



# HM Government of Gibraltar

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Ministry of Health, the Environment,  
Energy and Climate Change

## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Opposition clearly fails to understand the planning and EIA processes**

The Opposition's reaction to the DPC's unanimous decision to issue an EIA certificate for the power station shows a total lack of respect to all its members, especially those who represent non-governmental organisations and give their time to contribute and attend without payment, and who clearly and openly express their views.

For the benefit of those Opposition members whose lack of understanding as to how the planning and EIA processes work is clear; An Environmental Impact Assessment of the power station is exactly that - it studies the proposed power station's impact on the environment. It is not meant to be a comprehensive safety report, nor does it claim to study an LNG storage plant. As a means of encouraging full public participation the Government published the full EIA online immediately upon receiving it, thus opening up the whole report to public scrutiny. The EIA confirms that the new power station will have extremely low emissions and low noise in comparison with the overall activity of the area, including traffic, and that any increase in pollution will be insignificant in relation to that. LNG storage will be dealt with fully at the appropriate stage.

The information made available to the statutory members of the DPC was not made available to the Opposition precisely because they are not members of the DPC. The basic fact that documents are made available to independent members of the DPC is completely new under this Government. This includes the ESG, GONHS and the Heritage Trust, who had every opportunity to study and respond to the EIA in advance, and, in the case of the ESG to meet with Government on several occasions to pursue their environmental aims further. Is the Opposition accusing the ESG, GONHS, the Heritage Trust, the MOD and all the professionals on DPC of ignominious collusion and rubber stamping? They really have gone too far.

That the EIA was approved after an open, public debate is recognised and welcomed by those present, including the Waterport Terraces representative, and which was also documented and reported by the local media. Open, public meetings of the DPC were

Ministry of Health, the Environment, Energy and Climate Change

HM Government of Gibraltar • Duke of Kent House, Cathedral Square • Gibraltar GX11 1AA

t +350 20066491 f +350 20066706 e mhe@gibraltar.gov.gi w gibraltar.gov.gi



introduced by this Government and the media are always encouraged to report on the discussions. The aim is simple – although some in Opposition are evidently thrown by what may seem to them as a radical concept – full community participation that makes sure that all interested parties have their voice heard. The Government has separately embarked on a series of meetings with representatives of the Waterport Terraces petitioners in which all aspects of the power station, including the safety of LNG storage, are being discussed. This demonstrates a genuine determination by all stakeholders to engage in a meaningful, productive way to the benefit of Gibraltar. The Government regrets that the Opposition has deliberately misrepresented these efforts.

The designs for the power station will incorporate the Best Available Technology. Gas has been scientifically proven to produce significantly fewer harmful emissions than diesel – it is the cleanest of fossil fuels – and thus the Government is following expert advice to use it. Gas is also the most economically prudent option available as it is subject to fewer EU fines, which include those for carbon emissions and contribution to the carbon footprint, than diesel. The Government has always strongly emphasised that diesel will only be used at the new power station in exceptional circumstances precisely for these reasons. Incorporating plans to ensure that in these exceptional circumstances the power station is equipped with the Best Available Technology to clean these dirty emissions as much as possible is what any responsible Government would do. It is entirely regrettable that the Opposition have attempted to spin responsible Government as a lie instead of choosing to work positively with Government, the DPC and other stakeholders for the mutual benefit of us all.

Dr John Cortes commented: “The Opposition are clearly desperate, and annoyed at the professional and considerate way that the Government is dealing with this important matter. Never in Gibraltar’s history has there been so much openness and frank discussion on a similar project, something which this Government actually welcomes. It ensures that the community works together to achieve the best possible results. I am really grateful to the petitioners, and of course to the ESG, for flying the same environmental flag that I have flown all my life. I stand by the categorical commitment that I gave on behalf of the Government that all the conditions that have requested by the ESG would be incorporated, and in fact the process of requiring Best Available Technology, such as electrostatic precipitators, one of the ESG’s key requests, has already commenced. We are committed to produce an efficient, secure and safe supply of electricity for decades to come, and we will do just that”.