

Richard Drax MP

South Dorset



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Planning Team
Dorset Council
South Walks House
South Walks Road
Dorchester DT1 1UZ

20 November, 2020

Dear Sir/Madam,

Portland waste incinerator

Application number: WP/20/00692/DCC

I am writing to add my voice to the large number of strong objections against the proposed waste incinerator plant on Portland.

I have looked at the application carefully, read all the documents and spoken to a well-organised campaign group, led by Lucy Grieve. While I appreciate there is a need for more facilities to treat our waste, I do not believe Portland is the appropriate location.

It was not that long ago that I and my parliamentary colleagues successfully opposed a giant windfarm off our Jurassic Coast. With the drive to so-called green energy, there was at least a logic to this application. However, it would have been easily visible and dwarfed one of the most stunning coastlines in the UK. Other locations further out to sea have proved less controversial, but that was not possible here.

So, having opposed the windfarm, I cannot possibly support an Energy Recovery Facility (ERF) on the island of Portland itself. I am not surprised that HMP The Verne, Portland Town Council, Weymouth Town Council and Dorset Area Ramblers have come to the same conclusion, along with thousands of islanders who have signed a petition that I shall be formerly handing in to parliament.



In its response to the application, the Environment Agency has no objection, but highlights some risks, like water pollution, and has set a number of conditions.

The ERF will treat refuse derived fuel (RDF), which, contrary to some reports, is not bagged household waste. The RDF will be delivered in wrapped bales, or loose, in HGVs, or in wrapped bales by sea. There is no doubt that the preferred option will be by road, placing even more pressure on an already congested system.

There is some argument as to how many HGVs will be needed, but even Powerfuel Portland (PfP) estimates 72 lorry movements a day if all the RDF is delivered by road. The application would enable PfP to bring in rubbish from within a three hour radius.

At sea, there are no restrictions, so RDF could be sourced from anywhere abroad. Although not one of the biggest plants of its kind, the ERF does need to import a sufficient tonnage to make it economical.

Jobs is another important consideration, with PfP predicting c300 jobs during the construction phase and between 30-35 posts once completed. Any job is to be welcomed on Portland, but the long-term estimate does little to mitigate the effect such a facility will have on our historic port and of course islanders themselves.

A very tall stack will, unfortunately, dominate the skyline, emitting emissions just below HMP The Verne. While I am confident these emissions will meet stringent regulations, there is no doubt that the air quality immediately around the plant will be more polluted that would otherwise be the case.

The prevailing wind is indeed from the south west, which would suggest that emissions would be blown out to sea for the majority of the time. However, the wind direction changes and a southerly, south-easterly or easterly would affect Weymouth and Portland.



It's important not to underestimate the effect this plant would have on our Jurassic Coast, which is a UNESCO World Heritage Site (WHS). It is, therefore, not surprising that the landscape adjacent to this WHS is an Area of Outstanding Beauty (AONB). Within the ANOB there are Sites of Scientific Interest, Ramsar Sites, Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas.

It's perhaps also worth noting that "the port and East Weare undercliff includes a number of listed buildings and scheduled monuments". (PfP Design & Access Statement)

Finally, I think it's pertinent to point out that Portland suffers from deprivation and poverty and residents often feel "dumped upon". While I can see the ERF will provide energy to the national grid, and help the port provide power to visiting cruise ships, I cannot see a solid, long-term benefit for islanders.

They, like me, I am sure, wish to preserve the beauty of their island setting, and respect the unique character of the former Royal Navy base, while of course welcoming an expanding port and the jobs that go with it. What I and many do not want to see is another imposition on the island in what, in effect, is a blot on the landscape. It's just the wrong location!

I would like to conclude by praising the port's CEO, Bill Reeves, and the owners, the Langhams, for investing so effectively in the port over many years now. More jobs have been created and these are to be welcomed. I will continue to support the port in every way I can, but an incinerator is not something I can get behind.

Yours sincerely