

# SHELL TO SEA: The West's Awake!

<http://www.corribsos.com/>

About Us, September 2005

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**We are the Shell to Sea network: concerned citizens from all walks of life who seek to draw attention to the planned corrib gas project.**

**'Ireland should not negotiate away it's environment for the sake of a few jobs..'**

*Dr Owens Wiwa,*

*brother of of executed Nigerian poet Ken Saro Wiwa*

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## **QUICK READ BACKGROUND**

In Mayo Shell and Statoil, with the approval of the Irish government, are planning to:

Take land from local residents and build a high pressure gas pipeline that will go past their houses:

The pressure inside the pipeline will be up to four times greater than that of the biggest Bord Gais pipelines. The pipeline will be going through boggy land with a history of landslides.

### **Construct a gas refinery on unstable bog:**

This construction will be using previously untried methods to stabilise the bog surface and involve a massive amount of traffic. Emissions from the refinery will affect the nearby Carrowmore Lake, source of the regional water supply.

### **Pump toxic waste into Broadhaven Bay:**

A U.C.C. research team found that Broadhaven Bay was an important breeding and rearing area for dolphins and whales. They recorded over 220 sightings of seven whale and dolphin species, plus sightings of two seal species, in Broadhaven Bay and north-west Mayo waters.

The government is giving them our gas for practically nothing and then we will have to buy it back:

From 1975 for oil and gas companies there was a tax rate of 50%, an automatic 50% state stake in any commercial well, and royalties of 6 %– 7%.

In 1987, after lobbying by the companies, Ray Burke got rid of the 50% state stake and removed royalties.

In 1992 after further lobbying Bobby Molloy reduced the tax rate to 25% and 100% tax write offs were introduced, meaning that the companies can subtract their costs from their tax bill.

In other places in Europe the state take can be 55% or even 79% of a field.

Shell have been given permission by the High Court to start work on the on land parts of the pipeline in about a months time, construction is due to start on the landfall, where the off-shore pipeline hits the beach, on May 31st.

### **Help the local people to stop Shell!**

Who Pays the Piper?

On a side note this issue totally demonstrates the importance of the independence of Indymedia.

Tony O'Reilly, owner of the Belfast Telegraph, the London and Dublin Independents, the Sunday Independent (Ireland), the Independent on Sunday (England), the Sunday World, The Star, The Evening Herald, some of the Sunday Tribune, various local weeklies including The Kerryman and the Drogheda Independent, as well as other media internationally, also owns Providence Resources.

Providence Resources are an oil and gas exploration company with interests in potential fields off the south and west coasts of Ireland.

There is the possibility that what is happening in Erris, Mayo, will only be the first instance of corporations cutting corners at the expense of the environment and local communities as they exploit the potential oil and gas reserves off the coast,

particularly the west coast, of Ireland.

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## More background

### **The Pipeline:**

This is an unprecedented development, normally up stream pipelines of untreated gas do not go over land. The gas pipeline also has adjoining pipelines carrying hydraulic fluid, cleansing acids, and a waste pipe. There will also be electric cables.

This is a high pressure pipeline, 345 bar pressure for the gas, 610 bar pressure for the acids and hydraulic fluid. It is untreated, that is, odourless, without the added smell for detecting leaks. This is not the normal run of the mill gas pipeline.

In Kinsale the gas is refined at sea, piped ashore at a much lower pressure and odorised. The biggest Bord Gais pipelines, in the so-called Transmission network, bringing the gas cross-country or overseas, run at 16 – 70 bar pressure.

This development is so unprecedented the relevant legislation and regulations assumes its non-existence, that is, it applies to off shore upstream pipelines and to on land ones of around the levels of pressure used by Bord Gais.

The large pressure is necessary as the pipeline is actually pumping the gas straight out of the field, normally this process takes place completely at sea. This pipeline will pass by peoples' houses and by villages. It is being built through a bog where there have been landslides.

### **Carrowmore Lake:**

This is the source of the regional water supply, and is protected as a Natura 2000 site under the E.U. habitats directive; it is also on the United Nations list of protected conservation areas. It has already been degraded due to Shell related civil engineering, with a marked decline in fishing and the arrival of algae bloom.

It will be on the receiving end of emissions from the proposed refinery at Ballinaboy.

### **Broadhaven bay:**

Into Broadhaven Bay will be pumped the waste from the refinery, including lead, nickel, magnesium, phosphorus, chromium, arsenic, mercury and the radioactive gas radon, due to the bay's circular tidal pattern and semi-enclosed nature a large portion

of this toxic waste is likely to stay within the bay rather than be washed out to sea.

Broadhaven Bay is a Special Area of Conservation under E.U. regulations; it also provides livelihoods to local communities through fishing.

According to state heritage agency An Duchas "Broadhaven Bay supports an internationally important number of Brent Geese" as well as regionally important populations of other birds.

The Environmental Impact Statement made to the Department of the Marine by Shell as part of the process to gain a licence for off-shore work claimed there was 'no evidence that Broadhaven Bay is of particular importance to cetaceans (whales and dolphins)'. Against this the Irish Whale and Dolphin group pointed out the historic and anecdotal evidence to the contrary, which is sightings by fishermen and the former presence in the area of major whaling stations.

However it now turns out that Shell commissioned a study by University College Cork's Coastal and Marine Resources Centre which found the exact opposite from the claim Shell made in its environmental impact statement.

Shell neglected to mention the study, though the lack of concrete data on whales and dolphins in their statement was criticised by the department of Marine.

The U.C.C. research team recorded over 220 sightings of seven whale and dolphin species, plus sightings of two seal species and marine mammals such as basking sharks and a sea turtle in Broadhaven Bay and north-west Mayo waters. This including sightings of the relatively rare Risso's Dolphin. It found that Broadhaven Bay was an important breeding and rearing area for dolphins and whales.

The pipeline is to go straight through the machair sand dunes/coastal grasslands at one end of Broadhaven Bay. These are habitat unique to the north west of Ireland and the north west of Scotland.

### **The Refinery:**

The cleaning terminal, a large combustion plant, is a huge project. It will require in excess of 120 MW power to operate. The power will come from burning off the uncleaned gas condensate, full of chemical nasties, such as oxides of carbon and nitrogen, sulphur dioxide, methane and ozone.

There are nine chimneys, four of them approximately 140 feet high. They will release carbon dioxide and methane equivalent to the global warming potential of 27,000 dairy

cows. The Environmental Impact Study (EIS) from Enterprise Energy Ireland (EEI) notes two houses within a 2 km radius of the station. In fact, there are 16 houses.

The waste water problem is twofold. There is a pipe to take waste impurities to sea and a perforated perimeter ditch which will surround the drainage from the site. The waste water storage sump is designed to withstand one hour continuous rainfall, though Crossmolina had 106 days consecutive rainfall last autumn. The overflow will flow into Carrowmore Lake, which feeds the water supply of Erris.

This untreated waste water will contain many lethal substances, including lead, nickel, magnesium, phosphorus, chromium, arsenic, mercury and the radioactive gas radon.

Both the refinery and the pipeline are to be constructed on unstable bog land, Shell's plan to stabilise this involves mixing in cement to form a hard surface.

This process has only ever had small field trials and lab tests and creates a reaction which produces the very toxic hexavalent chromium.

### **The Deal:**

From 1975 for oil and gas companies there was a tax rate of 50%, an automatic 50% state stake in any commercial well, and royalties of 6 %– 7%.

In 1987, after lobbying by the companies, Ray Burke got rid of the 50% state stake and removed royalties.

In 1992 after further lobbying Bobby Molloy reduced the tax rate to 25% and 100% tax write offs were introduced, meaning that the companies can subtract their costs from their tax bill.

In 1996 the licence for the Corrib Gas field was granted to Enterprise Energy Ireland a subsidiary of Enterprise Oil, which has since been bought out, in 2002, by Shell, and the consortium also includes Statoil and Marathon Oil.

Enterprise Oil held major fundraising events for Fianna Fail at the Galway Races in 1998, 1999, 2000 and 2001.

Other companies involved are also major Fianna Fail donators.

Then Minister Frank Fahey granted them innumerable licenses before the planning procedures were over, and gave them 400 plus acres of Coilte land.

Bertie Ahern has had meetings with Shell on this issue.

The deal is the pipelines after the refinery, running to Dublin and Scotland, will be constructed by the state, that is, Bord Gais, while a good deal of infrastructure, new roads and bridges is already being built by the state, i.e. Mayo County Council. Some of the gas, that which is not exported, will then be purchased back by the state.

These companies have a track record of not employing Irish rig workers.

According to Mike Cunningham, a former director of Statoil Exploration (Ireland): "No other country in the world has given such favourable terms as Ireland."

In other places in Europe the state take can be 55% or even 79% of a field.

### **Window of Opportunity:**

In the High Court, in Shell's case against some of the small farmers upon whose land Shell's development is to go, Hanratty, barrister for Shell, made the case that they needed injunction proceedings to be dealt with as quickly as possible.

Claiming that they have a "window of opportunity" for construction between April and October of this year, and that if the project was delayed until late June there was a "real possibility that it would not be completed in that construction season" and hence would be delayed until next year.

He argued that was a real "urgency" to this, that it is "imperative" that this does not happen, lest there be "enormous additional costs."

### **Construction Dates:**

Landfall construction of the Pipeline, that is, building at the beach in Broadhaven bay where the pipe comes on shore, is due to commence on the 31st of May 05 and run to the 8 of November 2005.

The installation of the pipeline across country was to begin on the 25th of February, of course it hasn't.

Construction of pipeline estuary and river crossings is due to start on the 15th of August and finish on the 30th of September.

Construction of the Refinery is due to commence on the 29th of August 2005 and finish on the 14 December 2006.

The important thing to remember is Shell had initially planned to have the whole project up and running, finished, completed, built and pumping gas, last year, but

have faced considerable delays in the planning appeals process.

They claim they will lose 25,000 euro a day, every day, that the construction is delayed for after the 1st of June.

Should they be delayed into next year this will cost them a remobilisation fee of 2.5 million euro.

There are big bucks involved in this too, in July 2002 Shell had to cancel their hiring of the Solitare, a pipe laying ship, due to a delay provoked by an An Bord Plenala request for further information, and this cancellation resulted in Shell getting hit with a 31 million sterling breach of contract claim.





'And if, when all a vigil keep,  
The West's asleep! the West's asleep!  
Alas! and well may Erin weep  
That Connacht lies in slumber deep.  
But, hark! a voice like thunder spake,  
The West's awake! the West's awake!  
Sing, Oh! hurrah! let Shell & Statoil quake,  
We'll watch till death for Erin's sake'

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**Norway appeal** [APPEAL](#) [INFO](#) [En oppfordring til det norske folk fra "The Rosspport Five"](#)

**The Truth** ([PDF](#))

- **Background** articles: [1](#), [2](#), [3](#), [4](#), [5](#), [6](#), [7](#), [8](#), [9](#), [10](#) | [Local area](#) | [Shell](#)

We now call on our supporters to intensify the campaign for the safety of our community and families. The campaign has now



begun in earnest. Rossport 5, Sept 30th

We will do anything to save our land and our livelihoods, we are desperate and we are weary but we won't give up

Willie Corduff

'No other country in the world has given such favourable terms as Ireland...'

Mike Cunningham, former Statoil director, Ireland.

We're in prison because we intend to protect our lives and our families and our neighbours from potential disaster. We cannot agree to a proposal which proposes to ban us from continuing to protect our lives by opposing the Shell pipeline

The Rossport 5

"Why not just have all of them committed (put in prison)"

Andy Pyle MD Shell Ireland, 10<sup>th</sup> June 2005

'I am not even contemplating and we wouldn't anticipate further imprisonment'

Andy Pyle MD Shell Ireland, 30th Sep 05 (news clip)