



*Nuclear Free Local Authorities Steering Committee*

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**NFLA Media release - for immediate release, 27<sup>th</sup> March 2011**

## **NFLA and nuclear concerned groups issue joint statement of 8 demands for UK nuclear safety following the Fukushima incident**

The Nuclear Free Local Authorities (NFLA) have joined together with a large number of other nuclear concerned groups such as Friends of the Earth, CND, Nuclear Consulting Group and members of the umbrella group 'Communities Opposed to No Nuclear Energy Development' to issue a joint statement of 8 demands of the UK Government, nuclear regulators and nuclear industry on nuclear health and safety policy following the Fukushima nuclear reactor accident in Japan (1).

The Fukushima reactor incident is now the world's second worst nuclear incident in the history of the nuclear age, following the Chernobyl disaster. As this media release is issued, it has been reported that levels of 1,000 millisieverts per hour are being recorded in the stricken number 3 reactor – 4 times the safe dose. A number of Fukushima emergency workers have also been taken to hospital due to receiving such high levels of radiation exposure (2). It has also been reported that the Governor of the Fukushima prefecture was warned 6 years ago of the dangers of letting spent fuel accumulate in cooling ponds at the prefecture's nuclear plants and the need to put it into much safer dry stores as soon as possible. The Governor passed these concerns on to the reactor authorities, but clearly they were not heeded (3). Furthermore, the radioactive isotope iodine-131 has been found at rates 1250 times the permitted level in ocean samples found near the reactor (4).

As a result of the incident in Japan, the Energy Minister Chris Huhne, has asked the Head of the Nuclear Installations Inspectorate to initiate an urgent review of nuclear health & safety in the UK (5).

In order to increase public reassurance at this time, the nuclear concerned groups make the following 8 demands of the UK Government, regulators and the nuclear industry as follows:

- The UK Government's nuclear safety review must be undertaken in public and be fully open and transparent. It should include non nuclear industry representatives and consider nuclear reactors, spent fuel stores and reprocessing plants.
- The HSE's 'exclusions' arrangement in the Generic Design Assessment (GDA) process and those arrangements, such as deferring issue resolution in order to artificially meet the nuclear new build timetable, must be abandoned. The GDA process and the governance regime of nuclear safety in the UK should be reviewed as a result of the Fukushima incident.
- There should be NO public subsidies for nuclear new build as per the UK Government coalition agreement. All the groups oppose the development of new nuclear build in the UK and are concerned that the development of the low carbon price gives an indirect subsidy of up to £3.2 billion on the nuclear industry.
- The health effects of low level radiation on land and in the marine environment need to be independently verified.
- UK Government Ministerial statements that they have confidence that the proposed arrangements for new build radioactive waste management will exist should cease or be required to be justified or qualified.
- The UK Government should commission an urgent independent security review on current and projected radioactive waste and spent fuel interim storage arrangements.
- The UK Government and the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority need to resolve over 100 identified scientific and technical uncertainties before developing a deep-underground radioactive waste repository.

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- The UK Government should abandon the option of using separated weapons-grade plutonium as reprocessed Mox fuel for use by domestic and overseas customers.

NFLA Chair Bailie George Regan comments:

“The NFLA and many other groups have been deeply alarmed and concerned by the events in Fukushima. Though this incident is different than Chernobyl, it is clear that safety warnings for this reactor went unheeded. Our demands of the UK Government, nuclear regulators and the nuclear industry are aimed at restoring public confidence in the nuclear safety regime in the UK and seeing this country pull back from making the profound mistake of developing new nuclear reactors at this or any time. I urge the Government to respond seriously to our demands and we encourage the establishment of a robust and healthy debate to ensure we have a future energy and waste management policy that is safe for all our futures.”

**Ends.**

**Further information** - Sean Morris, NFLA Secretary 0161 234 3244 or 07771 930186.  
Other groups can be contacted via the NFLA Secretary.

**Notes to editors:**

(1) The joint statement is attached here:

**In the light of the tragic events in Japan in recent weeks, and with particular reference to the crippling of the nuclear plants at Fukushima; the UK and Ireland Nuclear Free Local Authorities, the undersigned NGOs (non governmental organisations), and individuals who have an interest and long-held concerns about nuclear safety\* make the following demands on the government, the nuclear industry, its trade bodies, government agencies and regulators on the review of, and input to, official processes on key areas of the new nuclear build programme in the UK. All the groups mentioned below are opposed to the development of a UK nuclear new build programme.**

1. **The recently announced review being carried out by the Health and Safety Executive's (HSE) Nuclear Directorate (ND) must:**
  - be carried out with a presumption of disclosure of all information: any information which, for security or commercial confidentiality reasons cannot be disclosed, must be accompanied by a full explanation of the reasons for confidentiality and subject to a challenge process;
  - include non-industry personnel on the review body;
  - include independent respondents and consider involving groups from the undersigned;
  - include a full review of the GDA process and the complete governance regime of the nuclear industry in the UK, given the failings identified in Japan;
  - ensure that spent fuel stores and other relevant facilities such as reprocessing plants are included in its remit.
2. **The HSE's 'exclusions' arrangement in the GDA process and those arrangements such as deferring issue resolution in order to artificially meet the nuclear new build timetable must be abandoned. All outstanding issues relating to the engineering, technical and waste management aspects of new build should be demonstrably dealt with in a sequential, transparent and open programme and with appropriate scrutiny, peer review and accessibility in**

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the public domain. These processes cannot be left to be 'resolved' through the licensing process which will follow the GDA process as licensing is effectively a close-door system.

3. **There should be NO public subsidies for nuclear new build as agreed in the UK Government's coalition agreement:** *The subsidies which have been identified in the "[Nuclear Subsidies](#)" report from the Energy Fair group (1), including limitations on liabilities for nuclear accidents, subsidies for the disposal of nuclear waste, and subsidies for the decommissioning of nuclear plants, should be withdrawn, without the transfer of financial risks from nuclear operators to taxpayers or members of the public. All the undersigned groups oppose a development of new nuclear build in the UK.*  
(1. [http://www.energyfair.org.uk/actions/ec-complaint/nuclear\\_subsidies\\_feb\\_2011.pdf](http://www.energyfair.org.uk/actions/ec-complaint/nuclear_subsidies_feb_2011.pdf))
4. **The health effects of low level radiation on land and into the marine environment need to be independently verified; with full and prompt publication of the COMARE 2011 report and its analysis of the German Government's KIKK report, and wider and detailed analysis made of the robustness and accuracy of the ICRP model and monitoring techniques of radiation discharges into the environment. The justification decision on new nuclear reactor designs should be reconsidered in reference of such a review:** *The issue of low level radiation impact upon which the justification process relies should be subject to a further and detailed review through a joint-fact-finding exercise involving, at the very least – a range of independent low level radiation experts and groups, stakeholder representatives from the nuclear industry, the Health Protection Agency, the European Committee on Radiation Risks and COMARE. Furthermore, as part of this review, independent specialists on low level radiation must also be called on to provide evidence to it.*
5. **UK Government Ministerial statements to the effect that there is confidence that arrangements for new build waste management will exist should cease or be required to be justified or qualified:** *in particular, government and / or appropriate authorities should be required to explain this statement of confidence in terms of:*
  - a) *how and when it will satisfy itself that the generic and then site-specific technical and scientific issues relating to the long term safety of a repository are to be resolved;*
  - b) *how it intends to demonstrate that a popular mandate exists in the potential candidate area, West Cumbria, including the definition of the community it intends to consult, how it intends to consult them along with details of the content, scope and detail of the information it intends to publish in seeking such a mandate;*
  - c) *explain what it intends to do should the only potential candidate community currently available to it decides to withdraw;*
  - d) *providing a technical demonstration of the safety of long term storage of new build spent fuel, its encapsulation and future management of it;*
  - e) *how it intends to demonstrate that the nominated sites being built near sea level can be protected giving the potential for an increase in predicted sea levels as a result of the onset of climate change;*



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- f) *undertaking a new process as recommended by CoRWM1 into attitudes towards the management of spent fuel from new build, given that CoRWM1's focus was entirely on legacy waste.*
6. **The UK Government should commission an independent body of experts to undertake a security review of current and projected nuclear waste and spent fuel interim storage arrangements and report directly to government on the adequacy or otherwise of those arrangements in the light of the CoRWM1 report and its recommendations on this issue:** *In our collective view, the NDA review is inadequate. The independent body could be comprised of those experts used by CoRWM1 in its process and a call for evidence from others with specialist knowledge in this field should be made.*
7. **Before further steps are taken in respect of developing the programme for managing radioactive waste safely, the following issues should be resolved:**
- a. *The technical and scientific uncertainties regarding the safety of deep geological 'disposal' as identified in various official documents and as collated in the Nuclear Waste Advisory Associates' document, the Issues Register.*
  - b. *The definition of a 'community' in respect of the constituency to be consulted on as part of the voluntarism process for a deep geological repository.*
  - c. *The inventory for a national deep geological repository should be identified.*
  - d. *Should that inventory include waste from a national new build programme, the management and disposal of such waste should be subject to a separate and thorough-going review of safety, ethical and environmental considerations.*
  - e. *Full safety reviews need to be undertaken for the transportation of radioactive waste with extensive training provided for all appropriate staff in the emergency services, local authorities and the NHS.*
8. **The UK Government should abandon the option of using separated plutonium as Mox fuel for domestic or foreign use as fuel and instead investigate, through the establishing of a review body involving appropriately qualified experts the best means of dispositioning the plutonium:** *this should be drawn from work already carried out by the plutonium working group of the BNFL national nuclear dialogue and the NDA's Materials Issues Group. A stakeholder dialogue event to discuss the options for the safe management of weapons-grade plutonium and MOX fuel should be established as soon as possible.*

**\*This statement of minimum demands has been fully endorsed by the following groups:**

**UK and Ireland Nuclear Free Local Authorities  
Friends of the Earth UK  
Nuclear Consulting Group  
Nuclear Information Service**

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**Energy Fair Group**  
**No Need for Nuclear Group**  
**Kick Nuclear Group**  
**Chernobyl Children's Project UK**  
**Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament**  
**CND Scotland**  
**CND Cymru / Wales**  
**Greater Manchester and District CND**  
**Oxford CND**  
**Yorkshire CND**  
**Low Level Radiation and Health Conference**  
**Communities Against Nuclear Expansion (CANE)**  
**Stop Hinkley Group**  
**South West Against Nuclear Group (SWAN)**  
**Cumbrians Opposed to a Radioactive Environment**  
**Radiation Free Lakeland**  
**Heysham Anti-Nuclear Alliance**  
**People Against Wylfa B / Pobl Atal Wylfa B**  
**Blackwater Against New Nuclear Group (BANNG)**  
**Bradwell for Renewable Energy (BRARE)**  
**Shutdown Sizewell Campaign**  
**Shepperdine Against Nuclear Energy (SANE)**  
**Kent Against a Radioactive Environment**  
**Oxfordshire Peace Campaign**  
**Peace Moves Coalition Cornwall**

- (2) BBC Online, 24<sup>th</sup> March 2011, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-pacific-12845304>
- (3) Bloomberg News, 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2011, <http://www.businessweek.com/news/2011-03-22/nuclear-fallout-comes-with-aura-of-arrogance-mycale-schneider.html>
- (4) BBC 26<sup>th</sup> March 2011, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-pacific-12869184>
- (5) DECC media release, 17<sup>th</sup> March, [http://www.decc.gov.uk/en/content/cms/news/PN11\\_026/PN11\\_026.aspx](http://www.decc.gov.uk/en/content/cms/news/PN11_026/PN11_026.aspx)

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