

Additional Information - Corrib Onshore Pipeline - ABP Oral Hearing June 2009

RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS FROM NATIONAL PARKS AND WILDLIFE SERVICE (NPWS), DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT, HERITAGE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT (NPWS, DOEHLG) QUESTIONS (11TH JUNE 2009)

NPWS Question no.12: *What assessment has been made of a potential impact of a bog slide on habitats within the SAC?*

SEPIL Response

Pursuant to a request on 09 June 2009 from the Inspector chairing the An Bord Pleanála (ABP) Oral Hearing, an assessment of the relative potential for peat failure along the proposed pipeline route has been undertaken by AGECC. The findings of this assessment are detailed in the AGECC submission entitled 'Corrib Onshore Pipeline, Additional Information (June 2009)'. The geotechnical assessment of the relative potential of peat failure using a qualitative approach included environmental factors such as ground conditions, topography, water conditions, stability analysis assuming weak sub-peat conditions, peat slide history and land use.

The findings of the geotechnical assessment delineated areas of low, medium and high potential for peat failure as shown in Drawing No. 001 of the AGECC report. The direction of potential failure tracks are also annotated on this drawing.

This submission addresses the potential impact of a peat failure on qualifying habitats within the cSAC. This submission should not be read in isolation, but must be considered in conjunction with the AGECC submission which is referenced above.

For the purpose of their analysis AGECC divided the pipeline route in 19 Sections (Section 1, Section 2, etc) based on similar terrain characteristics.

In terms of the cSAC:

- Section 6 and Section 7 (AGECC Drawing No. 001) have been classified as low potential for peat failure. This includes the proposed route areas which lie to the south of Flush number 1. The potential failure tracks along this part of the route are in a general north north-easterly direction, (*i.e.* towards the flush). The potential impact on the flush or other cSAC blanket bog habitats is considered to be insignificant because of the distance between the flush and the pipeline route and the recorded shallow ground slopes in the intervening area. In the very unlikely event of a peat failure along Section 6 or Section 7 and if either suspended sediment or a fluidised peat flow reach the Flush, the impact is likely to be transient, and subsequently the habitat will recover albeit slowly.
- Section 8 is classified as being of medium potential for peat failure and comprises: a short section (c. 50m) of blanket bog classified as intact, an eroded

section (c. 100m.), and approximately 20m of cutover bog. The potential failure track at this location is south westerly towards Sruwaddacon Bay. Other than the very unlikely potential disruption of a small area of intact bog, there would therefore be no other impact on qualifying habitats in the cSAC. Potential impacts on the Bay may be considered as moderate and temporary, the tidal nature of the Bay enabling rapid recovery. (Please refer to the Marine Environment sections of the EIS and Witness Statement of Mr. Ian Wilson.) The estuarine habitats of the Bay are not qualifying habitats for the cSAC.

Section 9

- Potential failure tracks in Section 9 are south westerly - towards Sruwaddacon Bay, but the relative peat failure potential is low. No qualifying habitats for the cSAC are present in the Bay and the potential impact on the pSPA is considered to be insignificant.

Non-designated sections

- Within the non-SAC area of the Commonage to the west of RDX2, the majority of the potential failure tracks annotated on the AGECE drawing No 001 are in a northerly direction, *i.e.* away from the cSAC (Sruwaddacon Bay) and towards the undesignated commonage sections to the north of the proposed route. All Sections (Sections 1 to 9 excluding Section 2) are of relative low peat failure potential with the exception of Section 2 which is of high potential as discussed in the AGECE submission.
- South of the Bay, and to the north of the L1202, Sections 12 to 15 are of medium potential for peat failure. The potential failure tracks are towards the Bay. Potential impacts on the Bay from these areas may be considered as moderate and temporary, the tidal nature of the Bay enabling rapid recovery. (Please refer to the Marine Environment sections of the EIS and Witness Statement of Mr. Ian Wilson.) The estuarine habitats of the Bay are not qualifying habitats for the cSAC.
- Sections 10 and 11, to the south of the upper crossing, are shown by AGECE to be of low potential for peat failure.