



*Nuclear Free Local Authorities Steering Committee*

# information

**NFLA Media release - for immediate release, 9<sup>th</sup> May 2013**

## **NFLA Ireland Chairs meet Irish Government to discuss Sellafield issues, HMS Tireless leak and RPII report on UK new nuclear build**

The Nuclear Free Local Authorities (NFLA) All Ireland Forum Chairs and NFLA Secretariat staff met recently with officials from the Department of the Environment to discuss a number of pressing nuclear policy issues with an impact on Ireland - Sellafield and radioactive waste issues, UK new nuclear build and the recent reported leak on the nuclear submarine HMS Tireless (1).

In a welcome and open discussion, the Irish Government's recent report on Sellafield, which argued that there were few types of serious incidents at Sellafield that would pose a significant health risk to Ireland, was the focus of the debate (2). The NFLA strongly challenged the Department's officials on this report and the impression it may give around the Government's policy position with regard to the Sellafield site. In response the officials said the report gave the Government a much greater understanding of the site and stood by its main findings. The Government's concerns over Sellafield still remain and are voiced at regular meetings with the UK Government. The NFLA concurs with the recent UK National Audit Office report that there remain 'intolerable risks' at Sellafield that have to be urgently dealt with (3).

The meeting also allowed for a discussion on the proposed development of new nuclear power stations on the west coast of England and Wales. The Radiological Institute of Ireland (RPII) is finalising its report on the radiological risks to Ireland of such new nuclear power stations and this report will be published shortly. One of the first public occasions it will be discussed in full is at the upcoming NFLA All Ireland Forum seminar in Swords on the 7<sup>th</sup> June, where an RPII speaker will profile the main findings of the report and an independent radiation specialist, Dr Ian Fairlie, will outline his views on the report for councillors and council officers (4). The report will play an important part in determining ongoing Irish Government policy towards UK new nuclear build. This is at a time when An Taisce, has begun a legal challenge against the UK Government giving outline planning permission for the building of a new nuclear reactor at Hinkley Point in Somerset. The NFLA were assured that the Dept is monitoring the new nuclear issue in the UK closely (5).

The other main issue discussed at the meeting was a reported reactor leak of the nuclear submarine HMS Tireless near the Faslane site. The UK Government have stated this was a minor leak and the submarine was transported to the Devonport site for repairs. The NFLA are concerned that the Irish Government was not formally notified of this incident and the transport. The Department's officials noted they were not made aware of the incident and are seeking further clarification about the incident at an upcoming IAEA intergovernmental meeting.

NFLA All Ireland Co-Chair, Councillor Mark Dearey said:

"I found this second meeting between the NFLA and the Irish Government a useful opportunity to discuss nuclear policy issues of direct relevance to Ireland. As we have seen from the recent publication of reports by the UK National Audit Office there are major risks at the Sellafield site that Irish Councils, particularly those on the east coast, need to keep a close eye on and that is the important role of the NFLA. I welcome the Irish Government taking time to discuss such issues with us but I remain concerned they are not being vocal enough in challenging the UK Government, particularly on proposed new nuclear build. I welcome An Taisce's recent legal challenge and see it as something to which our own Government should also be actively considering."

NFLA All Ireland Co-Chair, Councillor Michael Carr added:

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“Our upcoming NFLA All Ireland Forum seminar is an excellent opportunity for Irish Councils and the wider media to find out more about the radiological risks to Ireland of the construction of up to 8 new nuclear reactors on the west coast of England and Wales. The recent meeting with the Irish Government makes me fully aware that this is a critical time to be raising these concerns at the highest level as I do not want to see new nuclear reactors just across the Irish Sea from Newry, Dundalk and other Irish towns and cities.”

Ends

**Further information** - Sean Morris, NFLA Secretary - 0161 234 3244 or 07771 930196.

## **Notes to editors:**

- (1) The meeting between the NFLA and the Irish Government was held in Custom House, Dublin on the 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2013.
- (2) Irish Government report on the risks to Ireland of an incident at the Sellafield facility, published 28<sup>th</sup> November 2012,  
<http://www.environ.ie/en/Publications/Environment/EnvironmentalRadiation/FileDownload.31607.en.pdf>
- (3) UK National Audit Office – ‘Managing risk reduction at Sellafield’, 7<sup>th</sup> November 2012  
[http://www.nao.org.uk/publications/1213/sellafield\\_risk\\_reduction.aspx](http://www.nao.org.uk/publications/1213/sellafield_risk_reduction.aspx)
- (4) NFLA All Ireland Forum seminar – Key energy policy issues for Ireland to consider: the risks of UK new nuclear build and the issues around a major Irish onshore wind programme, Fingal County Hall, Swords, Friday June 7<sup>th</sup> 2013, 10.30am – 1.30pm.  
Speakers include Dr Ciara McMahon of the Radiological Institute of Ireland, independent radiation policy consultant Dr Ian Fairlie and the Co-founder of the National Offshore Wind Industry of Ireland, Grattan Healy.  
[http://www.nuclearpolicy.info/docs/events/NFLA\\_Fingal\\_flyer\\_June\\_2013.pdf](http://www.nuclearpolicy.info/docs/events/NFLA_Fingal_flyer_June_2013.pdf)
- (5) National Trust of Ireland seeks legal challenge on Hinkley Point decision, BBC, 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2013  
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-22381463>
- (6) NFLA Policy Briefing 109, 17<sup>th</sup> April 2013  
[http://www.nuclearpolicy.info/doscs/briefings/A223\\_\(NB109\)\\_HMS\\_Tireless\\_leak.pdf](http://www.nuclearpolicy.info/doscs/briefings/A223_(NB109)_HMS_Tireless_leak.pdf)

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