

Appendix 11.1

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Note of Meetings with Commercial Fishing Interests



# **Preesall Underground Gas Storage Facility**

## **Note of Meetings with Commercial Fishing Interests**

### **1. Background**

On the 10<sup>th</sup> August 2011, meetings were held with commercial fishermen and fishery regulators in Fleetwood to discuss the potential effects of the project on commercial fishing activity in the area.

This note summarises the key issues arising from these meetings.

### **2. Meetings held**

Several meetings were held, as follows:-

Gary Mitchinson	Skipper, FV Albion
Steve Welsh	Fleetwood Fishermen's Association
A local fish merchant	
A local fisherman	
Steve Brown	Fishery Officer, North West Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority (NWIFCA)
Andrew Newland	Fishery Officer, Marine Management Organisation (Blackpool)

### **3. Key issues**

The main points which were raised during discussions are summarised below.

- **Direct physical effects of the project on commercial fishing activity are unlikely.** In summary
  - There is no commercial fishing in the Wyre estuary.
  - The trawlers operating off the Fylde coast do not fish in the area that will be occupied by the outfall (the GPS plotter of the main vessel operating in this area has been inspected to confirm this).
  - There is some shrimp fishing (using push nets) at locations along the Fylde coast which may be affected during the construction of the sea outfall, and which could be affected if burial is not successful.
  
- **Effects of the brine discharge on commercial fish stocks are a concern.** The effect of brine on fish and ecosystems is the main concern associated with the project. There is concern that the brine will kill fish, and that its effects may be felt over a large area and that a pool of dense brine will accumulate on the seabed in the vicinity of the outfall, causing acute local effects.
  - **Modelling** of the brine plume dispersal was not trusted by the stakeholders, and there was doubt over the likely geographic extent of the area likely to be affected.
  - **Nursery areas** for plaice, sole and rays are thought to be in the vicinity of the outfall.
  
- **Water movement** - the effect of the outfall on water movement in the inshore area is a concern, particularly as there is doubt that the outfall is likely to be buried effectively. (This view stems from the recently built Rossall Point outfall, which was not successfully

buried as planned, and has had to be rock armoured. This is considered to have had a considerable effect on the local area).

- **Impacts on recreational fisheries were felt to be likely.** The inshore area between the areas that are trawled and the Fylde coast are popular with anglers fishing from boats and from the shore.
  - There are recreational fisheries in this area for cod, codling, bass, plaice, and rays.
  - The local NWIFCA fishery officer reports counting over 300 anglers and over 100 angling boats operating in this inshore area on one day.
  - There are well organised local angling clubs who the commercial fishermen feel should be consulted over this project.
- There were some concerns about the capacity of the Fleetwood Fish Dock to provide sufficient volume of water for the project.
- Throughout the discussions, particular concern was raised about:-
  - Geology - the suitability of the area for the project (arising from a perception of the unstable local geology).
  - Pollution - concerns were also raised about the risk of pollutants that had allegedly been disposed of underground in the past being discharged to the sea as a result of this project.
- Fishermen were willing to provide “guard duty” services for the project as a means of offsetting commercial losses that they might incur from impacts on the fish stocks in the area.
- One fishing industry representative was particularly keen to encourage alternative options to the discharge of brine to the sea. He asked the Applicant to consider whether salt could be produce from the project for sale, and also whether this activity could be integrated with the electricity produced by the proposed Wyre electricity generating barrage.

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