

Kevin Gordon
Environment Appeals Administration
The Planning Inspectorate
3A Eagle Wing
Temple Quay House
2 The Square
Bristol
BS1 6PN

26th October 2020

Dear Mr. Gordon

**Re: NNB Generation Company (HPC) Limited, Hinkley Point C Power Station, Hinkley Point, near
Bridgwater, Somerset, TA5 1UD
Permit application number EPR/HP3228XT/V004**

We are writing to express our strong concern and objection to the application to vary the permit for the above site. Specifically, we are concerned re the appeal by NNB Genco to vary its permit at its cooling water intake pipes in the Bristol Channel:

- remove one of the important protection measures, which is required by the existing permit specifically the acoustic fish deterrent (AFD) which is to reduce the number of fish drawn into the cooling water system.

Warwickshire Wildlife Trust is a wildlife conservation charity and our comments relate to the protection and enhancement of wildlife and the natural environment on and around the proposed appeal. The Trust is co-host for the Warwickshire Avon Catchment Partnership, and therefore is concerned regarding potential ecological impacts of a change to control measures on the power station in Severn Estuary.

It has been stated by fishery and environmental consultants regarding the need to use AFD, among other protection, as the most suitable screening at the new cooling water intakes, in order to protect all fish species in line with the range of protective environmental laws. The Environment Agency has issued the permit stating AFD as the required screening.

The Trust is very concerned at the potential for this screening to be removed and the consequent impact on fish species specifically and the consequent impact on the wider

Severn estuary and the rivers and habitats used by the migratory species e.g. eel, salmon. The Severn Estuary has the largest **eel** run in Great Britain.

The estuary is extremely valuable area for a range of species and the range of habitats, as shown below by the designations that have been made.

The Severn Estuary area is designated for its conservation value, meeting numerous formal criteria. Nature conservation designations protect key resources in specific areas; generally having their own management, monitoring and reporting systems in place in order to ensure that deterioration does not occur.

The international, European and national status of these designations clearly demonstrates the estuary's importance for nature conservation. The designations include:

Ramsar Site covering 16,942 ha of wetland; an **International** designation, awarded in 1995. Sites are designated to stem the loss of wetlands now and in future. Salmon, Eels and Sea Trout are designated features of the Severn Estuary Ramsar site.

- European Marine Site (EMS) **European** designation: collective term for intertidal SACs and SPAs. Competent and Relevant Authorities bordering the Estuary have a statutory duty to manage their activities within the Severn Estuary European marine site to minimise impacts and deterioration of the protected features of European importance.
- Special Protection Area (SPA) **European** designation awarded in 1995, covering 24,662.98 ha. under the Birds Directive. Such sites are classified for their rare and vulnerable bird populations and for regularly occurring migratory species. SPA areas help guarantee the maintenance of appropriate resources and habitats required to ensure the survival or viability of wild bird species of European importance.
- Special Area of Conservation (SAC); covering 73,715.4 ha, **European** designation in 2009; three species of migratory fish are defined both as features in their own right and as sub-features of the Estuary feature. Designated under the Habitats Directive, for areas supporting rare, endangered or threatened species of plant or animal.
- Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) **National designation** the Severn Estuary SSSI covers ~15,000 ha of foreshore and inter-tidal habitat and forms part of larger area including Upper Severn Estuary SSSI and Bridgwater Bay SSSI. 3 island SSSI's. Several further coastal sites and 675 ha of coastline. A significant Newport Wetlands SSSI designated in 2010; covering 865 ha, part of compensation for the loss of SSSI on completion of barrage in 1999.
- Protected species: European eels are protected under the European Eel Regulations.

Severn Rivers Trust, working on several major projects to restore the River Severn, has stated:

Chair

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'The estuary provides a known and vital migration pathway for a range of designated or endangered species such as the allis and twaite shads, lamprey species, Atlantic salmon and European eel. These vital habitats are connected and any development in the Severn Estuary directly influences conservation efforts in the River Severn and the River Avon.'

Warwickshire Wildlife Trust agrees with Severn Rivers Trust that:

'The likely impact of removal the AFD on fish populations will greatly undermine conservation work being undertaken across the Bristol Channel region to protect fisheries stocks, in both the marine and freshwater environments.'

In NNB Genco's Statement of Case, Section 3.11, they make the following statement -
"*...further work since the granting of the Hinkley Point C DCO has shown that an efficient AFD is extremely difficult to design, and would be very challenging to construct and maintain in the specific environmental conditions of the Severn Estuary*".

Warwickshire Wildlife Trust's position is that, as is the case for planning applications, no industry should be given a permit which is highly likely to cause a negative impact on protected species. There are appropriate technology and measures available to address the risk and protect the species which will be affected, and these should be used.

Industry has a key part to play in protection of species and habitats, especially industry providing a public resource such as energy production, and to ensure that net gain, not loss, is secured to restore our biodiversity. There is a major biodiversity crisis in which over 46% of species monitored are declining and many habitats are in poor condition. Every action which reduces protection further reduces nature's capacity to recover.

We strongly object to the appeal to remove control measures and ask that the permit as assessed by Environment Agency is not varied in this manner.

Yours sincerely



Gina Rowe
Living Landscapes Manager
Co host of Warwickshire Avon Catchment

Chair
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Vice Chair
Martin Randall
Chief Executive
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