

Appendix 9.19

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Natural England Consultation – Mitigation Licences



Date: 04 October 2011

Our ref: CCLP/21

Your ref:



Keith Budinger  
Halite Energy Group Limited  
Unit 5, St Georges Court  
St Georges Park  
Kirkham  
Lancashire  
PR4 2EF

Kathryn Murray  
c/o Natural England  
First Floor  
Temple Quay House  
2 The Square  
Bristol  
BS1 6EB

T 0300 060 1917  
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Dear Mr Budinger

**Re: Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project for Gas Storage Facilities at Preesall, Lancashire,**  
**Natural England reference CCLP/21**

**Developer:** Halite Energy Group Limited

**Consultant:** David Hoare, Principle Consultant – Environment, Hyder Consulting

**EPS mitigation licences required under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010:**

Bats and great crested newts

**Other protected species licences required:** N/A

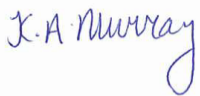
Natural England has been informed that Halite Energy Group Limited will shortly be submitting an application to the Infrastructure Planning Commission (IPC) for a Development Consent Order (DCO) in respect of the proposed underground Gas Storage Facilities in Preesall, Lancashire. This letter clarifies Natural England's position with regard to European Protected Species (EPS) licences which would be required in relation to your proposals.

For Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects which require protected species licences, Natural England would normally review draft licence applications **before** the development application is submitted to the IPC. Once content that the licence applications are of the required standard, we would issue a 'letter of comfort' to the developer which could be included in the application pack to the IPC. Such letters of comfort are designed to provide the IPC with confidence that the competent licensing authority is satisfied that a licence can be issued, subject to the DCO being granted by the IPC. Following the granting of a DCO, the developer would then formally apply for the licences, based on the draft application already considered, which would then be issued without delay. It should be noted that if circumstances on site have changed, or timings to proposed works have changed, then the onus would then be on the developer to provide Natural England with a modified licence application, including updated survey information if necessary, which would enable Natural England to issue the final licence.

With respect to the Gas Storage proposals at Preesall, we understand that as you wish to submit your application to the IPC imminently the timeframes associated with the process outlined above are now unrealistic. Given the above process is relatively new, we propose in this instance to work with both yourselves and Hyder Consulting with a view to issuing required letters of comfort as soon as possible, following submission of your application to the IPC. With that in mind I would suggest that you submit the draft mitigation licence applications (for bats and great crested newts) to Natural England within 3 months of submitting your application to the IPC and, at the very latest, prior to the conclusion of the 'pre-examination' period of the IPC application process. We would ask that you inform us when you submit your application to the IPC and your expected timetable for submitting draft species applications so we can manage our resources to enable a timely assessment process and to facilitate the required licensing assessments. Please mark all correspondence 'For the attention of Kathryn Murray and John Gordon'.

Please note that Natural England seeks to reassure the IPC that our decision to provide this 'holding letter' to you does not in any way set a precedent for other cases.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "K.A. Murray". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped 'y' at the end.

Dr Kathryn Murray

Senior Specialist – European Protected Species Licensing  
0300 060 1917