



*Nuclear Free Local Authorities Steering Committee*

# information

**NFLA Media release - for immediate release, 11<sup>th</sup> March 2014**

## **NFLA remembers the third anniversary of the Fukushima disaster and the ongoing affect it is having in the world**

Today, this 11<sup>th</sup> March is the third anniversary of the Fukushima disaster, one of the worst nuclear accidents in the history of the nuclear industry. The Nuclear Free Local Authorities (NFLA) remembers all those who died in the events of March 11<sup>th</sup>, 2011 and those who have been grievously affected by the Fukushima disaster.

Three years after the disaster there is still much that needs to be done to find long-term solutions for the effects of the Fukushima radiation leaks.

The worst effect of the Fukushima disaster is the more than 267,000 people who still have to live in temporary accommodation and makeshift facilities around Japan. The NFLA remembers them as an embodiment of how a nuclear disaster can ruin the life and well-being of local communities. (1)

Nearly half a million tonnes of radioactively contaminated water remain on the site in tanks which have been badly designed and often prone to leaking. Pressure is being put on public authorities for this water to be dumped into the Pacific Ocean in a 'controlled release' as advocated by the chief foreign adviser to the Japanese Government on the disaster, Dale Klein. NFLA shares the deep concern of environmental groups, fishermen and local communities over the environmental consequences of such an action. (2)

Then there are the medium to long-term health effects of the radiation leaks on the local population. Though it may well be too early to know the effects on the local population, NFLA notes with concern Fukushima Prefecture health figures showing a significant increase in the number of thyroid cancers affecting children and young adults over the past three years. Such cancers in adults can often take up to 25 years to appear. NFLA welcomes the serious amount of attention being taken in the area to monitor the health of the local community and agrees with the views of many independent radiation experts that comparative studies with other parts of Japan should be undertaken. (3)

The financial costs of the disaster are likely to run into many billions of pounds. What is known is that it has cost the Japanese nuclear industry already \$12.3 billion on reinforcing the foundations of existing nuclear reactors, tsunami protection walls and protection from seismic activity. Three years after Fukushima, 48 nuclear reactors in Japan remain closed and the country has recorded the largest trade deficit in its post-war history due to the huge level of energy imports required to keep the country functioning effectively. NFLA supports the campaign of many Japanese local authorities and the 'Mayors for a Nuclear Power Free Japan' network in carefully challenging reactor restarts. NFLA urges the Japanese Government to rather develop nuclear free energy alternatives. (4)

NFLA therefore remain staggered that the UK Government wishes to give the nuclear industry billions of pounds in public subsidies to build new nuclear reactors, starting at Hinkley Point. NFLA is delighted to co-operate with the Cities for a Nuclear Free Europe network and the Stop Hinkley group to challenge this development through its joint submission to the European Commission. This submission calls on the Commission to label the financial support as a public subsidy that should be rejected under state aid rules (5).

NFLA Chair Councillor Mark Hackett said:

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**THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT VOICE ON NUCLEAR ISSUES**



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“As the third anniversary of the Fukushima nuclear disaster passes by, it is quite clear that it will take many more years yet to ameliorate the effects of the incident, clean up the local environment and understand the health and practical effects on the local population. This incident has cost Japan billions upon billions and is likely to continue to have a negative impact on the economy for some considerable time to come. Much more still needs to be done. It is in this context that NFLA remains astonished with the pro-nuclear policies being pursued in the UK and other countries. I hope our serious and detailed joint submission to the European Commission bears fruit. Fukushima has shown more than anything else the necessity for the medium term phasing out of nuclear power.”

Ends

For more information please contact Sean Morris, NFLA Secretary on 0161 234 3244.

Notes for editors:

- (1) Japan Times 10th March 2014  
<http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2014/03/10/national/267000-still-evacuees-three-years-on/>
- (2) Times 11th March 2014  
<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/news/world/asia/article4029164.ece>
- (3) Guardian 9th March 2014  
<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/mar/09/fukushima-children-debate-thyroid-cancer-japan-disaster-nuclear-radiation>
- (4) Japan Times 11th March 2014  
<http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2014/03/11/national/nuclear-power-is-still-feared-despite-tests-walls-tougher-safety-standards/>
- (5) NFLA New Nuclear Monitor and Media Release 11<sup>th</sup> March 2014  
[http://www.nuclearpolicy.info/docs/nuclearmonitor/NFLA\\_New\\_Nuclear\\_Monitor\\_No34.pdf](http://www.nuclearpolicy.info/docs/nuclearmonitor/NFLA_New_Nuclear_Monitor_No34.pdf)

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