

**EPA Oral Hearing
Summation by Audrey Hogan
for Ringaskiddy & District Residents Association Ltd.**

I would like to thank Dr. Derhem for the respect and courtesy he has shown us over the past days. Particularly when it came to facilitating our speakers. I would like to extend that thanks to Mr. Owens and to the various members of the E.P.A. administrative staff who have been here.

Like others we were disappointed that the Bord of the agency did not see fit to attend. Especially Dr. Mary Kelly who at one stage was only 15 minutes away. Even though CHASE did offer to pay her taxi fare.

I came here wondering if I would learn anything new. Would any of the fears that the residents in Ringaskiddy have be put to rest? To my dismay I find if anything they are now worse.

I listened to evidence given by Mr. Ahern while he sat in front of a distorted picture of his site in Ringaskiddy. I had to sit and listened to his half-truths and his untruths.

He did tell the truth on one occasion when “He said that Ringaskiddy was not a soft touch.” You got that one right. And there is still no sign of Apathy. But you must have known this site was wrong. Otherwise why would you arrive with a P.R. machine, Arup consultant’s, AWN consultants and Arthur Cox barristers?

Four years ago the Ringaskiddy Residents Association were asked would we go to Maryborough House Hotel and meet with a company that wanted to locate in Ringaskiddy.

We met with Mr. Ahern and Ms. Burke who outlined their plans for 2 incinerators in Ringaskiddy.

We looked at their proposal and told Mr. Ahern that he would never be able to sell this to the people of Ringaskiddy. We were right:

- He could not sell his incinerators to the people of Ringaskiddy.
- He could not sell them to the people of Cork.
- He could not sell them to the democratically elected members of Cork County Council.
- He could not sell them to Mr. Philip Jones an independent senior-planning inspector with An Bord Pleanala.
- And I sincerely hope to God Dr. Derehman that he has not sold them to you.

I am not a technical person but as Minister McDowell famously said “I know what I know”. You do not have to be a technical expert to have local knowledge.

It does not matter how many experts Indaver trot out here. I as a person who has lived most of my life in or around the Ringaskiddy area know that this site is not suitable.

Mr. Ahern stated that someone deliberately flooded his site. Mr. Ahern no one deliberately flooded your site. It was the hand of GOD.

This site as anyone in Ringaskiddy could have told you is prone to flooding. This site at one time was used as a soccer pitch. I can remember soccer matches being called off because the players would be more inclined to play water polo than soccer. In October this site had its latest flooding. I went down to the site and I can tell you the destruction was there for all to see. The force of the tide was so strong that it removed the tarmac from the council car park and drove stones up onto the road heading towards Haulbowline.

Mr. Ahern stated his site was not about to fall into the sea. There is severe coastal erosion. You only have to stand on the beach in Gobby and touch the cliff. It will crumble with the touch of your hand. A local landlord who had horses on that field had to get up in the middle of the night after a storm and reset fencing posts as they were about to fall into the sea.

We have heard evidence here from both sides. In the case of Indaver it should be remembered that he who pays the piper calls the tune. It does not matter how you dress it up a dirty filthy incinerator is still a dirty filthy incinerator.

I have yet to hear of any sound evidence of an economic nature as to why these incinerators have to be built. The commercial viability of these incinerators has yet to be established.

Who would be the beneficiaries?

Glaxo SmithKline I doubt it? They have told the Ringaskiddy Residents that they are hoping to have nothing coming off site within the next few years.

Novartis I doubt it? At the moment they have about 2,700 tons coming off site that goes abroad most of that goes for recovery.

Pfizer's I doubt it? They are actively looking at plans for their own in house one.

Certainly not for the people of Ringaskiddy.

Let us be quite clear about who we would be building these incinerators for.

They would be built so that Indaver a Belgian owned company can make vast profits?

There was mention of a planning condition, which would exclude the importation of waste. Come to Ringaskiddy and I will show you that planning conditions are never enforced. And the licences are broken on a daily basis.

We would still not be self-sufficient, as we would still be exporting many types of waste after these incinerators have been built. As well as the hazardous ash.

Indaver's favourite mantra

60% of the waste is created in Cork.

If 60% of the people of Cork got sick would you build a big hospital and put them in it.

No you would not. You would go and find out what is making them sick, you would go to the source. The E.P.A. should refuse this licence. Government should go to the source and instruct the producers to stop producing, use cleaner technology.

People have to come before profit.

People's health has to come before profit.

We are citizens of this state and as such have rights enshrined in our constitution. In turn we are citizens of Europe and as such we have rights under the European Convention of Human Rights.

We as a community have done more for the common good than any other community. We now say ENOUGH IS ENOUGH. This proposal is a proposal too far. We refuse to be labelled and I quote from Mr. Walters's evidence "a sacrifice zone". We ask in the interest of the common good that this licence be rejected.

The whole of the country seems to have benefited from the industrialisation of Ringaskiddy but I tell you Ringaskiddy itself or its residents have not.

Harbour communities have been abused for years by the relevant authorities. Ringaskiddy is not only abused by it has been abandoned.

Every one here seems to have mentioned at one stage the W.H.O. and the W.H.O. health guidelines.

The W.H.O. has defined health. Its definition of health is.

Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.

Under Irish legislation the E. P. A. are immune to prosecution. Ireland is being threatened time and time again by the E.U. Commission. The E.U. Commission is threatening to take Ireland to court as it continually fails to protect its citizens. Do we have to go cap in hand to the E.U. Commission because the state agencies in this country are not going to protect its citizens?

We have heard expert evidence about Dioxins the fact that there is no safe level. We also heard evidence on particulate matter and that air pollution is responsible for 310,000 premature deaths in Europe. Lost life expectancy is worst in Belgium the home country of Indaver.

There has been much talk about risk. The fact that we take risks in our every day lives driving flying etc. These are risks people take by choice. These incinerators will be imposed upon us and as a community we are not willing to accept the risks that go with them.

We have heard evidence that incineration does not eliminate waste but change the form of waste into hazardous air emissions and toxic ash.

If a licence is granted it would allow different dioxin compounds, mercury, cadmium, nitrous oxide, hydrogen chloride, sulphuric acid and particulate matter small enough to lodge permanently in the lungs.

Fact: GARBAGE IN equals GARBAGE OUT.

We have heard expert medical evidence about the health hazards that would come with these incinerators. I feel it would be prudent for the E.P.A. to heed the doctor's advice on this one. Refuse the licence.

Japan operates the most number of waste incinerators of any country in the world. The country however also has the dubious distinction of having the highest levels of dioxin emission in the environment. According to independent studies communities living around and downwind of incinerators in Japan have been documented to have higher rates of cancer, birth defects and infant mortality compared to incinerator free areas.

There are several other factors that have to be taken into consideration when making a decision about this licence.

They are:

- The road infrastructure is inadequate - these incinerators will be situated on a site adjacent to a dirt track at the end of a cul de sac.
- It would be a threat to public safety
- No adequate emergency services in case of an emergency
- The severe coastal erosion
- The historical flooding of the site
- The thermal inversions that occur in Cork harbour
- The inadequacy of the E.I.S.
- The fact that the H.S.A. letter can not be relied upon because 6 months before construction they will have to go out and do another report to determine whether this site would be Saveso 1 or 2. I would hope that this time they would use independent information and not take instruction from the applicant. If it turns out to be the higher tier then this whole hearing will have been a mockery.
- There is no public trust or confidence in this company. The company does not possess sufficient training, experience or knowledge to operator these incinerators. The managing Director has said they were sorry for poisoning the people of Antwerp for 3 weeks he said it happen because they forgot what they were doing.
- There was no proper risk assessment done that took into account any interaction with human beings.
- No baseline health study. We would not know the effects of this for another 15 – 20 years.
- The W.H.O. guidelines were not adhered to.
- The E.P.A.s own guidelines were not adhered to.
- The E.P.A. by there own admission is under funded and under resourced. Its budget has been cut and it is almost bursting at the seams with the amount of new projects coming on stream. Letting someone self-monitor would be like letting the lunatics take over the asylum.

The Environmental Licencing Protection of the Environment Act 2003 states that the

applicant for a licence will have to meet the proper requirements of a “fit and proper person”. Taking into account the evidence that we have heard over the past days, it is our opinion that Indaver do not meet the requirement of being a fit and proper person.

Under the waste management act 1996 the E.P.A. is responsible for the licensing of all-significant waste recovery and disposal facilities. Up to the end of December 2003 (and those are the latest figures I have) the agency received 239 applications for waste licensing. The agency rejected only ONE. I am now urging the inspector to recommend to the board that they now reject TWO.

I would respectfully ask the Bord when it has made its decision that they have regard for the people that have asked for this oral hearing. Indaver did not ask for this oral hearing. I would ask that the board notify the objectors of their decision on this licence first. We do not want to read about on the front page of the Irish Times. Neither do we want a telephone call 25 minutes after Pat Kenny has finished interviewing John Ahern on national radio.

I have quoted one of Corks favourite sons at a previous oral hearing. I am going to quote him again here today.

In his book Keane “THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY” when asked about his roots said: “Like most Cork people I am inordinately proud of my roots. When asked about their origins Cork people invariably reply with a mischievous grin, ‘Irish by birth: Cork by the grace of God.’”

It does not matter how much money you have at your disposal. No amount of money can buy the passion that the people of Cork have. We told Indaver 4 years ago that they would never be welcome in Ringaskiddy that their proposal was a proposal too far.

If it takes another 4 years we will still be giving the same message your are not wanted, your not needed and you will never be welcome. We have told Indaver in more ways than one and in many different forums. That they will not be welcome.

There seems to be a communication problem between Indaver and the greater population of Cork Harbour. Or maybe it is a compression problem. They do not understand words like unbidden, unwanted, unnecessary, unwelcome, unsafe or unacceptable.

I have been given the privilege of having the last words here today.

These words are NEVER NEVER NEVER EVER.