



Nuclear Free Local Authorities Steering Committee

information

NFLA All-Ireland Forum Media release - for immediate release, 15th March 2010

Are Ireland's coastline safe from radiation discharges? Should Ireland be worried by an escalation of nuclear power in the UK?

The Nuclear Free Local Authorities All-Ireland Forum are holding an important pre-UK election seminar considering the implications for Ireland – north and the Republic - of a major escalation of nuclear power across the Irish Sea in England and Wales. A number of potential sites on the west coast of Britain have been nominated for a new generation of nuclear power stations by the UK Government (1) whilst large radioactive material shipments have also resumed again from Barrow and Liverpool. The seminar is being hosted by Newry and Mourne Council in its Council Chamber on Friday March 19th (2).

This seminar particularly considers the potential effects of radioactive discharges from nuclear power stations like Sellafield and what effect they may be having on Ireland's coastline. The keynote speakers include Dr Ian Fairlie, an eminent independent radiation specialist on low level radiation, who will address whether Irish coastal communities should be worried about such issues from the UK nuclear industry. Dr Pawel Gaca will also be speaking at the seminar. He is a co-author of the Annual Reports of the Northern Ireland Radiation Monitoring Committee, and will be able to provide councillors and officers with an overview of the figures from their reports.

Should Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland Councils need to take a greater interest in the risks of nuclear materials on the island? And should the island remain 'nuclear free'? The seminar will also hear from Dr Larry Staudt of the Dundalk based Centre for Renewable Energy about the highly positive movements to promote renewables in Ireland which allow the island to remain nuclear free.

The seminar will also urge Irish Councils to join the Hiroshima and Nagasaki-led Mayors for Peace organisation, one of the largest local government bodies in the world (3), which campaigns for a nuclear weapons free world. With the upcoming Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty Conference in May being seen as one of the best opportunities for reductions in nuclear weapons for a generation, Sean Morris, UK Mayors for Peace Working Group Secretary, will say why Irish Councils can enhance this campaign by joining the Mayors for Peace and the NFLA (4).

NFLA All-Ireland Joint Chair and Newry councillor Michael Carr said:

"The NFLA All-Ireland Forum has organised this seminar to allow councillors and officers from across Ireland to consider the risks from nuclear power across the Irish Sea. As a coastal based councillor I have been concerned for many years if Ireland is affected from radioactive discharges from the likes of Sellafield. I know this seminar will be very helpful in bringing these important issues to the attention of Irish councillors. I urge Councils to attend it."

The seminar will be closed by newly created Irish Senator Mark Dearey, who has just stood down as NFLA Ireland Joint Chair. He added:

"As a former councillor attending NFLA meetings, I know of the high quality of its policy work and seminars. Friday's seminar follows on in this great tradition. In my new role as a Senator I will be taking the information from the seminar and challenging the Governments appropriately, as the NFLA have done for many years."

Ends

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Further information

Sean Morris, NFLA Secretary 00 44 (0)161 234 3244 or 00 44 (0)7771 930186

Notes to Editors:

- (1) UK Government's Draft National Policy Statement on Nuclear Power Generation, November 2009.
(2) NFLA All-Ireland Forum seminar, Newry Council Offices, Monaghan Row, Friday 19th March 2010

FINAL PROGRAMME:

10.30am	Registration
11.00am	Opening welcome by Newry and Mourne Councillor and the Joint Chair of Irish Nuclear Free Local Authorities, Councillor Michael Carr
11.05am	Low-level radiation and public health risk from the nuclear industry - Dr Ian Fairlie, independent consultant on radiation (confirmed)
11.35am	How safe is Northern Ireland's coast from radiation discharges? The reports of the Northern Ireland Radiation Monitoring Group – Dr Pawel Gaca, Geosciences Ltd, Southampton University and report co-author (confirmed)
12.00pm	Promoting renewable energy in Ireland, the local authority role (using the Dundalk 2020 cross-border programme as a case-study) and why Ireland does not need nuclear power - Larry Staudt, Dundalk Centre for Renewable Energy (confirmed)
12.25pm	Mayors for Peace, nuclear weapons proliferation and Trident replacement - Sean Morris, UK Mayors for Peace Secretary (confirmed)
12.45pm	Panel discussion.
1.00pm	Closing comments by Senator Mark Dearey, Seanad Eireann, seminar conclusion, followed by short 30 minute NFLA Ireland business meeting.

- (3) Further information on the Mayors for Peace can be found from <http://www.mayorsforpeace.org>. There are 3680 members of Mayors for Peace worldwide, including 3 Councils in Northern Ireland and 11 Councils in the Republic of Ireland.
- (4) Further information on the Nuclear Free Local Authorities can be found from <http://nuclearpolicy.info>. There are 70 members of the UK and Ireland Nuclear Free Local Authorities with members in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

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