



Nuclear Free Local Authorities Steering Committee

information

NFLA Media release - for immediate release, 22nd May 2015

NFLA concerned over impact of huge job cuts at Magnox on safe nuclear decommissioning and radioactive waste management

The Nuclear Free Local Authorities (NFLA) is concerned with the announcement by Magnox that it will over 1,600 jobs from its workforce at its 12 nuclear reactor sites over the next 15 months. (1) NFLA supports the concerns made by the unions GMB and Unite (2) of the significant impact this will have on the speed with which decommissioning of redundant sites will take, as well as the reduction in available technical skills and the safe management of radioactive waste on these sites.

In an announcement made yesterday, Magnox have announced that job cuts will take place at all 12 of the sites they currently operate, which will include core staff, agency and contractor staff. Magnox argue these cuts relate to the reduced activity at the site, claiming:

"These proposed reductions arise from planned step downs in the work programme at a number of sites and the implementation of a more streamlined operating model for delivering decommissioning. We will seek wherever possible for these reductions to be through voluntary means and we will endeavour to retrain staff in roles where we are currently reliant on agency resources."

In its statement on the proposed job cuts, Unite said:

"Our concern is that the decommissioning of these power stations will be slowed down with such a large reduction in the workforce and the skills that they possess. We question whether there will be enough available manpower to do this complex work in decommissioning in the future and we will be seeking assurances on this issue. We believe the impetus behind this large job loss announcement is due to a downward revision of the cost analysis by Cavendish Nuclear Flour which was awarded the decommissioning contract by the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA)."

NFLA share Unite's concerns in this area and the skills shortage in the nuclear sector was one of the main points that the NFLA Chair queried with senior officials of the NDA prior to this announcement at its 'Strategy Marketplace' event held in Manchester. (3) The NFLA Chair expressly sought reassurance that key skills in the decommissioning and radioactive waste management field would be retained and not diverted to new nuclear. The decision to cut 1,600 staff at these 12 sites at this time therefore alarms the NFLA, as it fears the key and scarce skills of these staff could be completely lost to the industry. NFLA believe nuclear decommissioning should be scaled up, not scaled back.

NFLA Chair Councillor Mark Hackett said:

"I regret the decision to make 1,600 workers redundant across 12 Magnox sites. These jobs will be made up of experienced nuclear staff working at important and complex nuclear facilities. My thoughts go out to the workers and their families affected by this decision by Magnox. It worries me greatly that the skills these workers have in nuclear decommissioning and radioactive waste management may be lost. It is symptomatic of a nuclear industry in crisis and deep decline in this country. I urge the new Government to intervene in order to prioritise resolving deep-seated nuclear legacy challenges over any plans for new nuclear build. They need to save these jobs for the nation and help the communities that will be affected by these job cuts."

Ends

For more information please contact Sean Morris, NFLA Secretary on 0161 234 3244 or 07771 930196.

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT VOICE ON NUCLEAR ISSUES



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Notes for editors:

- (1) BBC 21st May 2015 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-32827580>
- (2) Unite 21st May 2015 <http://www.unitetheunion.org/news/1600-job-loss-threat-at-magnox-nuclear-power-stations-is-shocking-says-unite/>
- (3) NDA Stakeholder Marketplace to discuss the NDA Draft Strategy 2016 – 2021, held at the Marriott V & A Hotel, Water Street, Manchester, 19th May 2015.

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