

Environmental Campaigners Vow to Fight Egnedol's Milford Haven waste and biomass plans

- For immediate release -

Pembrokeshire Friends of the Earth have launched a campaign against Egnedol's planning application for an experimental waste and biomass gasification scheme at Blackbridge, Milford Haven. The group is encouraging residents to lodge objections with the Planning Inspectorate by 2nd February, and to share concerns with their elected representatives [1].

Environmental campaigners warn that the technology which Egnedol proposes is unproven and that there has been no successful waste or biomass gasification scheme in the UK, despite many attempts. However, they have serious concerns about public health and health and safety risks should Egnedol build and try to operate such a plant. Gasification technologies such as those Egnedol want to use are associated with substantial risks of fires, explosions and pollution incidents [2].

Any explosion at the Blackbridge site could have particularly devastating consequences because it overlaps with two areas classified as top tier – i.e. most dangerous - “Control of Major Accidents” sites: The Dragon LNG Terminal, and SemLogistics' oil storage. Air pollution is another serious concern because houses in Blackbridge would overlook the gasifier at a height just below that of the top of the chimney, i.e. would be heavily exposed to any pollution. Operators of a waste gasification plant in Scotland reported hundreds of air pollution incidents breaching the conditions of their environmental permit before the plant was finally shut down following an explosion and a fire [3].

Jan Waite from Pembrokeshire Friends of the Earth states: “This is the wrong proposal at the wrong site. Granting Egnedol planning consent would amount to giving them the license to experiment with a dangerous, unproven technology and putting the safety and health of residents at risk. Anybody concerned about this prospect should object to this application now and speak to their Councillors and AMs.”

Almuth Ernsting from the UK organisation Biofuelwatch [4] adds: “We have been studying biomass gasification proposals and schemes across the UK for several years, and none of them has ever succeeded and delivered the electricity and the jobs that had been promised. Yet Egnedol is the first developer we have come across who is trying to combined three completely unproven and non-viable technologies at once, i.e. those proposed for gasification, for advanced biofuels and for algal production.”

Residents can object by writing their own letters to the Planning Inspectorate, or by sending pre-drafted objections: www.foepembrokeshire.co.uk/news.php?id=127

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Notes:

[1] www.foepembrokeshire.co.uk/news.php?id=127

[2] Guidelines on biomass gasification issued by the European Commission's Intelligent Energy Europe programme state:

“During operation of a biomass gasification plant there is an increased hazard potential due to the fact that a potentially explosive, toxic and combustible gas mixture is produced and consumed. The producer gas and residues (ash, liquids, exhaust gases) may cause the following major hazards/risks:

+ an explosion and/or fire;

+ health damage to humans (poisoning, danger of suffocation, noise, hot surfaces, fire and explosion); and

+ pollution of the environment and plant vicinity.”

https://ec.europa.eu/energy/intelligent/projects/sites/iee-projects/files/projects/documents/gasification_guide_final_guideline_for_safe_and_eco_friendly_biomass.pdf

[3] See Dargavel case study: www.zerowasteurope.eu/downloads/air-pollution-from-waste-disposal-not-for-public-breath/

[4] Biofuelwatch provides research, campaigning, education and advocacy about the impacts of large-scale industrial bioenergy: www.biofuelwatch.org.uk