

Laura Morley
Marine Scotland – Renewables Licensing Operations Team
375 Victoria Road
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5th September 2013

Dear Mr Tate,

Inch Cape Offshore Limited's application for Marine Licenses & Section 36 Consent

RSPB Scotland welcomes the opportunity to provide comment on the application for the Inch Cape offshore wind farm, situated in the Forth & Tay region some 15km to 22km to the east of Angus coastline. Following submission, the applicant met with RSPB Scotland to present their proposals and approach to assessment of the ornithological elements of the project. We appreciate this openness and the efforts taken to keep stakeholders informed.

The application, including the supporting environmental assessment of seabirds, is of a very high standard. The methodologies applied, the transparency provided in the description of assessment and the clarity of the reporting are very much welcomed. This high standard has aided our ability to understand and appraise the application.

ICOL are aware of the research projects, commissioned by Marine Scotland, that will support and inform the decision making process for Inch Cape and the other two offshore wind farm applications in the Forth & Tay region. RSPB Scotland is part of the steering groups to these projects that are considering the population level effects from offshore wind development on seabirds in the Forth & Tay region. Alongside all interested parties, we are awaiting finalisation and publication of this research as we are reliant on best available science to inform our position on Inch Cape. Furthermore, it is critical for us to consider the potential cumulative environmental impacts of Inch Cape with Neart na Gaoithe and Seagreen offshore wind projects as it is apparent that a number of seabird species are likely to be significantly impacted by all three proposals. It is also clear that there is the potential for adverse impacts on the integrity of Special Protection Areas in the region.

In the knowledge that further case relevant information will be forthcoming, we feel it unfortunate Marine Scotland were unable to agree an extension to the statutory consultation period. An extension would have allowed consultation responses to be fully informed. Nonetheless, we have met the response deadline and RSPB Scotland **objects** to Inch Cape Offshore Ltd's application, pending publication of the above mentioned research and, given the possible cumulative impacts, the final submissions from Seagreen's project. This information will provide important contextual input from which we can reassess our position.

Yours sincerely,

[Redacted signature]

[Redacted name]
Conservation Planner (Marine)

Cc'd [Redacted] – Repsol Nuevas Energias UK Limited
[Redacted] – Joint Nature Conservation Committee
[Redacted] – Scottish Natural Heritage

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