



6th September 2010

Dear Resident,

I am writing to address a number of concerns that have been raised with us through phone calls and correspondence over the past number of weeks.

It is important that you as a local resident have full factual information regarding the East West Interconnector especially about health and safety measures, as incorrect information can cause unnecessary worry.

Over the past three years, we have endeavoured in good faith to respond comprehensively to all questions and concerns raised by members of the community, elected representatives and Rush Community Council. Despite this misinformation is still being circulated and we understand, that as a result, people remain concerned about the impact of the project.

While we appreciate there will be temporary disruption while the Interconnector is being installed, this project is safe and poses no health risk to the people of Rush or indeed anyone living anywhere along the route of the cable.

There are a number of points which should be clarified:

Assurance on health:

- There are two types of electricity, alternating current (AC) which generates time varying magnetic fields and direct current (DC) which generates static magnetic fields. Both magnetic fields are measured in the microTesla (the unit used to measure magnetic fields) however both types of electricity are fundamentally different and the international guidelines in relation to the exposures from each vary considerably and should not be confused.
- Guidelines regarding public exposure to electromagnetic fields are issued from the International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) which is a non-governmental organisation, formally recognised by World Health Organisation (WHO) and International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC). The Irish national standards endorse the guidelines set by ICNIRP and WHO. If you were to stand directly above the Interconnector, the static magnetic field present would be less than 1% of these international guidelines.
- There is some confusion regarding the power that will be transmitted through the Interconnector which I would like to clarify. The Interconnector will transmit 500 MW which is similar to the capacity of other underground electricity cables in Dublin, in residential areas for example South Circular Road, and not 1000 MW or other figures as have been suggested.
- Rush Community Council has requested a route change based on the 'precautionary principle'. The precautionary principle is only invoked in areas where there is some reason to question whether a substance or an exposure is harmful either based on a biological rationale or based on research which provides some evidence for concern. The

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precautionary principle does not apply to the East West Interconnector because there is no evidence which suggests that the exposure from the Interconnector poses a health risk.

- Rush Community Council has referred to a study from the Oxford Childhood Cancer Research group. This is misleading as the study refers to overhead lines and a different form of electricity to the form that will be transmitted in the East West Interconnector.
- People have questioned the testimony given by Dr William Bailey at the An Bord Pleanála oral hearing suggesting that his evidence was compromised because he was paid by EirGrid. It is wrong to question the independence and impartiality of the evidence of Mr Bailey, an academic with more than 25 years international experience in the evaluation of scientific research in relation to EMFs and electricity and who has served with international agencies such as the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), ICNIRP, and the World Health Organisation.
- The minimum burial depth of the cables will be 1 metre (and not 300mm as has been suggested) which is standard practice for underground electricity cables. The cables are fully screened and will be contained within a heavy duty plastic duct which is surrounded by different layers of protection, which include, lean mix concrete, protective tiles, and plastic warning tapes. As the cable is in the public road, a road opening licence is required before digging. Therefore no residents are at risk of accidentally digging up the cable.

The health concerns raised by Rush Community Council and other residents were considered by An Bord Pleanála the independent planning authority. If there were any health risks, the project would not have received planning permission.

Route selection:

Engineering, environmental and physical constraints in the marine environment were the reasons for selecting Rush North Beach as the landing point for the cable. We considered all alternative routes. In 2008, during the consultation phase with Meath County Council, a route change was made to avoid Ratoath in order to reduce traffic disruption. This change was not based on health and safety concerns as has been suggested. We would not be installing this Interconnector if there was a health risk to anyone along the route.

Rogerstown Estuary is a designated Natura 2000 site and EU guidelines set down that any project having a significantly negative effect on a site may only be authorised in the absence of alternative solutions. The suggested alternative route through Rogerstown Estuary was raised during submissions by Rush Community Council during the An Bord Pleanála hearing.

The selected route, going from Rush North Beach to Woodland in Co. Meath, was granted full planning. We have considered the issues raised and there is no basis for us to propose a re-route. We have been mandated to deliver vital infrastructure for the people of Ireland by 2012 in order to facilitate competition in the electricity market to put downward pressure on prices, reduce our dependence on fossil fuels and develop our renewable energy sector.

We are working to open an office in Rush and welcome anyone who wishes to discuss the project to ring and arrange to meet with a member of the project team. Alternatively, you can send an email at eastwestinterconnector@eirgrid.com or talk to us by phone on 1890 36 46 56.

Yours sincerely,

John Fitzgerald
Project Director