



*Nuclear Free Local Authorities Steering Committee*

# information

**NFLA joint media release with the groups Cumbrians Opposed to a Radioactive Environment (CORE) & Highlands against Nuclear Transport (HANT). For immediate release, 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2013**

## **NFLA and local groups want greater transparency from the NDA over proposed shipment of nuclear waste from Dounreay to United States**

The NFLA, in cooperation with the local pressure groups CORE (1) and HANT (2) are alarmed with recently publicised information of a proposed shipment by sea of radioactive materials currently stored at the Dounreay site to a site in Savannah River in South Carolina, United States.

CORE (Cumbrians Opposed to a Radioactive Environment) have recently uncovered applications by the American company NAC International (working on behalf of the US Department of Energy) to the United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) for authorisation 'to package and ship from Dounreay to the Savannah River site in Aiken, South Carolina five special fuel assemblies in a one-time shipment'. It is not clear when this shipment will take place at present but the authorisation has been extended again in June 2013 and may take place any time up to the end of 2014.(3)

The waste concerned came to Dounreay in the 1990s from a research reactor site near Tbilisi in Georgia. Dounreay was chosen to host the waste following an agreement between the UK, USA and Georgian Government amidst concerns over the safe control of this material during a civil war in Georgia. This waste was managed by the predecessor of the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA), the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority. As CORE have noted, this proposed shipment to the United States has had no formal public scrutiny in the UK. It is expected that the shipment would be undertaken by the NDA's shipping subsidiary, International Nuclear Services (INS). (4)

NFLA, CORE and local pressure group 'Highlands against Nuclear Transport' (HANT) are opposed to unnecessary transports of waste from Dounreay. Whether by rail, air or by sea, the transport of nuclear materials should be reduced to an absolute minimum and be dealt with safely on site, in line with Scottish Government policy on highly active radioactive waste.

The three groups would also like to see some form of adequate public scrutiny of the NDA's decision to transport this waste to another country, over 6,000 miles away by sea. It surely is far better and risk-averse to safely store and manage the waste at Dounreay, where it has been kept for two decades now, and this would assist with maintaining a number of jobs for the local community at a time when the workforce is being cut back.

The transport of radioactive materials from Dounreay also remains a matter of concern for all three groups since rail transports from the site to Sellafield commenced earlier this year. The materials involved in these transports include a wide range of radioactive 'fuels', including plutonium. In the official NDA consultations seeking public views on this decision, the NFLA firmly opposed the movement of such materials, arguing that it should be safely managed and stored at the Dounreay site. It also raised concerns over the safety of such rail transports across remoter parts of Scotland and northern England, particularly in the event of an accident or a malicious incident. (5)

This issue also comes at a time when the NFLA have raised concerns about the nuclear materials transported by the 'roll on, roll off' carrier ship Atlantic Cartier, which docked in Liverpool a few days ago just four months after a fire incident in Hamburg, at which 9 tons of uranium hexafluoride were on board and a major emergency and environmental incident was narrowly averted. This incident highlights at the very least some of the risks with transporting radioactive materials long distances. (6)

**THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT VOICE ON NUCLEAR ISSUES**



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The NFLA are organising a joint seminar which will partially look at the issue of nuclear emergency planning, as well as the safety of MOD nuclear weapon convoy transports. This is taking place in Glasgow City Chambers on 20th January. (7)

The NFLA Chair, Councillor Mark Hackett said:

"I remain alarmed that the NDA looks to be continuing to move radioactive materials thousands of miles by sea, to be dealt with by another country. This historic waste should be better managed locally at the Dounreay site. I urge the NDA to initiate public scrutiny of this waste transport with the Site Stakeholder Group, local authorities and the Scottish Government. The NFLA remains opposed to unnecessary transports of radioactive waste by road, rail or sea. I do not see why these materials cannot be safely stored at Dounreay, as the generic Scottish Government policy advocates."

Martin Forwood from CORE said:

"Contrary to its claims of openness and transparency, the NDA has been extremely evasive about the extent of its involvement with this projected shipment of radioactive materials. The plans urgently need public scrutiny in the UK before such materials are exposed to the multiple risks of an unnecessary trans-Atlantic crossing".

Tor Justad from HANT said:

"HANT has been recently established to raise concerns in the Highlands about the total lack of information provided to local communities about the rail transports of nuclear waste the 400 miles from Dounreay to Sellafield. The proposal to ship waste to the USA is yet another example of lack of transparency by the NDA and within the nuclear industry and a total disregard for safety of the local populations and the increased risks of sea transport for all coastal communities"

Ends

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

Martin Forwood, CORE – info@corecumbria or 01229 716523.

Tor Justad, HANT - 07771 392666.

## Notes to editors:

- (1) For further information on CORE please consult its website <http://www.corecumbria.co.uk>
- (2) For further information on HANT see <http://www.north-star-news.co.uk/News/Dingwall-meeting-hears-call-for-nuclear-trains-halt-06032013.html> , North Star News, 6<sup>th</sup> March 2013.
- (3) CORE Cumbria media release, 28<sup>th</sup> August 2013, 'Covert plans to ship Dounreay nuclear fuel to US - contrary to NDA's publicly stated decision to send it to Sellafield'.  
<http://www.corecumbria.co.uk/newsapp/pressreleases/pressmain.asp?StrNewsID=321>
- (4) Follow-up information to CORE press release provided to the NFLA, which will be placed on the CORE website shortly.
- (5) For the NFLA's original responses to the NDA's consultation on Dounreay's radioactive materials:  
[http://www.nuclearpolicy.info/docs/radwaste/NFLA\\_RWB\\_29\\_Dounreay\\_report.pdf](http://www.nuclearpolicy.info/docs/radwaste/NFLA_RWB_29_Dounreay_report.pdf) and  
[http://www.nuclearpolicy.info/docs/radwaste/NFLA\\_RWB\\_33\\_Dounreay\\_exotic\\_fuels.pdf](http://www.nuclearpolicy.info/docs/radwaste/NFLA_RWB_33_Dounreay_exotic_fuels.pdf)
- (6) NFLA media release, 29<sup>th</sup> August 2013, 'NFLA alarmed at docking of Atlantic Cartier in Liverpool less than four months after it was involving in a major fire incident which nearly involved nuclear materials'.  
[http://www.nuclearpolicy.info/docs/news/NFLA\\_Atlantic\\_Cartier\\_concerns.pdf](http://www.nuclearpolicy.info/docs/news/NFLA_Atlantic_Cartier_concerns.pdf)
- (7) NFLA / NIS / Nukewatch / CND special seminar on nuclear emergency planning and MOD nuclear weapon convoys, Glasgow City Chambers, 20th September 2013.  
[http://www.nuclearpolicy.info/docs/events/NFLA\\_joint\\_seminar\\_September\\_flyer.pdf](http://www.nuclearpolicy.info/docs/events/NFLA_joint_seminar_September_flyer.pdf)

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