

## **EPA Oral Hearing**

**Closing Submission – 01/03/05**

### **Cobh Action for Clean Air**

Inspector, on behalf of our community group, Cobh Action for Clean Air, I would like to thank you for your guidance throughout this process. You have been thoughtful and considerate to all the groups.

This has been of some assistance to us, even though we haven't always heard what we believe is necessary to advancing what we view as core difficulties with the proceedings. Obviously you have a job of work to do, but so do we. We have stayed engaged so that we can raise what we believe are the key concerns of our community. These may not fit into your brief but it raises fundamental questions about the limitations of the enquiry when it cannot, it seems, include the concerns of one of the significant players, the community, within its frame of reference.

The purpose of the enquiry is to explore and expand the objections which can be then added to the existing information to make an informed decision about the granting or refusal of a waste license. The worries of the community expected to bear this facility must then be considered relevant. If this cannot be done, a more sophisticated model of enquiry is appropriate as public confidence in the process is fundamental if communities are to have any trust in the state's motivation for an enquiry in the first instance.

### **The Cobh Group concerns**

I would again remind you that the community of Cobh have specific questions for the EPA. Namely: was Cobh, with its population of 14000 people and rapidly growing, considered by the EPA when it made its assessment of vulnerable populations in the event of accident at the Indaver site at Ringaskiddy. This question still concerns us and we would like an answer.

Again I remind the Board of the very restricted access on and off the Island – it is by a narrow, humpback bridge. We again ask the Board or your good self to inspect the bridge before making a final decision about its viability as the main access off the Island in the event of a major incident or accident which may require the rapid evacuation of the residents of the Great Island.

I believe it would be useful to commission a report from the Garda Siochana and emergency services to enquire what their views would be should they have to manage such an evacuation. I believe you and the Board have a duty to be fully satisfied that communities who may have to live with such facilities have their safety requirements treated seriously. In fact I think it might help the Board to ask the same question of the Garda Siochana at Carrigaline, who in the event of a major incident would be faced with the enormous task of perhaps evacuating the villagers of Ringaskiddy, the students and staff at the Maritime College, workers at the various factories, not to forget the traffic that leaves the ferry port at Ringaskiddy during Holiday periods.

We believe this warrants further enquiry. We obviously cannot submit any further material but Inspector you have to be satisfy yourself and can if you wish obtain further information if you deem it necessary. These are the legitimate concerns of the community, who have asked how the Board reached its decision about the safe evacuation of the population Cobh, in the event of a major accident .

Cobh have asked for a specific response either from yourself, Inspector, or directly from Ms Kelly about the progress of her communication with the Department of Health re. her letter concerning the lack of monitoring of the health of communities living near incinerators. She in her capacity as director general of your organization has raised this as a serious query with the Department and its outcome has a direct bearing on our well-being.

We would ask that you Inspector, when writing your report, make a baseline health study central to any recommendations you make as without it this community is vulnerable to any other predatory, opportunistic companies who seek their own economic advantage with no concern for the health of the local population. We would ask for a moratorium on mass commercial incineration until all such baseline studies are complete and a system for ongoing monitoring of the health of the population has been established.

Finally, Inspector, Mr Aherne's comments to the local media were somewhat of a surprise to me. He said that he had learned nothing new at this Hearing. We however learned from Dr O Callaghan that Indaver did not carry out a risk assessment on health which includes worse case impacts as recommended as standard by the EPA. Dr O Callaghan wanted us to believe that risk assessment referred to upper limits of the license, not to breaches of the license. His evidence left me horrified that I might have to rely on him to give an accurate account of any risk that may occur in the event of a major accident in the future. If this is the public face of expert reassurance that INDAVER SEEKS TO GIVE TO MY COMMUNITY, then may God help us as Indaver will certainly not. Dr ten Tusscher's research is now showing children presenting with significant medical problems below the permitted levels of exposure to dioxin and other contaminants. We also learned from Dr Staines that in Indaver's EIS the section about impacts on humans is inadequate. I could go on .

But this brings me to what for me and the community I represent is the essential problem we have with this company, the fact that we don't trust them. Remember this is the company who wanted to introduce a new source for waste at the Planning Oral Hearing, waste from Northern Ireland. They said this was to fulfil their obligations under the Good Friday Agreement. When they realized they had stretched the credulity of the community too far they withdrew this. Of course we all know that with the free movement of goods among EU countries they can do it anyway and they have a magnificent port facility to make this even easier. This company were asked to withdraw their planning application and reapply under the new planning act where consideration could be given to our health and the environment. This company who claim they want to be a good neighbour, when asked to reapply said no.

There are other issues we have with the company Inspector but what is relevant for the hearing and for the Board to know is that this company have never attempted to address the very serious worries we have, when they had opportunities to do so they

did not and it is now too late. We ask that you please include this matter of trust or the lack of trust we have in this company when making your own evaluations. We will continue to oppose Indaver until they finally get the message that we will never accept this facility in Cork Harbour.

Inspector you will hopefully be convinced by the experts who have turned out to support us, the strength of the communities opposition, the lack of trust in the company and finally the justice of our case.

Thank you for your attention .