



Nuclear Free Local Authorities Steering Committee

information

NFLA Media release - for immediate release, 29th July 2013

NFLA welcomes cancellation of Canadian contract to ship radioactive waste generators to Sweden, and calls on NDA to do the same

The Nuclear Free Local Authorities (NFLA) has welcomed the news from Canadian NGOs that a major series of proposed radioactive waste shipments from Canada to Sweden, which would have passed relatively close to the Shetland and Orkney Islands and the east coast of Britain, have now been cancelled following a significant level of international public opposition (1).

The original 2011 contract by the Canadian nuclear facility Bruce Power was to send 16 (and possibly 32) decommissioned radioactively contaminated steam generators through the Canadian Great Lakes and river system across the Atlantic Ocean to a Studsvik facility in Sweden, for clean-up and partial recycling. The NFLA supported the many Canadian, American and Scandinavian local authorities and non governmental organisations who opposed these shipments, given the high level of radioactive content of the proposed shipments.

The NFLA, in a joint policy briefing with the local authority marine pollution group, KIMO International, shared the concerns of the Canadian groups in reference to the impact of a potential accident or even malicious attack on such a shipment (2). The NFLA have a long-held policy that radioactive waste should be wherever possible managed near site and not sent large distances by sea, road or rail.

The statutory permission for Bruce Power to move the shipments from the Canadian nuclear regulator ran out in 2012 and it was announced in Studsvik's most recent report that there are no anticipated plans of the shipments taking place. This decision is to be welcomed and the NFLA agrees with local authority representatives and environmental groups that the level of public opposition to the shipments played an important role in this outcome. (3)

The NFLA also remains highly concerned and opposed to the current policy of the UK Nuclear Decommissioning Authority to continue to send decommissioned steam generators to the same Swedish Studsvik facility by sea, as well as the continued rail transports of highly radioactive materials from Dounreay to Sellafield. (4) The policy should be for 'concentrate and contain' rather than 'dilute and disperse' according to the waste hierarchy. Such waste should be rather managed and safely stored close to their site of origin.

NFLA Chair, Councillor Mark Hackett said:

"I welcome the hard work and dedication of Canadian and American Councils and environmental groups that have lobbied so effectively to ensure major radioactive waste shipments are not sent over 6,000 miles for treatment. It seems to me that the level of public opposition to these shipments has been a factor in why they have not taken place. The NDA should take note of this development and review its current practice of increasing transportations of radioactive waste across Britain and overseas. Risks to the public are increased by such transports and they should be limited as much as is possible and practical."

Ends

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Notes to editors:

- (1) 'Plan to ship radioactive material to Sweden for recycling cancelled', Ottawa Citizen, July 27th 2013.
<http://www.ottawacitizen.com/news/Plan+ship+radioactive+material+Sweden+recycling+canceled/8715633/story.html>
- (2) NFLA Policy Briefing 85, July 26th 2011, 'Radioactive waste shipments from Canada to Sweden – concerns for UK and Irish local authorities'.
[http://www.nuclearpolicy.info/docs/briefings/A199_\(NB85\)_Canadian_waste_shipments.pdf](http://www.nuclearpolicy.info/docs/briefings/A199_(NB85)_Canadian_waste_shipments.pdf)
- (3) 'Sarnia's mayor celebrates annulled radioactive waste shipment contract', Sarnia Observer, July 26th 2013. <http://www.theobserver.ca/2013/07/26/sarnias-mayor-celebrates-annulled-radioactive-waste-shipment-contract>
- (4) See NFLA Policy Briefing 95, April 10th 2012, 'Transport of radioactively contaminated steam generators from Berkeley nuclear power plant, Gloucestershire to Sweden'.
[http://www.nuclearpolicy.info/docs/briefings/A209_\(NB95\)_Berkeley_Sweden_transport.pdf](http://www.nuclearpolicy.info/docs/briefings/A209_(NB95)_Berkeley_Sweden_transport.pdf)
Also see NFLA Radioactive Waste Policy Briefings 29 and 33 on NDA proposals for exotic fuels and nuclear materials stored at the Dounreay Decommissioned Site.
http://www.nuclearpolicy.info/docs/radwaste/NFLA_RWB_29_Dounreay_report.pdf
http://www.nuclearpolicy.info/docs/radwaste/NFLA_RWB_33_Dounreay_exotic_fuels.pdf

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