

**Letter to 'The Guardian', 27<sup>th</sup> July 2009 (not published)**

**Nuclear industry needs to be calmed down**

Dear Sir,

Terry Macalister's informative article on E.ON's preparatory work at the Oldbury nuclear power station (Greenpeace threatens E.ON with legal action over nuclear reactors, Guardian Business, 26th July) lets the genie out of the bottle.

E.ON and EDF appear to have already decided that the decision by the Government to 'justify' approval for new nuclear power stations is merely a formality, given suggestions of preparatory work at Oldbury and Hinkley Point. It isn't a formality, and nor should it be.

Deep concerns remain about the design and safety of new nuclear power stations. The Finnish example at Olikuloto is 3 years late and billions over budget with scores of identified design flaws. Similiar issues are occuring in France, while the article also notes problems in Canada. The justification procedure is a carefully determined process governed by European law which should rigourously determine the pros and cons of new nuclear build. The Nuclear Free Local Authorities remains concerned the Climate Change and Energy Minister is the final arbiter given his public pronouncements on nuclear new build, but we hope the process will be open, fair and transparent.

I remain concerned that the justification process does not go the way of previous Government nuclear 'consultations'. E.ON and EDF should be told to stop all such preparatory work until a formal justification decision is made. Meanwhile, lets support safer and more sustainable forms of renewable energy and then there will be no longer concerns of a future energy gap in the next decade.

Yours sincerely,  
Baillie George Regan  
Nuclear Free Local Authorities Chair

**Letter to 'The Guardian', 14<sup>th</sup> July 2009 (not published)**

Dear Sir,

**Scrapping Trident will save money, and more importantly, save lives**

The data from today's ICM poll in The Guardian (Voters want Britain to scrap all nuclear weapons, 13th July) that 54% want the complete scrapping of all UK nuclear weapons, rather than replacing the Trident system, is very heartening and completely sensible.

In today's hard economic times it seems folly to be spending billions on a nuclear weapons system that will probably, and hopefully, never be used. What use is nuclear deterrence to the British soldiers so tragically being killed in Afghanistan? Working with our international partners to reduce nuclear stockpiles, as was demonstrated in the agreement between Presidents Obama and Medvedev last week, is the sensible answer to reducing worldwide tensions. The nuclear non-proliferation regime should be radically reformed and improved over these next few months and it could be one of Gordon Brown's greatest achievements if he is shown to be leading the way on eliminating the ultimate weapon of mass destruction.

What do nuclear weapons deter? They don't stop terrorist attacks, they don't stop the Taliban in Afghanistan and the longer they are around the more risks we have of them getting into the wrong hands.

Saving the billions on Trident will allow resources to be prioritised to protect our armed forces and to be spent on saving lives through our health and social services, and via a truly ethical foreign policy. Wouldn't that be a great legacy to take to the voters whenever the next elections takes place? That's what the public want, so let the public's view prevail!

Yours sincerely,  
Baillie George Regan  
Chair, Nuclear Free Local Authorities UK and Ireland

**Letter to 'The Independent', 13<sup>th</sup> July 2009 (not published)**

Dear Sir,

We finally have an admission from the CBI that nuclear power is detracting attention from renewable energy (Independent 13<sup>th</sup> July 2009). But whilst the CBI attacks the proposed renewable energy target, and demands more nuclear reactors instead, its report shows a 'business as usual' scenario and a so-called 'balanced pathway' scenario with virtually the same amount of electricity coming from renewables.

Where the two scenarios differ radically is in the amount of electricity generated by gas. Under the 'business as usual' scenario gas provides 36% and nuclear only 20%. But under the 'balanced pathway' scenario nuclear's contribution is increased to 34% at the expense of gas.

The CBI report is focused almost exclusively on electricity, as opposed to energy, virtually ignoring heat, and leaving it with a huge credibility gap. Some 47% of carbon emissions were produced by heating in 2005. Apart from the footnotes there are only two mentions of combined heat and power (CHP), for example, and the word solar does not appear once.

A report by Pöyry Energy Consulting has shown that industries across the UK could generate as much electricity as 10 nuclear power stations and halve gas imports by installing or extending CHP plants. Currently 5.5GW of electricity is produced by CHP plants, but Poyry suggests there could be up to 16GW more.

If the CBI really wants to drive the UK towards a sustainable energy future it should be promoting technologies such as CHP and solar thermal rather than expensive and dangerous waste producing unsustainable nuclear energy.

Yours sincerely,  
Councillor George Regan  
Chair of Nuclear Free Local Authorities

**Letter to 'The Scotsman', 29<sup>th</sup> June 2009 (published)**

Dear Sir,

The point of the Renewables Obligation (RO) (Letters 26<sup>th</sup> June) is that because renewables are new technologies the scope for cost reductions is very large. According to the Government's Performance and Innovation Unit (PIU) there is good evidence that onshore wind is likely to become amongst the cheapest of all generating technologies within 20 years. Even solar photovoltaics look as though they will be competitive with fossil fuels in the next couple of years. The RO is an opportunity to nurture these new technologies and bring costs down to competitive levels quickly whilst we create a new manufacturing base.

On the other hand the scope for cost reductions with nuclear power is limited, since it is already a mature technology. The nuclear industry has already received huge subsidies, for example when

the Government sold off British Energy's eight nuclear plants for the price of half a reactor. If members of the public want to decide whether electricity from new reactors is likely to be expensive they just need to look at recent experience. The fact that Western Europe's first reactor since Chernobyl, in Finland, is three years late and 50% over budget is widely known. Perhaps less well known is the fact that the industry's second attempt at Flamanville, in France, is also behind schedule and overbudget. In the United States, Florida and Georgia have changed state laws to raise electricity rates so that consumers will foot some of the bill for new nuclear plants in advance, before construction even begins.

Yours sincerely,

Councillor Audrey Doig  
Renfrewshire Council and NFLA Scotland Vice Convenor

**Letter to 'The Guardian' and 'The Observer', 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2009 (not published)**

**Nuclear inspection regime can't deal with new build**

Dear Sir,

In the last few weeks we have learnt about a narrowly avoided disaster (Guardian 11<sup>th</sup> June) at Sizewell, and a radioactive leak at Sellafield which had been going on for 14 months. Sellafield is to appear in court on 24<sup>th</sup> July over a different leak, but in the Sizewell case there will be no prosecution, partly because of a shortage of nuclear inspectors.

Now we learn (Observer 21<sup>st</sup> June) that between 2001-08 over 800 incidents occurred which "had the potential to challenge a nuclear safety system". The obvious question is how can the nuclear industry seek to build a new generation of reactors when major safety issues are still to be resolved?

The Nuclear Inspectorate, which is struggling to recruit sufficient inspectors to properly assess new reactor designs, says it wants to streamline the process by waiving certain aspects through a series of "exclusions". Discussions about nuclear safety which used to take place at public inquiries have now been sidelined by the new planning system, and the formal licensing process gives no opportunity for public input or parliamentary oversight, so any streamlining is a serious concern to local authorities.

Surely the recently revealed accidents at Sizewell and Sellafield show the NII's staffing crisis is already compromising nuclear safety. Is it not time to stop rushing ahead with new reactor designs before the Inspectorate loses public confidence in its ability to keep the nuclear industry safe in an open and transparent way?

Yours sincerely,  
Councillor George Regan  
Chair of UK and Ireland Nuclear Free Local Authorities

**Letter to 'The Scotsman', 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2009 (published)**

Dear Sir,

I would like to reply to the letters from Colin McInnes (Letters, June 19<sup>th</sup>) and Stuart Campbell (Letters, June 22<sup>nd</sup>) which suggests that the views given by Nuclear Free Local Authorities Scotland last week (Letters, June 16<sup>th</sup>) do not stand up.

The Royal Academy of Engineering figures are remarkably similar to those put forward by the nuclear industry. The Downing Street Performance and Innovation Unit (PIU) Report in 2002 expressed scepticism about the industry's optimistic cost projections, and Professor Gordon Mackerron, who was a member of the PIU Energy Review Team has more recently accused the Government of failing to acknowledge the uncertainty surrounding the cost projections used in the latest White Paper. Achieving the costs put forward by the nuclear industry will depend on absolutely everything going according to plan, unlike the current reactor construction projects in Finland and France.

Colin McInnes might want to look at Business Risks and Cost of New Nuclear Power by Craig Severance, which estimates that costs in the United States could reach 25 to 30 cents per kWh (15 – 18p). It is hardly surprising there is widespread scepticism about the cost of electricity from new reactors when the Finnish reactor is already three years late and 50% over budget.

Yours sincerely,  
Councillor Euan McLeod  
Nuclear Free Local Authorities Scotland Convenor  
c/o Glasgow City Chambers

**Letter to East Anglian Daily Times, 19<sup>th</sup> June 2009 (published)**

**Sizewell's near disaster – how can we consider new nuclear build?**

Dear Sir,

The alarming report of a leak at the Sizewell nuclear power plant reported in the East Anglian Daily Times (Friday June 12th, Sizewell Leak – What Really Happened?), with a major disaster only being narrowly averted by a matter of hours, raises some serious questions for the Government and the nuclear industry.

Why has it taken 2 years, and only through a Freedom of Information request, for this potentially catastrophic incident to be made public? It emphasises the continuing culture of secrecy in the nuclear industry, which has to become more transparent if it is to receive any public acceptability.

What concerns me most though is that Sizewell, pencilled in as one of the first new nuclear plants, had such a lax safety culture that almost 40,000 gallons of radioactive water was split, indeed a quarter of it did discharge into the North Sea. The independent report from Large and Associates suggests that the Nuclear Installations Inspectorate should reconsider prosecuting Magnox South on the issue, which I very much agree with.

Your readers may wonder how can the nuclear industry seek to build a new nuclear plant at Sizewell, costing billions in the teeth of a major recession, when it is still open to the possibility of creating a new Chernobyl-type disaster.

The only answer for East Anglia is to ditch the concept of new nuclear build. The only energy renaissance is for renewable energy – safe, clean and not liable to bring catastrophe.

Yours sincerely,  
Councillor Ralph Pryke  
Chair, Nuclear Free Local Authorities England