



15<sup>th</sup> September, 2020

M.V. Murray,  
PSE Kinsale Energy Ltd,  
Mahon Industrial Estate,  
Cork,  
T12 PW92.

### **Kinsale Area Subsea Wells - Rig Site Clearance Survey Application**

Dear Mr Murray,

I refer to the application (dated 5th March 2020) submitted to the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment (DCCAE) by PSE Kinsale Energy Ltd. (PSE), seeking Ministerial approval to undertake a rig-site clearance survey using geophysical techniques in the South West, Ballycotton and Seven Heads gas fields during 2020.

I wish to inform you that the Minister having considered the following matters in respect of the rig-site clearance survey:

- a. the submission appended to this letter including the TABs attached to it;
- b. the content of the EIA and having determined that it adequately identifies, describes and assesses the direct and indirect effects of the rig-site clearance survey;
- c. the content of the AA Screening Report accompanying the application, the separate submission to the Minister on the AA Screening Report and the Annex IV species assessment and the separate AA determination of the Minister dated 29<sup>th</sup> July, 2020;
- d. the reports prepared by the environmental consultants, RPS Consultants;
- e. and having regard to the following matters:
  - i. the nature, scale, extent and location of the rig-site clearance survey;
  - ii. the particulars submitted with the application seeking approval for the rig-site clearance survey; and
  - iii. the submissions and observations made in relation to the effects on the environment of the rig-site clearance survey including those made by statutory consultees and members of the public.

determined on 15<sup>th</sup> September, 2020 that he is satisfied:

- having carried out an EIA in relation to the rig-site clearance survey, alone and in combination with other developments, he agrees with the conclusion of RPS



Consultants that, subject to the implementation of the mitigation measures proposed, as set out in the EIA, and subject to compliance with the conditions set out below, the rig-site clearance survey will not result in significant adverse effects on the environment;

- that it can be excluded on the basis of objective scientific information, following screening under the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations, SI No. 477 of 2011 (as amended), that the rig-site clearance survey, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will have a significant effect on a European site having regard, *inter alia*, to the European Union (Environmental Impact Assessment and Habitats) Regulations 2011 (SI No. 473 of 2011) and the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (as amended) (SI 477/2011);
- that the assessment for Annex IV Species is of an acceptable standard such that he can be satisfied that there would be no significant adverse effects on Annex IV species;
- to accept and adopt the content and conclusions of the reports prepared by RPS Consultants and PAD Technical.

Being satisfied regarding the matters outlined above, I am directed by the Minister to convey his consent to:

- (i) PSE Kinsale Energy Ltd. to undertake a rig-site clearance survey using geophysical techniques in the South West, Ballycotton and Seven Heads gas fields during 2020.

Please note that this consent is conditional upon:

1. The applicant must seek approval from DCCAE prior to the commencement of the survey should alternative vessels and/or equipment be proposed. In this event, confirmation will be required that the survey equipment and methodology on any replacement vessel are equivalent to that described in the applicant's application documents, and that the nature and extent of the proposed activities described in those documents have not materially changed.
2. The applicant shall have a suitably qualified visual observer on-board for the duration of activities to ensure that there are no significant effects on species of bird or marine mammal.
3. All operations shall be conducted in compliance with the provisions of the Rules & Procedures for Manual Offshore Petroleum Exploration Operations (RPM).
4. The operator/contractor are required to avoid potential cumulative/in-combination effects arising from adjacent regional survey activity, i.e. a minimum of 100km will be maintained between current survey and any other surveys running concurrently. There is to be co-operation between survey activities in the area.
5. In accordance with Section 2.2.4 of the RPM, a Fisheries Liaison Officer (FLO) and Marine Mammal Observer (MMO) must be on board the vessel for the duration of the survey.



6. The operator/contractor is required to arrange for a radio navigational warning to be broadcast and ensure that daily position reports are sent to the Irish Coast Guard, MRCC Dublin along with a notification of number of persons on board. The Irish Coast Guard, MRCC Dublin, the Marine Survey Office of the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport and the Department of Communications, Climate Action & Environment (DCCAE) must be notified on the start and completion of operations.
7. The Department is to be informed on the commencement and completion of the survey. Daily progress reports should be sent to DCCAE via secure website or by posting to a designated secure website or by emailing (addresses to be advised separately). The operator/contractor is required to make the daily progress reports available to DCCAE before noon each day for the duration of the survey. The final progress report should be sent to the DCCAE.
8. The Department is to be provided with tabulated data on impulsive noise events to be added to the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government (DHPLG) Impulsive Sound Register. Data to include;
  - Source properties (Hz; SPL, dB re 1  $\mu$ Pa @1m; SEL, dB re 1  $\mu$ Pa2s @1m);
  - Cumulative hours of active source;
  - Daily/weekly acquisition details (to include line number and date of acquisition);
  - Daily acquisition maps (to include line numbers).
9. All operations must only take place within the proposed working areas as delineated by the light blue outlines in Figure 1 (below) and described in the documents submitted by PSE Kinsale Energy Limited in March 2020.

In accordance with Sections 13A (8) and 13A (8A) of the POMDA, the public must be informed of this decision and it will be published on the Department's website, a national newspaper and in Iris Oifigiúil. A letter informing Prescribed Bodies of the decision will also be issued.

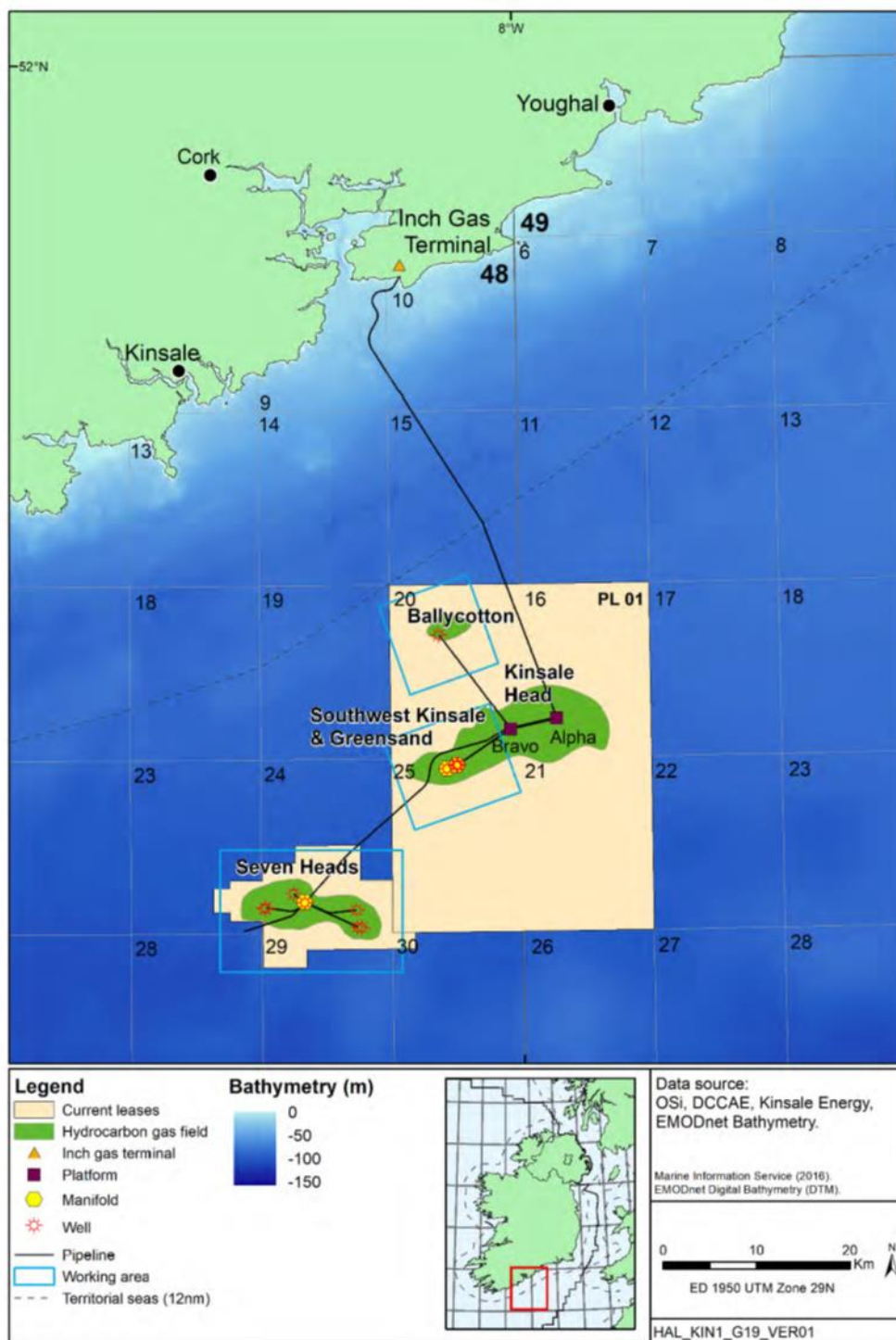
Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Martina Hennessy', is written over a horizontal line.

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Martina Hennessy  
Principal Officer  
Petroleum Affairs Division

**Attachment – submission to Minister Rig-Site Clearance Survey**



**Figure 1:** The location map for the proposed Kinsale area offshore survey.