

Ceathrú Thaidhg,  
Béal an Átha,<sup>i</sup>  
Co. Mhaigh Eo.

02/06/2008

**To:- Department of Communications, Energy & Natural Resources,  
Petroleum Affairs Division,  
Leeson Lane  
Dublin 2.**

a chara,

**Re. Application by Shell E & P Ireland Ltd. to An Bord Pleanála for approval for a strategic upstream pipeline and associated facilities, structures and site development works in the townlands of Glengad, Rosduagh, Aghoose, Bellagelley South, Co. Mayo, submitted by RPS Group on their behalf and dated May 1st 2008.**

The following is a comment on the above application from members of the public directed to the Minister as provided for in the relevant regulations.

### **Bringing Corrib Gas to Market.**

#### **A Logical Development?**

1996 Enterprise Oil and its partners made a substantial gas discovery that they called *Corrib*, off the N.W. Mayo coast. As the North and West coasts of Mayo have very low population densities, the area offered a great variety of possible routes to bring the gas ashore in a safe sustainable way and to prepare it for market.

*The job to be done was*

- i. Bring the gas to where it would be processed;*
- ii. Send it to market.*

Not an unusual job, routine one could say.

Much of the North and West coasts of Mayo has a hinterland of blanket bog with a pre-Cambrian geology so that the population is concentrated in pockets of arable land, much of it reclaimed bog, surrounded by areas of blanket bog, similar to islands surrounded by sea. Obviously it was easy to apply the normal engineering solution to the dangers inherent in high pressure pipelines: that is to use *separation* to maximise the safety of the receiving population as far as possible, as the gas companies' always put safety first. Don't they?

This is what the Enterprise Oil-led engineers came up with:-

1. a pipeline to bring the gas to land, coming through the length of the 10Km Broadhaven Bay, a candidate SAC, a breeding place for dolphins and the site of valuable marine grasses, an important fishing area;

2. a pipeline that requires the destruction of the nesting place of the migratory sand martin at the landfall;
3. the pipeline to come ashore in a "*Priority Habitat*", a protected habitat under EU legislation, and travelling through it for 1 Km. This Habitat is directly under Glengad Hill, an area known to be prone to landslides, the last major in September '03;
4. the pipeline to cross the mouth of an SPA, a remarkably swift current;
5. the pipeline then travels for 4 Kms or so through the only arable/grazing land in Rosport South, 10 meters from and parallel to the only local road through which the community communicates and within 70 meters of dwelling houses; parallel to and draining into the SPA; this land is largely bog reclaimed by hand using sod drains, something that will never again be done - a farming archaeological feature; disturbed bog does not re-constitute;
6. the pipeline then does a right-angle turn, crosses into an SAC in a huge arc through deep bog, crosses the SPA again;
7. the pipeline then carries on through State-owned forestry to the processing plant (called "terminal" by the developer, a "refinery" by the EPA.);
8. The processing plant is chosen 9 Km inland in a deep unstable bog (30' or more) that drains into Carrowmore Lake, a salmon angling lake and the only source of drinking water for the 8,000 inhabitants of Erris;
9. the peat to be removed from the footprint and scattered between the trees on the site;
10. the hydraulics of the site are not considered;
11. the processing plant site is in the middle of the parish, like a marble on a plate, in the centre of a long-settled community;
12. the waste-pipe from the plant disgorges into the Bay: [later changed under pressure from residents and fishermen to the mouth of Broadhaven Bay at a spot that the developer admits has a current (a tow in our language) that comes back into the bay];
13. the gas, condensate, pollutants etc have a potential operating pressure of 345 BARg.: maximum pressure allowed in Ireland 84 BARg [*Commercial Handbook* Dept. of Natural Resources].
14. so as to reach the minimum design factor of 0.72 the pipeline wall is to be 27.1 mm in thickness - although the designers say [QRA] that there is no evidence that any wall thickness above 19 mm makes any contribution to safety. Crossing the public road and the bay and river crossing, the design factor remains at 0.72 in breach of the basic and normal requirement of standard engineering codes that this must be a minimum of 0.3 - to achieve this required D.F. would require a pipe wall thickness of 61 mm! (QRA)
15. no derogation is sought from the EU for breaches of SAC and SPA;
16. the designers involved did not lose their jobs: the project is already 7 years behind schedule. One wonders why?.<sup>ii</sup>
17. **Strange 1:-** The designers originally seem to have chosen 3 final sites for consideration that avoided land and marine SACs and SPAs : no explanation for change;
18. **Strange 2:-** No analysis of alternative sites for comparative purposes given by designers even when **required** to do so by An Bord Pleanála Inspector;
19. **Strange 3:-** Downstream pipeline to market announced by partners including the Prime Minister and the State Gas Board, before project is declared commercial or before planning permission is applied for siting of processing plant;

20. **Strange 4:-** In early September 2000 the Taoiseach introduces S.I. 110 which removes this pipeline (upstream) from the remit of the Department that oversees all other pipelines in the jurisdiction (Enterprise) and transfers responsibility to Minister Fahy at the Dept. of the Marine: followed immediately by Strange 3.

The above puts this application in context. We, members of the local community, immediately saw the problems introduced by this crazy proposal and we brought them repeatedly to the attention of the relevant Department and to those politically responsible for the project. (We also saw the absence of advantage for the area but that did not surprise us.) Eight years on, the issues remain the same :-

1. inordinate pressure, an upstream pipeline complex in a residential area - a residential area in a ribbon pattern as Rosport is, is considered an "urban" area in human geography terms in many of the jurisdictions where Shell and Statoil operate: this would reduce the pressure allowed to a max 16 BARg, under Irish regulations.
2. no escape from Rosport in an emergency and everyday events, from the USA to Algeria to Belgium to Buncefield to Java to Nigeria attest to the reality that gas pipelines explode and ignite and life or death at that moment depends on where one happens to be - purely an accident of location;

3. no fire service of required standard - this has again been made clear by the recent bog fire in the Glenamoy area just east of the proposed refinery complex that burned for 4 days steady;

4. no local physical infrastructure - all roads built on bog.

5. Proximity of houses and especially people's work places in field and bog, to the pipeline - there is no shelter in case of an 'incident' as the area is open bog.

6. Proximity of road, the internal communication line for the community, to the pipeline: also the beach and shoreline of Sruth Mhada Conn, especially when we discovered the Carlsbad tragedy - 200+ meters from the 'incident' at pressures of 45 BARg in empty desert but 12 are incinerated - wrong place to camp at the wrong time;

7. The fragility of the Glengad range of hills: the land slid along the entire range on both aspects Sept. 19th 2003 - the evening of the day the Taoiseach was visited by a Shell, Statoil and Marathon delegation of heavies seeking their pound of flesh (should that be a dollar?) (Freedom of Information). Even nature was appalled.

8. The dangers of pollution (chemical and noise= constant 24 hour thud of huge compressors in a quiet area) of blast and fire from the refinery itself, from waste and chemical storage.

9. Project Splitting:- In order to put down a marker to planners, by showing them where the political wind blows, a practice has developed in Ireland, as everyone knows, to split projects into what can be imaginatively seen as its component parts. In its crudest form a developer jumps the gun and builds before full planning permission is got or alternatively knocks down a building or destroys a habitat before the authorities pre-act to stop the vandalism. The present practice is more sophisticated as some developers have been punished but some still get away with it. In the case of the Corrib project "project splitting" reached a new level. In early October 2000 the then relevant Minister and the Taoiseach with An Bord Gáis and the developers Statoil, Enterprise Oil (now Shell) and Marathon held a press conference announcing the agreement by An Bord Gáis to finance and build the downstream pipeline to bring the gas from Ballinaboy to join the national

grid at Creachmhaoil in the constituency of the relevant Minister - in effect a new and major subsidy for the project. This announced the cart to bring the piggy to market and also the market itself, majorily An Bord Gáis, who would be buying 26% of the product although this was announced as 60%: all that was missing was the piggy at the cart. The first item presented for permission in November 2000 was the refinery at Ballinaboy, to provide a starting point for the cart to get to market - no sign yet of the piggy. Next item was the announcement of the Plan of Development, an overall blueprint. Next a variety of announced work at the well-heads out at sea. And finally the pipeline to bring the piggy to the starting point at Ballinaboy - for this there would be no need for planning or any such old nonsense like that. A political card game called S.I. 517 was introduced in November purporting to give the Minister authority to allocate power to the developers to take over the lands of the people along the pipeline route, i.e. using an S.I. to make primary law.<sup>iii</sup>

Such shinanigans are the subject of an ongoing E.U. infringement procedure N0 1997/4703. In an answer given to question E-0378/07EN by Mr. Dimas on behalf of the Commission (23.3.2007) it says *"the Directive (85/337/EEC) makes provision for assessing the interactions between different factors. If different factors are the subject of decisions by different decision making bodies, arrangements must be adequate to ensure that these interactions are assessed."* Given the sequence used by the State in advancing this project such assessment is impossible: however it is evident that such manipulation introduces an element of inevitability (the purpose of the exercise in modern spin-doctor land) that, added to by more subtle factors, make any opposition seem futile and not worth while - after all, if you have the pipeline to Galway from Ballinaboy, the gas must be delivered to Ballinaboy agus nára maith. Have gun will travel. As the relevant Minister said in the Dáil at the time *"They can object but they can't hold up the project."* (the General Election was coming up.)

Since the arrival of the emissaries of this project there has been no change to the pre-decided process except a minor one forced by the High Court. The much-touted talk of "consultation" consists of "we will listen to you but will change nothing." This is well illustrated by a set-piece interview given by Andy Pyle, M.D. of the project, to the Western People, May 6th 2006 at a time when 'mediation' talks were ongoing between the Rosport 5 and Shell through Peter Cassells. In the interview, Pyle said "the mediation between the Rosport 5 and SEPIL will **not** result in a change in the project." This at the same time as he, on behalf of SEPIL, apologised for jailing the Rosport 5.

In the present application to An Bord Pleanála, the agents, RPS, again present Cassells' suggestion that the pipeline route be 'modified in the vicinity of Rosport'. This 'suggestion' has been used ad nauseum as backing for the present blind forward and in itself it presents the weakness of the project, for were the project fit to stand on its technical feet the promoters would not need to call an ex-trade union official, without any expertise in the community dynamic or in gas technology, to witness to the integrity of their proposals. It is not likely that Terry Prone, for all her undoubted talents in the field now being ploughed by Mr. Cassells, will be called on to recommend how and where to modify the Metro at Fairview or indeed that Tom Savage will be hired to tell General Early what weapons to use in Chad. Insíonn sé scéal ar fhéin and illustrates the absence of any real dynamic in favour of the route and prospect chosen for this disaster that a p.r. consultant be quoted by a developer to give credibility to what should be a model of best available technology in a most innovative industry. The message of Cassells is that this is

a p.r. matter, spin: his further recommendation that SEPIL bribe more people with more money further shows from where he is coming, his driving force and his complete lack of empathy with the standards and practice of this community.

RPS presents Cassells as a mediator between SEPIL and the community: he was not. His original job was to mediate between SEPIL and the Rosport 5, terms of reference that Dempsey, the Minister of the day, decided to unilaterally change causing the first break down of the process which was never going anywhere as SEPIL had no power to make any change to anything. Cassell's report as mediator was simply that he could not find common ground between the parties. He was further hired by the Minister to make a few suggestions which he did and his friend and patron was happy with him..

We note also the use made of the Advantica report to give the present proposal an aura of sanctity. It did/does not. Advantica was hired by the Minister of the day to examine the then upstream pipeline proposal in the context that its location was fixed as was the site of the refinery, its terminus. Advantica did not have permission to suggest alternatives, to give an opinion on whether the siting was suitable or not and, most importantly, to give an analysis of the consequences of an accident along the pipeline length, although the Rosport 5 in jail had specifically requested the Minister that Advantica or some other be allowed to do this. Their terms of reference did not allow them to point out the damage done by a blast, by overpressure on humans, by thermal radiation. Advantica could not point out at what distance from a blast in the open people were skinned or killed or etc etc. Advantica gave a fine overview of the design on paper of the pipeline and found that it was normal and so as safe as any pipeline: for no one in this community has ever suggested that this pipeline would not be designed to be safe - no one in this community believes that any other pipeline is designed to be unsafe either, but blasts, fires, deaths, disability happen. What Advantica could not do was find sufficient historical data with which to justify an extreme high pressure upstream (production) pipeline on land, through a residential working community and so they, as any other analysts at the moment, are dependent on data from transmission or distribution pipelines, with much lower pressures and **possibly** not at all relevant to judging the risk from this upstream pipeline. What Advantica judged was the **risk to the pipeline**: what we worry about is **the risk to us of a pipeline accident**.

Advantica also noted:-

p.6 *"a detailed review of the documentation associated with all aspects of the project was not possible within the time-scale or scope of the pipeline safety review."*

p.9 *"public safety considerations did play an important part in the selection of the onshore gas pipeline" but the rest of the sentence reads "once the landfall and terminal locations had been determined." (At that stage what choice was there?)*

p.10 *"However if the flow through the pipeline was stopped for any reason and the sub-sea valves failed to isolate the pipeline from the sub-sea wells then the pressure in the pipeline could rise .. to 345 bar."*

*"the minimum acceptable proximity distance for the pipeline should have been considered further at these early stages."*

p.11 *"the consequences of failure are potentially very severe and there is therefore the potential for several people to be harmed in an incident at any location along the pipeline. societal risk should also have been examined."*

p.13 Referring to the design code being recommended by Advantica for future work on the pipeline: "on-land pipeline systems used by the gas supply industry are specifically excluded from the scope of EN 14161."

p.26 "the corrosion analysis described does not represent the best practice used at the time" (2001)

p.31 "However carefully a system is designed, constructed and operated, there remains the possibility of failure and the consequences of failure may pose a risk to people, property or the environment."

"the calculation of risk at a particular location is complicated by the fact that the failure position is unknown in advance."

p.33 "It is not clear from the report on the HAZID whether this small team had sufficiently wide areas of expertise to be able to address all the potential aspects necessary to identify and assess the hazards associated with the pipeline."

p.35 "this pressure is well above the 100 bar range of the proximity distance graphs provided by the codes."

"taking account of the uncertainty in the knowledge and limited operational experience for onshore pipelines at such high pressures"

p.36 "Corrib pipeline, which has the potential to generate a major hazard to the local population in the event of a failure"

p.40 "the models have not been validated at the higher pressures"

p.41 "the hazard distances for a rupture of a high pressure gas pipeline are significant and a full bore rupture in particular has the potential to affect many people in a single event."

p.42 "our understanding is that the valves do not fail safe in the event of a loss of communication."

"exposure to the full well-head pressure is a credible event"

"the possibility of the pipeline experiencing the higher pressures cannot be eliminated."

p.52 "the consequences of a pipeline failure depend on many factors that cannot be known in advance of a failure."

p.58 "there is insufficient evidence to conclude with confidence that integrity management plans will be sufficient to ensure that the integrity of the pipeline is maintained to a sufficiently high standard throughout its life"

Remembering also that the historical data used refers to transmission pipelines carrying processed gas and free of the load of heavy metals, condensate, glycol, methanol etc. And so on. The extracts above show that the Advantica report is not a simple statement that all is rosy in the garden but a complex analysis of the one solution Advantica was allowed by its' terms of reference to consider, an analysis that strongly supports our knowledge that while the pipeline is intended to be as safe as any other it is also just as likely to fail or not. Indeed its' reasons for recommending that the pipeline be re-designed could have been written by any opponent of this unfortunate proposal: "in view of the societal concerns, the level of uncertainty in the risk analysis, the extent of extrapolation of onshore pipeline design codes beyond their normal range of application and mindful that the results of risk analysis are only one factor in the decision-making process"

Is this a glowing endorsement of a best available technology project?

The Advantica report, excepting the slippage in Chapter 5 relating to pressure- control valves, due to last minute change in the info given Advantica by the developer, is excellent in the context of its terms of reference. It gives a very good account of what to

expect from the Corrib pipeline **if the Corrib pipeline was a transmission /distribution pipeline** - but it is not: it is a **production** pipeline. Were it a transmission/distribution pipeline its pressure would be capped at 84 BARg, it would not contain glycol, methanol, condensate (which magnifies the destructive power of the gas in the case of a blast), nor carry an assortment of power lines and lines of glycol/methanol in the same trench (P.J.Rudden of RPS specifically warned in his published work on the Galway to Dublin pipeline of the effect of power lines in proximity to a gas line - he must have learned/forgotten something since).

The restrictions on pipeline pressure by the various codes and authorities are likely to be put there for a reason - or so one would expect: maybe they are just the engineering equivalent of doodling?. If so why not say so?

This application to An Bord Pleanála is so full of deception that it seems to indicate a very bad weak project indeed in which the promoters/designers have little faith. If we, civilians, can detect so much of doubtful integrity, how much more could professionals of integrity in the field unearth?.

The landfall at Glengad is a case in point:-

**The Landfall:-** In the first instance neither SEPIL's or RPS's experts have noticed the existence of the Sand Martin colony that occupies the cliff where the pipeline landfall is intended to be. Although SEPIL's operatives - including some recently in camouflage - have tried to hunt the Sand Martin away, for some strange reason this migratory bird has a soft spot for its home and refuses to go away - like this community. Not even the nets fixed over their nesting holes has entirely got rid of them. The real issue here is that the official monitoring body of this State has not noticed them either, although the species has European protection. Not everyone is a bird fancier but many of us used to believe that laws were enacted for a reason and because of that it was in the common interest to have the laws implemented. The way this project is being monitored sometimes indicates to us that we have misunderstood what the law is all about. However this is a blatant breach of EU conditions. No derogation has been sought from Europe for this transgression. Any derogation - again if the law means what it says - can be granted only if there is no other way of getting the job done and this does not apply in this instance and if any damage is reasonably repaired. If the law means what it says.

On the 27/09/2005 Mayo County Council issued a declaration that the construction of a road from the existing road L1202 to the foreshore was exempted development. This was a road constructed by the SEPIL from the public road to the pipeline way-leave which is an SAC and then on through the SAC for 400 meters to the landfall. On appeal by An Taisce on 20/10/2000, An Bord Pleanála [Reference Number: 16.RL.2293] overturned this decision by Mayo Co. Co. and decided "*that the said construction of a road from the existing L1202 to the foreshore which travels through a "Priority Habitat" of the Habits (sic) Directive 92/43/EEC at the Natura 2000 (SAC) site number 500 is development and is not exempted development.*"

The appeal by An Taisce was made, among other reasons, on the basis that the area in question was a machair. This was not commented on by An Bord. Although this area has not been listed by Curtis (1991) or Pyle, Connolly, Murray and Swann 2007 as a machair the site remains as stated in the decision of An Bord Pleanála, a "Priority Habitat" and an SAC and it shares much of the characteristics of a machair with its neighbour, Garter Hill

Machair, just across Sruth Mhada Conn. Sand Dune habitats are moving systems and as recently as 2007, Dubh Eairc in Erris has been added to the list. Trenchant conditions apply to any proposed interference with its integrity and prior derogations must be sought. Much degradation has already been inflicted on this Priority Habitat while our regulatory functionaries remain seemingly unaware or unconcerned or unempowered

Another little oversight - no derogation has been sought to drive the pipeline through this Priority Habitat and again the bogeyman intervenes - no derogation without no option. It has been suggested to us that some "experts" in the Parks and Wildlife Service think that a few Sand Martins or a sand dune system are not really important and that the competent authorities should turn a blind eye to this and say "exception". One timidly asks "For what reason did the P&WS experts mark this area as a priority habitat and an SAC if it did not matter"? Were the experts - if such there be - just having a day off or on? They **did** draw the maps. Or are designations etc just a matter of - as one Mayo County Council engineer recently said about CAO - making it up as you go along? The question remains, is designation just a whim of a departmental expert or is there logic and reason for designations beyond the ad hoc satisfaction of an individual's needs? We used to think that law was there to put the common good before the common bully but we may have been mistaken. As it looks to us from our experience, the application of laws and regulations follows the process of the Ballymagash local commun.

Accompanying the application under discussion is a fine volume "*Environmental Impact Statement*. Vol 2 of 2, Book 1 of 3 - Appendix A, containing maps and photographs and admittedly schematic drawings. We are not impressed with the presence of "Ordnance Survey Ireland Licence No. xxx" accompanied by a health warning "**Not to scale.**" Whatever does that mean apart from the obvious that the material is not to be taken seriously: it is serious for us who have to live here. An examination of one 'photograph' 'Proximity of Pipeline Route to Local Housing' and one proto-map 'Subsoils' raises doubts as to the objective of the exercise. We will concentrate on three items in the Legend of the Subsoil proto-map - i. Till derived from Metamorphic Rocks, ii. water, iii. Wind Blown Sand:-

1. Large areas shown as water are evidently from the photograph not at all water but part of the dune system.
2. The pipeline is shown passing through a small area of "wind blown sand", which gives the message that RPS are prepared to admit to infringing designations for one must remember that this is an SAC.
3. The wind blown sand area shows only a small part of the **real** wind blown sand area as even the photograph shows.
4. Most of the pipeline in this 1 Km section is shown to be passing through "Till derived from Metamorphic Rocks" and herein lies the problem. The entire Erris area is composed of a bedrock that is metamorphic :mica-schist, quartzite, gneiss. No doubt the weathered top surface of the bed-rock, i.e. the till, is derived from Metamorphic Rock. From personal knowledge we know that the proposed pipeline in this SAC, from Pisín na Cruithneachta inland, passes through a sandy soil and not a "till derived from metamorphic rock". It is quite possible that the aforesaid till is present under the sub-soil, but surely the experts had some reason to baptise this area as an SAC and Priority Habitat. In this instance RPS manages to deceive while pretending to be scientific. The fact of the matter is that for some reason known perhaps only to the

Gods, the area through which the pipeline passes on paper has been demarcated by the experts hired by the state as Priority Habitat.

5. It is more than possible that there is a substantial amount of acidic material in the top layer of this soil, but it does not originate in the bedrock. 27/09/2005 Mayo Co. Co. declared that a road built by the developer from the existing L1202 to the landfall(foreshore) was exempted development. This is a gravel road built by the developer by spreading material sourced in a quartzite quarry some distance away and quite distinct from the locally sourced material. This may be what RPS calls "till" from Metamorphic, but it more accurately can be called "fill". Unless one adopts the discourse of The Mad Hatter words do mean something. On appeal by An Taisce on the 20/10/2005, an Bord Pleanála, Ref. 16.RL.2293 , decided "the said construction of a road from the existing L1202 to the foreshore which travels through a "Priority Habitat" of the Habits Directive 92/43/EEC at the Natura 2000 (SAC)site number 500 is development and is not exempted development."
6. As a matter of illustrating uberissima fides in these matters: the developer (SEPIL) later applied to Mayo Co. Co., Ref. P06/2565, for permission to retain temporarily part of this road, but only from the existing L1202 as far as the wayleave, so as not to officially infringe a Natura 2000 site. To facilitate the deception, the valve station, now being relocated, as originally, at the landfall, was shown on the maps accompanying the application, 400 meters in from the landfall and by a stroke of luck, just at the bottom of the illegal road for which they sought temporary retention!. Mayo Co of course gave permission to retain. An Bord Pleanála, 16.RL.2293, had also required "permanent emergency access" to this valve station which the new location supplied, although the retention was only sought for 5 years. Bord Pleanála seems to have no problem with project splitting in time or place that is obviously and transparently devised to deceive the intentions of the planning process which we are told is "proper planning and development". In the application presently before the Bord, full permission for the entire road, a permanent road this time, from L1202 to the foreshore, through the Natura 2000 site, an SAC is being sought. It was obvious that application P06/2565 was intended to be deceptive, was incomplete by device, and did not properly describe the use for which the proposed road was intended. An Bord Pleanála, knowing the facts of the case, gave permission??.

To return to the photograph "Proximity of pipeline route to Local Housing" it is evident that the residents in the houses from no 20 to 44 are now much worse off than under the previous original plan. The strange occurrence in a rural area of purchasing the taking out of occupation of 2 houses is noted. From the point of view of the map the only change is that the pipeline no longer skirts the road ten yards from it and so is possibly in that area somewhat safer. However, 21 households cannot now leave their houses to carry on their normal business without crossing this bizarre pipeline. Household no 44 - the numbers have a suitable totalitarian effect - must cross the pipeline twice to carry out the normal functions of living. We totally reject this imposition. In the matter of houses 21 to 44 where the pipeline once ran at the front of their houses it now runs behind them and nearer to the working bogs where there is no shelter, no cover (not that an explosion gives one time to re-act!).

A noteworthy feature of the drawings purporting to present the facts of the mini-tunnelling of the SPA, Sruth Mhada Conn is the strange use of "probably" on what are

supposed to be geological sections. Surely no one gets planning permission for a project on the basis of "probably" or is the Mad Hatter at work again?. The fact is RPS don't know what the condition of the SPA is in or how decisive the faulting in this multi-faulted bedrock can be. This is the height of irresponsibility.

Since the jailing of the Rosspoint 5, both the State and the representatives of the developer, have bleated incessantly of the need for local consent before this project could go ahead. There is no consent. The requirement of the developer must surely be to get the gas to market. There are many alternatives that would meet our requirement of health and safety to a great extent, but the developer has never shown any intention to compromise. And why should the developer compromise, when he can depend on the force and forces of the state to force this through on a non-consenting community.

There are many aspects of this project that question the existence of the rule of law in this state, law being an ordinance of reason for the common good. The undermining of belief in proper civil society is well obvious in this project. The new paratroop-style non-EU-national security force in camouflage being assembled to take on the natives - the Mayo Dogs of War scenario. Birdwatch Ireland, a harmless organisation by all accounts: they have recently gone ballistic over interference with the nests of the Sand Martin in Wexford but they do not want to hear about the long war waged on the same creatures in Glengad by the acolytes of a major multinational. Why?. A recent fuss in the national media concerned the killing by Meath Co. Co. of hedgerow birds: not one seems interested that Mayo Co. Co. is destroying the same hedgerows in Aughoose to facilitate SEPIL. Coillte have an obligation to consult "stakeholders", local people, re. changes to the land use of their land: not when SEPIL are involved. A recent fire in Glenamoy lasting 4 days and causing enormous and costly damage that illustrated clearly the dangers of a refinery like this one proposed for Ballinaboy found the media denying the relevance of the events for the Corrib project. Although An Bord Gáis has been consistent and business-like in its answering of questions re. Corrib gas, recently in an interview on MWRadio an executive of An Bord Gáis said that Corrib on stream may bring down the price of gas to the consumer, something that is a complete lie and impossible and that has been consistently denied by An Bord Gáis spokespeople until now.

Why? Local people are being refused planning permission for houses along and under the Glengad ridge because of danger of landslides: but there is no problem to give permission for a huge heavy industry project that will vibrate day and night just under the hill. A recent huge bog burst, initiated by Co. Co. work to facilitate SEPIL on the boundary of the refinery site was hushed up with the co-operation of most media outlets. The council denied the matter while the ESB admitted that hundreds of houses were left without power and diesel generators had to be commissioned. The council were acting without legal authority but that seems to be a minor matter.

Finally we totally oppose the proposals presently being pushed on us, both their reality and their methodology. We do not consent to this unnecessary political project. Since 2000 we have consistently stated our position: we do not oppose the gas coming ashore or to market. We have said since 2000 that we would help to bring it ashore provided it was being done properly respecting our sustainability. As we have made clear again and again, it can be done easily although it should not be our job to show Shell, Statoil and

Marathon how to properly implement a project. We would support a process that involved best available technology, a process that was true to the declarations of social responsibility that the p.r. departments of the oil companies churn out. If this state system respects the law or the cohesion of civil society it will not further seek to derogate from EU Directives when, at the minimum, alternatives exist. Project splitting does not justify the insidious colonisation of our safety or our peace of mind: just because the Taoiseach announced the pipeline to Galway, thereby giving a direct message to planners before any planning was sought, does not make inevitable the remaining steps that should have been previous - except in totalitarian milieu.

The effort to guarantee that the pressure in this pipeline will not exceed 144 BARg is being presented as a favour. The reality is different and we know it, the community knows. No other community in Ireland is being exposed to this exotic pressure. If the pressure does not matter why is An Bord Gáis statutorily obliged not to exceed 60% of this pressure in any of its pipeline installations?. Is it just another exercise for bored bureaucrats to be cast aside at a whim?. Will the next edition of the Commercial Handbook show a revised pressure of 144 BARg, also on a whim or on a pet notion of a Minister of the day?. Why is so much pressure being exerted to get a national standard for industrial safety enacted based on mathematical risk and not on the consequence to people of human error or defective plant or material?.

In the first application for planning permission filed by the developers in November 2000 it was made clear that a HIPP System of electronic control of pressure valves was not suitable for the Corrib wells. A HIPPS is now proposed. Under the new proposal it is quite possible that pressure in the pipeline will rise to 345 on land at Glengad (see Advantica). Advantica also point out the danger if there is a power black out as happened two weeks ago when a bog slide happened during Co. Council work. Advantica itself also doubts the certainty of a fail safe closing of the valve system: it seems that no one really believes that the fail save cut out system of valves exists or that it is possible - a cursory glance at the literature comes up with M.A. Westhoff of the Colorado interstate company who says "*Some interstate transmission pipelines have installed 'excess flow valves' which sense abnormal changes in flow and automatically close. In theory these locally controlled valves offer the fastest response time to isolation of the affected. Experience has shown,, however, that these valves close in error as much or more than they close at appropriate times.*" And he is dealing with, as he says "*A typical range of operating pressures for a transmission system is 300 to 1440 psig.*"(21 - 100 BARg.)

There are similar issues with SCADA systems of communication of problems to a central control: already the Port Tunnel in Dublin has been brought to a full stop for 4 hours by the failure of the state-of-the-art SCADA in place. This application does not do anything to increase our confidence in the safety of the Shell-operated system proposed and especially the exposure of Glengad residents, children and adults to what is the weakest link in the entire system. The fact that the pressure in the pipeline at the landfall in Glengad can potentially reach 345 BARg, even without system failure, changes the paradigm of separation distance and is not faced up to by SEPIL in this application. It is a wake up call to remind ourselves that even with the best in management and technology available, pipeline explosions are usually first reported by a phone from some member of the public who has survived the blast. At the valve installation in Glengad many problems meet: pressure, automatic reporting (SCADA or similar), HIPPS (already

rejected by the designers of the pipeline), non-detection of possible hydrogen sulphide formation, human error that seems to be part and parcel of this industry's attitude to the safety of individuals who are so blasé that they typically provide their own insurance.

RPS tell us that the whole pipeline must be applied for in one go to avoid project splitting!. An Bord Pleanála has jurisdiction in Mayo only to the low tide mark or something similar. Five different applications are now thrown at us the community, lay people protecting our own place, to answer all at the one time to crowd us out = egalité des armées, Irish Government style. Laws have been and continue to be changed to facilitate this private sector development in true Myanmar fashion as SEPIL comes up against another "unforeseen". The supposed blueprint, The Plan of Development, is submitted for approval to the State although much of what it supposedly proposes is already implemented. State experts give sworn evidence in court that support the theory that heavy machinery does not damage a Priority Habitat while environmental carers do. Consent is defined as 'doing what a commercial interest needs and needs now'. The burden of this misguided development, a political rape of this community and this environment, rests entirely on this reasonable adaptable people and is a step too far that we do not accept: no one small and resource-weak section of this citizenry should, under our Bunreacht na hÉireann, be targeted for individually crafted laws and instruments, for the good of shareholder value and especially when that "good" is easily otherwise accommodated. The circus continues: the state against the community.

The pipeline is in the wrong place

Because the refinery is in the wrong place.

There are safe alternatives commercially viable.

Let the record show that we do not consent to this abusive project  
that is a negation of proper planning and sustainable development of this area  
disastrous for the traditional economic social cultural environment of this community  
In reality, a sentence of death.

Signed

Micheál Ó Seighin

Ceathrú Thaidhg,

Béal an Átha,

Co. Mhaigh Eo.

XXXXXX

Glengad,

Pollathomas,

Ballina,

Co. Mayo

XXXXXXXXX

Gleann a' Ghaid,

Poll a' tSómais,

Béal an Átha,

Co. Mhaigh Eo.

XXXXXXXXXX

Ceathrú Thaidhg.

Ceathrú Thaidhg,

Béal an Átha,

Co. Mhaigh Eo.

02/06/2008

**Contact Person:-**

Micheál Ó Seighin,

Ceathrú Thaidhg,

Béal an Átha,

Co. Mhaigh Eo.

**To:- The Minister,  
Department of Communications, Energy & Natural Resources,  
Petroleum Affairs Division,  
Leeson Lane  
Dublin 2.**

a chara,

**Re. Application by Shell E & P Ireland Ltd. to An Bord Pleanála for approval for a strategic upstream pipeline and associated facilities, structures and site development works in the townlands of Glengad, Rosoduagh, Aghoose, Bellagelly South, Co. Mayo,** submitted by RPS Group on their behalf and dated May 1st 2008.

Enclosed please find comments from some residents of this parish on the above Application, directed to the Minister for Energy and Natural Resources as facilitated . The residents of this parish alone bear the brunt of this massive and irrational proposal which stands in breach of technical logic, commercial sustainable logic and the logic of this community's continuity in health, safety and traditional living. The sustainability of this community is, as always, by definition a factor of the health of this environment: this cynical exercise as proposed makes our way of life no longer viable.

Micheál Ó Seighin.

Contact Person.

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i. Insert between 16. and 17. Strange 1:- The capacity of the receiving infrastructure not questioned by the designer or by MCC in its preliminary discussions. For example, after the community produced a preliminary structural analysis of the load bearing capacity of 9 bridges on the proposed haulage route for hard-core and other bulk and dense materials, Mayo Co. Co. produced an analysis of their own and presented it to the Bord PleanAla oral hearing. In their analysis it was admitted that one bridge in particular had a load-bearing capacity of less than 8 tons, whereas Mayo Co. CO. lorries that daily ply the routes weigh from 11 tons to 25 tons: the proposed hardcore carrying lorries could weigh double that and more.

ii

iii. Still being processed through the high court