

To: External Affairs Manager
ECGD - Public Affairs Branch

From: Nicholas Hildyard, The Corner House

Date: 24 February 2004

Cc: Minister for Trade and Investment
Secretary of State for International Development
Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Chief Secretary to the Treasury

Via email

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... we would like to make a formal request for the summary and conclusions of the Parsons Energy & Chemicals report that you mention [in your earlier email] together with any sections relating to the testing of the product, its use elsewhere and its record as a coating on other pipelines.

We believe that the release of such material is of critical importance if public concerns over the safety of the coating are to be assuaged. We note that the report was commissioned by the project lenders and that issues of commercial confidentiality should not therefore apply. We believe that we would be entitled to the report under the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information.

We would also ask you to clarify:

1. What were the Terms of Reference for the Parson Energy & Chemicals' review?
2. When was the review undertaken?
3. What documentation was made available to Parsons Energy & Chemicals?
4. Does the Parsons Energy & Chemicals report confirm that the coating, if applied properly, will protect the pipeline for its estimated design life of 40 years + 20%?
5. Was the SPC 2888 coating subject to a full field test in stimulated weather conditions? If so, when, who by and with what results?
6. When did Parsons Energy & Chemicals approve the coating?
7. When was the Parsons review made available to ECGD?
8. Can they confirm that the field joint coating specification did not include any post-application heat induction?

9. On what other major pipeline, anywhere in the world, has SPC 2888 been used where the pipeline is coated with a three layer, high-density, polyethylene coating, like the BTC pipeline?
10. How many of the pipes coated with SPC 2888 have already been buried (backfilled) in (a) Azerbaijan and (b) Georgia?
11. How many of the pipes coated with SPC 2888 are waiting in trenches for backfill in (a) Azerbaijan and (b) Georgia?
12. What percentage of the unburied pipes coated with SPC 2888 have developed cracks in (a) Azerbaijan and (b) Georgia?
13. What steps the ECGD has taken since November 2003 to investigate in situ the integrity of those sections of the pipeline that have been coated with SPC 2888, including sections that have already been buried?
14. Does the ECGD intend to send engineers to check the SPC 2888-coated pipeline's integrity in situ?