

Northern Ireland Environment Agency



Your reference

Our reference: AE2-23-55095

Chief Commissioner

Planning/Water Appeals Commission

Park House

89-91 Great Victoria Street

Belfast

NIEA
17 Antrim Road
Tonagh
Lisburn
BT28 3AL
Telephone:

3 May 2024

Email: [REDACTED]@daera-ni.gov.uk

Dear [REDACTED]

RE.THE CURRAGHINALT PROJECT (DALRADIAN) PUBLIC LOCAL INQUIRY.

The Department notes the Commission's letter of 2 May 2024 and its suspension of the current timetable for the public inquiry. The Department also notes the Commission's letter of 3 May, in response to the Department's direction of 2 May to the Commission on holding an inquiry on the new abstraction and impoundment licence applications, and the Department's suggested approach to consideration of those new applications.

Firstly, the Department apologises to the Commission for its one day delay in meeting the Commission's deadline of 1 May for responding to the Commission's letter of 25 April. The short delay was due to obtaining the necessary internal Departmental clearances. The Department kept the Commission informed on the expected delay, which the Commission acknowledged. The Department is reviewing its processes with the aim of better ensuring meeting Commission deadlines going forward.

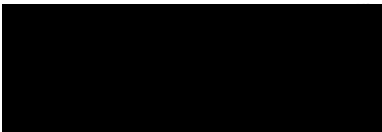
The Department made a valid direction to the Commission on holding an inquiry on the new abstraction and impoundment licence applications on 2 May. The Department is of the view that there is no reason not to accept referral at this point in time. The Department will send

any further representations received, to the Appeals Commission at the end of the consultation period. The applications were advertised in two local newspapers on 2 May 2024. I have included proof of advertisements, from the applicant, for your records.

In the Department's view, suspending the current timetable is not a proportionate response. In directing the Commission on the new applications, the Department made a pragmatic and sensible suggestion for their consideration. The suggested timetable would allow the new applications to catch up with the original timetable for the other applications before the conjoined inquiry. In the Department's view, this suggestion does not lead to any possible prejudice to other parties; it is the most appropriate way of promoting fairness for the applicant and members of the public; and it avoids further delay.

In light of the Department's valid direction on the new applications and its suggested approach to their consideration, the Department asks the Commission to re-consider its decision on suspending the current timetable for the conjoined inquiry.

Yours sincerely



**Chief Executive
Northern Ireland Environment Agency**