



*Nuclear Free Local Authorities Steering Committee*

# information



**NFLA / KIMO International Joint Media release - for immediate release, 29<sup>th</sup> July 2014**

## **NFLA and KIMO highly concerned with proposal to transport highly radioactive waste by sea from Dounreay to Sellafield**

The Nuclear Free Local Authorities (NFLA) and the marine issues local government group KIMO International today jointly raise their real concern and alarm over a potential proposal to transport highly radioactive substances from the Dounreay facility by sea to Sellafield in Cumbria.

At present, the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA) / Dounreay site operator has been organising rail transports of the materials, which may include plutonium, by rail from Dounreay to Sellafield. NFLA has vociferously and consistently criticised these waste movements by rail and it continues to do so, along with the local community group Highlands against Nuclear Transport. (1)

Its objections lay around the potential issues that would arise in the event of an emergency incident taking place on remote rural parts of the Scottish rail network involving such rail transports, in terms of prompt emergency response and public health risks to the local community.

NFLA now joins with KIMO International to raise concerns, for similar reasons, over the proposed transport of such materials by sea, passing close to the Northern Isles, the Western Isles and the west coasts of Scotland and England, and the east coast of Ireland.

NFLA and KIMO International support the decision by Western Isles Council, which is a leading member of both organisations, to write to the Dounreay facility to dissuade it from considering such transports. This comes at time when there is only one emergency tug vessel covering the northern isles and the west of Scotland, based at Orkney. (2)

Both NFLA and KIMO International are highly concerned of how an on-board accident on such a shipment would be safely dealt with, given that it could take many hours for an emergency tug vessel to reach such a stricken vessel.

Both organisations remain opposed to the transportation of nuclear materials by sea, given the real problems that exist in the event of a major fire on board or collision with another vessel. NFLA has recently met with senior staff and the Secretary General of the International Maritime Organisation around concerns raised by the 'Atlantic Cartier' fire incident at Hamburg in May 2013. This vessel was transporting radioactive materials, and a major emergency and radiation incident was only narrowly averted. NFLA are currently considering the recently published joint Swedish / German 'Atlantic Cartier' interim accident report, which outlines a number of serious issues with this incident. (3)

This also comes at a time when the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) has launched an investigation into the discovery of alpha-emitting radioactive particles being found in sludge upstream from the Dounreay facility. Work is continuing to locate the source of this radioactivity. (4)

NFLA Chair, Councillor Mark Hackett said:

"I am alarmed with the prospect that the owners of the Dounreay facility are contemplating transporting highly radioactive materials by sea to Sellafield. Rail transports of such materials are bad

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enough, but at least there is the possibility of reasonably prompt emergency response with such an incident. NFLA remains opposed to these transports, arguing that the material should be safely stored on site. The potential transport of such material by sea, at a time when emergency tug vessels have been removed from Stornoway, is of even more concern and I call on the Dounreay site operators from desisting with sea trials and abandon the possibility of such a transport.”

Councillor Norman McDonald, President of KIMO International said:

“KIMO International was established to bring coastal local authorities together to raise concerns of the dangers to the marine and coastal environment by the transport of dangerous goods by sea. I am very worried that Dounreay site operators are contemplating transporting highly radioactive materials close to the Western Isles and coastal communities in Scotland, Ireland and England. The possibility of a fire, collision and subsequent radiation leak would have potentially devastating and harmful effects on one of the most sensitive parts of the north east Atlantic. Our communities have endured decades of radioactive marine discharges from Sellafield, but an accident involving such a shipment would be many times worse. It simply should not happen.”

Ends

For more information please contact Sean Morris, NFLA Secretary on 0161 234 3244 or Harriet Bolt, KIMO Secretary on 01595 744826.

Notes for editors:

- (1) See NFLA Radioactive Waste Briefing 33, ‘NFLA response to NDA consultation on the transport of exotic fuels contained at Dounreay by rail to Sellafield’, March 2012  
[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)
- (2) West Highland Free Press, 26th July 2014  
<http://www.whfp.com/2014/07/25/concern-over-nuclear-waste-shipments/>
- (3) NFLA Policy Briefing 120, ‘Concerns over the transportation of nuclear materials by sea on ‘Roll on, Roll off’ vessels, the *Atlantic Cartier* fire emergency and wider issues for UK / Irish ports, 4<sup>th</sup> March 2014  
[http://www.nuclearpolicy.info/docs/briefings/A234\\_\(NB120\)\\_Marine\\_nuclear\\_transportation.pdf](http://www.nuclearpolicy.info/docs/briefings/A234_(NB120)_Marine_nuclear_transportation.pdf)
- (4) Sunday Herald, 27th July 2014  
<http://www.heraldscotland.com/news/home-news/dounreay-pollution-probe.24868655>

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