

MANAGING RADIOACTIVE WASTE SAFELY

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: Councillor Elaine Woodburn
LEAD OFFICER: Paul Walker, Chief Executive
REPORT AUTHOR: Tim Capper

WHAT BENEFITS WILL THESE PROPOSALS BRING TO COPELAND RESIDENTS?

None from petition directly

WHY HAS THIS REPORT COME TO THE EXECUTIVE?

Decision

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Executive considers the attached petition.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Council has received a petition from Radiation Free Lakeland asking the Council, along with Allerdale Borough Council and Cumbria County Council, to halt the Managing Radioactive Waste Safely process by withdrawing from it.

1.2 This report summarises the content of the petition and options for responding.

2. PROPOSALS

2.1 The petition contains 1520 signatures, mostly of non Cumbria residents. The preamble to the petition is reproduced at Appendix "A" for Members' information.

3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS TO BE CONSIDERED

3.1 The Council needs to consider what response to the petition, if any, would be appropriate at this stage.

4. CONCLUSIONS

4.1 The Council needs to decide how to respond to the petition, by either acceding to the petitioners' request to withdraw from the MRWS process or by deferring consideration of their concerns until after the formal consultation period in 2012.

5. STATUTORY OFFICER COMMENTS

5.1 The Monitoring Officer's comments are: Reflected in the report

5.2 The Section 151 Officer's comments are:

5.3 EIA Comments: This report deals with options for responding to a petition concerning the Council's participation or otherwise in a process for choosing a site for long term storage radioactive waste. It does not impact on any group with protected characteristics either positively or negatively.

5.4 Other consultee comments, if any:

List of Appendices

Appendix A – Preamble to Petition

List of Background Documents:

RADIATION FREE LAKELAND
LOVE THE LAND

5th September 2011

CUMBRIA COUNTY COUNCIL MEMBER SERVICES UNIT	
07 SEP 2011	
ACKD _____	
ANS'D _____	
PASS TO _____	

To Cumbria County Council, Copeland and Allerdale Borough Councils.

Dear Councillor,

Cumbria County Council and Allerdale and Copeland Borough Council are absolutely right to object to the distribution of low level nuclear wastes in Cumbrian landfill sites such as Lillyhall and coal mines such as Keeble Head (1). Radiation Free Lakeland fully support these objections (2). Given the sensible objection to the dispersal of low level nuclear wastes, it makes no sense for Cumbrian councils to "express an interest" in the geological disposal of high level nuclear wastes (3).

We will be delivering a petition of 1520 signatures to CCC on Monday 5th September. The petition calls on Cumbria County Council and Copeland and Allerdale Borough Councils to halt the Managing Radioactive Wastes Safely process by their withdrawal (4). The MRWS process has one agenda - "steps towards geological disposal" which means a newly mined area (or two or three) filled with high level radioactive wastes - in a hole(s) bigger than Lake Windermere and as deep as the Eiffel Tower (5).

In November 2008 Cumbria County Councillors were not allowed to vote on what they described as 'the most important decision this council will ever take.' (7) Copeland and Allerdale were told: "This is the option being taken in the US at Yucca Mountain, Nevada, where highly radioactive fuel will go underground. The Yucca Mountain project involves URS Washington, a key partner in Sellafield's parent body organisation". (8) Sounds plausible but geological disposal of high level nuclear waste in Yucca Mountain is off the agenda because of contamination risks to that regions water, soil and air. URS Washington have now set up shop in Cumbria, a much wetter area than Nevada (9). Despite the Managing Radioactive Waste Safely Partnership's reassuring rhetoric, there is in fact nowhere in the world with an operational high level waste geological disposal facility (10). There are those with concerns about Cumbria's geology who advocate geological disposal elsewhere (11). We agree that Cumbria is the wrong place but would go further and suggest that there is no place in the world safe, dry and remote enough to put high level nuclear wastes into the ground and expect them to stay isolated from humans and the environment.

Certainly as far as Cumbria's geology is concerned it is a massive waste of time, energy and taxpayers money for councils in Cumbria to "express an interest" in "volunteering" to host a high level nuclear waste repository. The Nirex Inquiry Decision was that the site should be sought elsewhere - well away from the Irish Sea. Eminent geologists have recently confirmed that this meant outside West Cumbria; and the Irish Government and others would inevitably lodge legal actions under EU Law to prevent inevitable radioactive pollution of the Irish Sea from a deep underground dump (12).

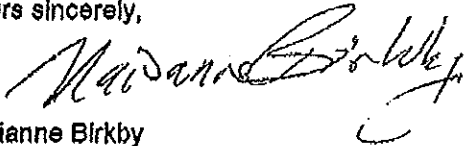
"Steps towards geological disposal" in Cumbria are being used as a front. The government is desperate to be seen to comply with the findings of the Flowers report that:

There should be no commitment to a large programme of nuclear fission power until it has been demonstrated beyond reasonable doubt that a method exists to ensure the safe containment of long lived, highly radioactive waste for the indefinite future. (13)

BNFL (now the NDA) produced a video in 1999 which made a far stronger case against 'geological disposal' in Cumbria than any petitioner such as Radiation Free Lakeland could hope to. The video advises that areas of "high rainfall, permeable rocks and hills and mountains to drive the water flow" would guarantee high level radioactive wastes migrating to the surface (14). In other words geological disposal of high level nuclear wastes in an area such as Cumbria would make that land too fiercely radioactive to sustain life.

We urge Cumbria County Council, and Allerdale and Copeland Borough Councils to withdraw from the 'Managing Radioactive Wastes Safely' process as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,



Marianne Birkby
Volunteer* (dictionary definition)
on behalf of Radiation Free Lakeland
8 Chelsea Court
Millthorpe
Cumbria
LA7 7DJ

NOTE:

*The word 'Volunteer' as used in the MRWS process has mutated to: *council volunteering their region to site a high level nuclear waste repository in return for taxpayer millions.*

The dictionary definition of Volunteer is:

- of the volunteer's own free will and without coercion
- for no financial payment
- A person who performs or offers to perform a service voluntarily
- A person who renders aid, performs a service, or assumes an obligation voluntarily
- without payment in fact or in kind

<http://www.thefreedictionary.com/volunteer>

REFS:

(1) Copeland Rejects Keekle Head Nuclear Waste Plan
<http://www.whitehavennews.co.uk/news/copeland-rejects-keekle-head-nuclear-waste-plan-1.869127?referrerPath=home/2.2837>

(2) Radioactive Landfill at Keekle Head and Lillyhall? No Thanks!
Facebook group - 115 members
<http://www.facebook.com/groups/119805971373120/>

Bid to Oppose Lillyhall Landfill Legalities
<http://www.getnoticedonline.co.uk/news/general-news/bid-to-oppose-lillyhall-landfill-legalities.html>

(3) "expressing an interest"
<http://www.whitehavennews.co.uk/news/underground-dump-not-a-done-deal-1.676364?referrerPath=home>

(4) Petition – NO Underground Nuke Dump
<http://northern-indymedia.org/articles/1368>

(5) "We must progress implementation of geological disposal"
Charles Hendry MP
http://www.decc.gov.uk/en/content/cms/news/pn10_114/pn10_114.aspx

(6) Repository Footprint – slide 8
Would a deep nuclear waste repository in West Cumbria be safe? Dr Helen Wallace
http://www.genewatch.org/uploads/f03c6d66a9b354535738483c1c3d49e4/HW_allerdale_fin.pdf

(7) Council Slammed in Nuke Dump Row
<http://www.cumberlandnews.co.uk/news/council-slammed-in-nuke-plan-row-1.277316?referrerPath=news/1.117593>

(8) Allerdale might host N-waste Dump
<http://www.whitehavennews.co.uk/news/business/1.282959>

(9) Nevada Objects 229 Times
Las Vegas Journal <http://www.lvri.com/news/36489114.html>

(10) Rock Solid – scientific review by Dr Helen Wallace
<http://www.greenpeace.org/eu-unit/en/Publications/2010/rock-solid-a-scientific-review/>

(11) 13 Years on Nirex report makes compelling reading
<http://www.getnoticedonline.co.uk/news/general-news/thirteen-years-on-nirex-report-makes-compelling-reading.html>
Prof David Smythe
<http://davidsmythe.org/nuclear/nuclear.htm>

(12) Irish Action on Sellafield
<http://www.friendsoftheIrishenvironment.net/paperstoday/index.php?action=view&id=1466>

(13) As part of its response to the **Flowers report**, the Government made the Department of the Environment responsible for radioactive waste management policy (Command Paper 6820)
<http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:UZhCS7oaV2wJ:www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld199899/ldselect/ldscitech/41/4103.htm+Flowers+report+nuclear&cd=4&hl=en&ct=clnk&client=safari&source=www.google.com>

(14) The Pangea Project
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UJBSAfu0hJM>

Pangea Project Sponsored by BNFL Rules Out Cumbria ie area of "high rainfall,
permeable rocks and hills and mountains to drive the water flow."
<http://northern-indymedia.org/articles/2115>

CC
Tim Farron MP
Rory Stewart MP
John Woodcock MP
Jamie Reed MP
Tony Cunningham MP
John Stevenson MP
Richard Leafe LDNPA
Ian Stephens Cumbria Tourism
Peter Bullard Cumbria Wildlife Trust
Andrew Forsyth Friends of the Lake District
Simon Jenkins National Trust
Katé Gascoyne Cumbria Organics
Robert Sheasby National Farmers Union