

Letter to Western Mail, 18th August 2009
(Similar letters also sent to Wales Online, South Wales Daily Press and North Wales Daily Post)

NFLA welcome Minister's statement on a public inquiry for nuclear power

Dear Sir,

The statement of the Welsh Environment Minister Jayne Davison (Western Mail 14th August), that she supports a call for a full public inquiry on whether new nuclear power stations should be built, is highly welcome.

The Nuclear Free Local Authorities (NFLA) have also called for a public inquiry to the Government in its submission to a number of nuclear power consultations. Only when all the pros and cons of nuclear power are fully considered - particularly over safety, security and radioactive waste management - can the public be truly assured of whether billions of pounds should be spent on this option.

The NFLA believes that nuclear power is a risky and expensive red herring to the solution of energy security and combating climate change. Full government and Council backing for energy efficiency and the promotion of renewable energy will be more than adequate for dealing with Welsh energy needs and provide a green jobs bonanza. The relentless push for nuclear power without an adequate public debate leads to a democratic deficit and for Wales, and the rest of the UK, makes a potentially huge mistake that may take decades to rectify. Wales should follow Scotland's example, and seek to go nuclear free. A public inquiry would be a good first step.

Yours sincerely,
Baillie George Regan
NFLA Chair
c/o NFLA Secretariat, Manchester Town Hall

Letter to Daily Telegraph, 18th August 2009

Nuclear subsidy - the cat's out of the bag

Dear Sir,

I read with interest your article on the likelihood of household energy bills set to rise to pay for new nuclear power stations (Daily Telegraph, 18th August). I can't say it is a surprise. Despite all the grandiose statements of the nuclear industry, and the comments of the Government, the Nuclear Free Local Authorities have consistently said that the billions required for new nuclear power stations would eventually have to be paid by the UK's put-upon taxpayers.

Nuclear power has always required a huge subsidy to develop, whether it be in the UK or across the world. The NFLA would agree with John Large's assessment that any levy on bills for nuclear power will be significantly higher than the £15 renewables obligation.

The safety, security and waste legacy of nuclear power costs billions, let alone the £10 billion per station it will cost to actually construct them.

The Government may insist that there will be no public subsidy for nuclear power, but we all know that we'll be paying for it in our bills, effectively a subsidy by the back door. In these tight days of recession we need to consider carefully the costs of nuclear power.

If resources are used on renewable energy and energy efficiency instead the cost will be much lower. Councils can also help lead the way and we will create a long-term sustainable energy market. I urge the Government to resist the calls for any nuclear levy and choose the safe low carbon option - renewables.

Yours sincerely,
Baillie George Regan
Chair of UK and Ireland Nuclear Free Local Authorities
c/o NFLA Secretariat, Manchester Town Hall

Letter to East Anglia Daily Press, 18th August 2009

Continuing concerns over the GDA process

Dear Sir,

It appears the Generic Design Assessment (GDA) of new nuclear reactors being carried out by the Nuclear Installations Inspectorate (NII) is in even more trouble than suggested by Peter Lanyon (Letters 14th Aug 2009).

As well as the concerns about control and instrumentation systems, a number of other issues have been highlighted in the NII's most recent report. The regulators, for example, are still awaiting vital information relating to terrorist attacks using aircraft. The information is being delayed by security clearance procedures, so a key assessment is late starting as a result.

The NII claims that while any Design Acceptance Confirmation provided may need to be subject to 'exclusions' if there are issues which remain unresolved by June 2011, this will not undermine the robustness of the assessment, because they will need to be resolved eventually. It goes on to say that if it is not convinced that a reactor is suitable for construction in the UK, it will not issue a Design Acceptance Confirmation. But there will be enormous pressure when we are two years closer to 2020, when the UK needs to reduce carbon emissions by 34%, to start getting concrete poured to reduce fossil fuel consumption as soon as possible, or we will have wasted another crucial two years in the urgent fight to tackle climate change.

We were promised a step change in energy efficiency by the 2003 Energy White Paper, yet we are still waiting. Time to drop this dangerous nuclear adventure now and give local authorities the resources they need to start implementing a local energy revolution.

Yours sincerely,
Councillor Ralph Pryke

Nuclear Free Local Authorities England Chair
c/o Leeds Civic Hall, LS1 1UR

Letter to the Scotsman, 17th August 2009

The nuclear challenge – a response

Dear Sir,

I note with interest the letter from Brian Christley suggesting that nuclear power is the only answer to our energy dilemma (Scotsman Letters, Nuclear Challenge, 17th August).

I don't think at all that it is 'bonkers' to believe that we should seek to reduce energy consumption. Energy efficiency is a prudent solution to the wastefulness of our society and Councils in Scotland are showing that it is both a cost effective and an effective way of making our houses and buildings warmer and more comfortable.

Mr Christley seems to think nuclear power is a trouble free energy source. What would he do with the huge amounts of nuclear waste his world network of nuclear reactors would create? What about the potential for another Chernobyl? The UK nuclear regulator has publicly admitted that there has been over 800 incidents which 'had the potential to challenge a nuclear safety system' in the last 7 years, so what would happen under Mr Christley's vision of nuclear reactors in developing countries who may not have such a robust safety culture?

Renewable energy are not 'mickey mouse' options but sensible, clean and cost effective ways to generate the energy needs for Scotland and the wider UK. With concerted Government support they can provide all the energy we need and positively impact on the negative effects of climate change. The only 'nuclear challenge' we require is the challenge to get rid of it.

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

Letter to the Irish Examiner, 17th August 2009

Ireland should encourage the path of a nuclear free world

Dear Sir,

The Irish Examiner recently reported the words of the Mayor of Nagasaki (August 9th, Nagasaki Mayor backs nuclear ban) that the world should follow President Obama's pledge for a nuclear free world.

The Mayor of Nagasaki provides an important example that towns and cities can play a leadership role in urging a world free from nuclear weapons. Councils in Ireland - north

and south - can actively show solidarity with the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and all cities affected by the scourge of the nuclear age, by joining the Nuclear Free Local Authorities and the World Mayors for Peace.

Ireland has much credit to bring to this debate by being an expressly nuclear free country. Our neutral status and the respect for our values in the United Nations gives us the ability and the integrity to influence our neighbours across the Irish Sea - the UK and France - to challenge the 'nuclear renaissance' taking place in nuclear power and significant nuclear weapons upgrades. This is a critical time and we do stand at a crossroads. Let us take up the path urged by the Mayor of Nagasaki. Councils should go to www.nuclearpolicy.info now to find out more.

Yours sincerely,
Councillor Mark Dearey
NFLA Ireland Joint Chair
c/o Council Offices, Dundalk

Letter to the Irish Independent, 17th August 2009-08-19

The threat of nuclear terrorism means we need to go truly nuclear free

Dear Sir,

I was very concerned to read the article in the Irish Independent that the Taliban had attacked the Pakistani base containing its nuclear weapon stockpile three times in the last 2 years (12th August, Nuclear attack fears).

The idea that such an extremist group is seeking to get its hands on nuclear weapons should send a chill down the spine of all governments and people. But we have an option out of this. Next year the members of the United Nations will be meeting to discuss a review of the Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty. President Obama's pledge for a nuclear free world can be achieved if states support the Hiroshima Nagasaki Protocol, put forward by the Mayors for Peace and supported by Nuclear Free Local Authorities Ireland (www.nuclearpolicy.info).

The Protocol brings concrete measures to developing a Nuclear Weapons Convention and the elimination of all nuclear weapons by 2020 . The only way we can be sure dangerous regimes and terrorist groupings don't get hold of nuclear weapons is by getting rid of them. Now is the time to work to do so. This is the imperative for all non nuclear nations including our own.

Yours sincerely,
Councillor Mark Dearey
NFLA Ireland Joint Chair
c/o Council Offices, Dundalk