

Letter to Press From Howard Phillips

Dear Sir,

Through your column I would like to thank everyone who supported Protect Wyre Group in opposing the Canatxx proposals to store gas in the salt bed which underlies the Wyre Estuary and adjacent areas.

This includes those with expertise who helped PWG put the case together, those who came to the Inquiry to listen and to ask questions, those who spoke and presented evidence themselves, the very many people who distributed information leaflets in Fleetwood, Cleveleys, Anchorsholme, Thornton, Poulton and Over Wyre, and the 16,000 or more individuals who objected in writing to the LCC in response to either or both the Canatxx applications. There is no doubt that this show of strength was significant in making sure that LCC fully investigated the proposal and did not roll over to the Government's threat that nothing should get in the way of this development.

A major principle which was established by the Inspector's Report was that there is no specific need for the Canatxx scheme especially given the uncertainty about the geology and safety and just how little gas might be stored. To quote the Report "this is not the only location in England where there are proposals coming forward for underground gas storage".

Before Canatxx can put in another application, wide ranging, costly and time consuming investigations would have to be carried out to satisfy the Planning Inspectorate. Any application must include

- 1 Details of the geology sufficient to identify the proposed locations of any caverns. The Report comments that Canatxx " appears to have failed to appreciate that the geological structure is a major constraint". A cored bore is then needed for each of the proposed locations. How this could be done for locations under the estuary is uncertain.
- 2 Details of the layers of rock which lie above the salt bed to determine whether pathways exist for gas migration and to assess the stresses in the gas pipes which it is proposed to drill at an angle from the wellheads.
- 3 It must be proved that there can be no possibility of roof failure of any cavern whilst being created and /or decommissioned. If this happened then a subsidence crater of over 1 km in diameter could be formed which is clearly unacceptable.
- 4 Investigations of the ground conditions in the whole of the area where brine has been extracted in the past.
- 5 An assessment of the risk of wellhead explosions caused either accidentally or through sabotage to the public using the Wyre Way. Any closure of the Wyre Way is unacceptable.
- 6 A sure means of ensuring that the decommissioning can be funded and implemented.

This is a very damning report from the Inspector and the Geological Assessor which is supported by the Secretary of State. It shows clearly that right from the start, Canatxx have not carried out the necessary investigations and sought to mislead the public with bland assurances about safety. I am thankful that so many of you were not taken in and threw your weight behind PWG.

Howard Phillips

Vice Chair PWG