



Nuclear Free Local Authorities Steering Committee

information

NFLA Media release - for immediate release, 23rd October 2014

NFLA English Forum seminar considers defence nuclear safety concerns, nuclear weapon convoy incidents and the risks of nuclear weapon incidents

The Nuclear Free Local Authorities (NFLA) English Forum is meeting in Oxford Town Hall tomorrow, 24th October, where it will be considering concerns around the defence nuclear sector. (1)

The concerns relate to a worrying spate of nuclear safety incidents at defence sites including Aldermaston, Burghfield, Devonport and Derby. The Aldermaston and Burghfield sites are in 'special measures' for the second year, requiring enhanced nuclear regulatory checks. Peter Burt from the Nuclear Information Service will highlight its concerns in this area.

The seminar will also focus on concerns around the transportation of nuclear materials, in this case by road, but also by rail and sea. Recent information provided through the Freedom of Information Act to Nukewatch highlights a number of significant incidents affecting nuclear weapon convoys, which regularly travel up the road network from Berkshire to the West of Scotland. Nigel Day from Nukewatch will provide more information and its wider concerns with these convoys. (2)

The seminar will highlight an important Ministry of Defence consultation process around the dismantling of 27 redundant nuclear submarines. Five shortlisted sites have been announced for the storage of intermediate level waste, four of them in England – Aldermaston and Burghfield in Berkshire, Capenhurst in Cheshire and Sellafield in Cumbria. A key issue the NFLA will be focusing on is the transportation of materials from the Rosyth and Devonport dockyards to whichever of the nominated sites is finally chosen next year. The NFLA Secretary will outline its positive involvement with this policy process.

The seminar will conclude with a presentation looking at the consequences of an accident or deliberate use of nuclear weapons on a UK city, and why it is essential for organisations like the NFLA to remain heavily involved in the debate to reduce and eliminate nuclear weapon stockpiles around the world. Rebecca Sharkey from the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons will speak on its work as the 3rd International Conference on this subject takes place in early December in Vienna.

NFLA Chair Councillor Mark Hackett said:

"I am pleased we are able to hold this NFLA English Forum seminar in Oxford, which is impacted by regular nuclear weapon convoys from Aldermaston and Burghfield, and obviously takes an interest in local defence nuclear safety and nuclear emergency planning issues. This seminar will provide important information to councillors and interested groups and highlight legitimate concerns after a spate of worrying incidents at our defence nuclear sites and with nuclear weapon convoys."

Ends

For more information please contact Sean Morris, NFLA Secretary on 00 44 (0)161 234 3244.

Notes for editors:

- (1) NFLA English Forum Autumn Seminar, St Aldates Room, Oxford Town Hall, 24th October 10.15am **Welcomes:** Councillor Van Coulter, Oxford City Council and Councillor David Blackburn, NFLA English Forum Chair.

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- 10.20am Defence nuclear sector safety concerns at AWE Aldermaston and other sites – why is Aldermaston in ‘special measures’ for a second year? Peter Burt, Research Manager, Nuclear Information Service.
- 10.45am The dismantling of nuclear submarines – where may the intermediate radioactive waste go and what are the key issues around such storage? Sean Morris, NFLA Secretary.
- 11.15am Nuclear weapons convoys – a public safety risk? Nigel Day, Oxford branch of Nukewatch.
- 11.40am The risks and consequences of nuclear weapons to large cities and the international disarmament context - Rebecca Sharkey, International Campaign to Ban Nuclear Weapons (ICAN-UK).
- 12.05pm Panel Discussion.
- 12.30pm Seminar close.
- (2) Rob Edwards.com, Independent environmental news and comment, 24th September 2014
<http://www.robedwards.com/2014/09/20-year-old-trucks-carrying-deadly-nuclear-cargoes-keep-breaking-down.html#more>

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