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Consents given under the Petroleum Act 1998 and Reviews under the Assessment of Environmental Effects Regulations 1999

Bord Gais Eireann

SECOND SCOTLAND TO IRELAND GAS INTERCONNECTOR

Bord Gas Eireann (BGE), the gas supply organisation for the Irish Republic, wish to construct a 762mm (30inch) pipeline from the northern shore of the Solway Firth in Dumfries and Galloway, Scotland to Gormanston, north of Dublin in the Irish Republic. BGE has identified the need for additional gas supplies from late 2002 and to meet demand in Ireland up until 2025. The first Scotland - Ireland Interconnector was laid in 1993 over a similar, but not identical, route and experience gained helped to inform the environmental assessment and management of the second operation.

The pipeline was subject to a total of four environmental assessments covering various sections of its length, the Scotland onshore section, the Scotland inshore and territorial waters section, the offshore marine section and the Irish inshore waters and onshore section. The offshore marine section passes through the waters of three jurisdictions, the UK, the Isle of Man and the Irish republic. These web comments cover the two UK areas of the offshore marine section, between the Scottish coast and the Isle of Man waters on the east and the Isle of Man waters and the Irish waters on the west.

The pipeline will be laid on the seabed and then trenched to lower it below the surface with burial taking place by natural infill by the displaced sediments. The assessment confirmed the main issues of concern as those relating to fishing, particularly shellfish with the possibility of risk to seabirds in the event of a spillage of the oil fuel from the vessels carrying out the activities. The fishing issues concerned the resuspension of sediments during pre-lay dredging and laying operations and the potential creation of seabed obstructions from anchor mounds and rock dumping which is used to protect pipeline crossings. These issues had been identified and satisfactory mitigation measures put in place. Oil spill risk was addressed by careful scheduling, minimising the number of trips to refuel the vessels and written instructions to be followed when fuel transfers were taking place. An oil spill contingency plan will be in place to cover all the operations. No candidate SAC's were identified. The review of the Environmental Statement was completed on 23 January 2002.