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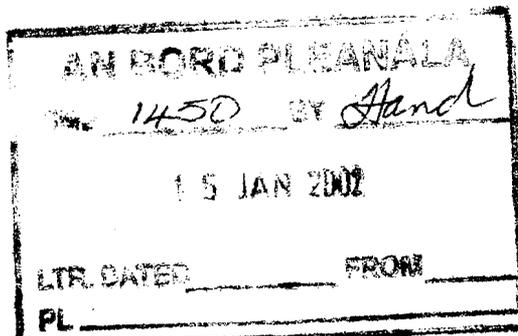
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WATERWAYS IRELAND
UISCEBHÍLÍALAI EIRFANN

15th January 2002

Re: Kildare County Water Strategy
Proposal to Abstract Water from the River Barrow
EIS for Water Treatment Plant at Srowland, Athy.

Dear Sir,

We refer to a letter received from Kildare County Council dated the 17th December 2001 in connection with the above.

Waterways Ireland is one of six North-South Implementation Bodies established pursuant to the British-Irish Agreement, which was brought into force on 2nd December 1999. Waterways Ireland is responsible for the management, maintenance, development and restoration of the inland navigable waterways system throughout Ireland, principally for recreational purposes and works under the overall policy direction of the North-South Ministerial Council.

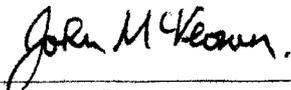
We would like to make the following observations in relation to the proposal to abstract water from the River Barrow at Srowland, Athy and the Environmental Impact Statement prepared for Kildare County Council.

- (1) The Barrow Navigation is the stretch of the River Barrow between Athy, Co. Kildare and St. Mullin's, Co. Carlow. It is a river navigation with lateral canals. The navigation is 69 km long, 18 km of which are lateral canals, with 23 locks. Like all river navigation's it is subject to fluctuating water levels and low levels can cause problems for navigation in the summer. Waterways Ireland has the statutory duty, under the Canals Act 1986, to provide navigation for private and commercial boat operations during the boating season which mainly occurs between the months of March through to October.
- (2) Table 10.9, Page 59 of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) notes that the estimated flow depth on Ardreich Weir at Dry Weather Flow (DWF), presently, is 0.130 metres. From observations by Waterways Ireland personnel, over many years, there is only a trickle of water going over the weir in DWF. Therefore, the removal of any supply from the upper reaches of the navigation will have an effect locally but will have detrimental effect to the lower reaches of the navigation. If the navigable depth is reduced below a certain critical figure, for whatever reason, the navigation may have to be closed in the interest of safety.

The EIS is remiss in that it has not identified any mitigation measures having accepted that the post works flow regime will be reduced and hence a direct impact on water levels (Section 10.6.3). In addition to meeting predicted traffic requirements by supplying lockages, water availability along the navigation must be sufficient to provide for losses due to evaporation, leakage around and through weirs (weir crest irregular) and natural drainage seepage through lands.

In conclusion, there is a long history of water shortage on the Barrow Navigation where the flow in the river is insufficient to maintain satisfactory navigation depth in some reaches during dry weather periods. Waterways Ireland are very concerned that the proposal to draw off 40,000 m³/day (8.8 million gallons per day) will have a detrimental effect on the Barrow Navigation. Further studies should be carried out to evaluate the effects to navigation depth and to develop a water resource model, for each of the reaches of the Navigation, to determine the total water requirement.

Yours sincerely,



John Mc Keown
Regional Manager
Eastern Region.

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