Report will also be subject to revision to reflect the current status of the project.

Route options

In its letter of November 2009, An Bord Pleanála invited SEPIL to route the onshore pipeline through Sruwaddacon Bay between Glengad and Aughoose. In seeking to comply with the Board's direction, SEPIL and its consultants have been studying the alternative route options available.

Construction methodology options

There are in general two options for constructing the bay section of the pipeline: an open-cut trenched method through the bay or a trenchless tunnelling technique under the bay. Combinations of the two methods would also be possible.

These options are undergoing detailed assessment in order to arrive at a preferred solution and to prepare the necessary changes to the Onshore Pipeline EIS.

Impacts associated with construction

There are a number of potential impacts associated with the construction of a pipeline through the bay, among them:

- Traffic
- Noise
- Light
- Visual disturbance

These impacts are in general temporary in nature. As part of the ongoing studies, SEPIL is seeking to identify possible ways of minimising and/or mitigating these impacts, a process which will be reflected in the revised EIS, where appropriate.

Please complete this feedback form. When you are done please, detach, seal and freepost.

Feedback Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Email Address: _____

Please tick this box if you would like to participate in an organised group meeting in April 2010.

Tell us your views:

How can the public make submissions/observations in regard to An Bord Pleanála's request for further information?

SEPIL has been requested to prepare and submit a revised EIS with the response for further information. It is anticipated that once this revised EIS has been submitted there will be a period of consultation where written submissions and observations on the new information can be made. Following this period of statutory consultation it is possible that An Bord Pleanála's oral hearing on the application will be re-opened.

Feedback

SEPIL seeks the views of the community in relation to these proposals, so as to understand concerns people may have in relation to them and to respond to any queries that may arise. There are a number of possible ways in which you can participate in this engagement process:

- By filling in and returning the attached feedback form before April 16th
- By logging onto the online facility at www.corribgaspipeline.com and completing the form online
- By participating in an organised group meeting. Simply contact 097 20720 if you would like to be part of one of these sessions.