



Nuclear Free Local Authorities Steering Committee

information

NFLA Media release - for immediate release, 13th April 2012

NFLA Policy Briefing outlines concerns over the movement of radioactively contaminated heat exchangers from Berkeley to Sweden

The Nuclear Free Local Authorities (NFLA) publishes today its latest policy briefing. It outlines initial concerns over the decision to start moving by road and sea radioactively contaminated heat exchangers from the decommissioned former Magnox reactor at Berkeley, Gloucestershire to a site in Nykoping, Sweden for decontamination and recycling (1).

The transport follows earlier concerns raised in 2011 by the NFLA and an international coalition of North American and Northern European environmental groups over the proposed transport of bus-sized radioactively contaminated steam generators from a Bruce Power facility by the Great Lakes in Canada to the same Studsvik plant in Sweden. The campaign has to date successfully prevented the transport of the generators, with the licence for it having now lapsed and requiring a new application (2).

This initial NFLA briefing has been developed for it by independent marine pollution consultant Tim Deere-Jones following the first shipment which docked in Sweden last week. The transport went from Berkeley to the Avonmouth dockyard before travelling through the Bristol Channel and the English Channel and on to the Swedish site in Nykoping.

The NFLA has consistently campaigned against the transport of radioactive material shipments across such large distances and is also concerned that the decontamination of the heat exchangers will see a potential 'dilution and dispersal' of the materials, with much of the recycled steel going back into the consumer chain. The NFLA also believes that there must be better ways to safely manage such radioactive waste materials than sending them halfway across Europe with all the attendant risks of an accident or malicious attack.

On behalf of the NFLA, Tim Deere-Jones is asking a number of questions to authorities over the following issues of concern:

- the precise details of the design and interior structure of the Berkeley heat exchanger;
- a detailed breakdown of the radioactivity content of each heat exchanger;
- a Freedom of Information request for a detailed breakdown and description of a late 1990s trial project (and its conclusions) for dismantling a heat exchanger at the Berkeley site.

A more detailed briefing, in conjunction with other groups, is planned when such information is forthcoming.

NFLA Chair Councillor Brian Goodall said:

"This NFLA briefing highlights the continuing concern we have with the moves across the nuclear sector to transport radioactive materials long distances for decontamination rather than deal with the waste management safely on or near the site. It concerns me greatly that this first shipment may set a precedent for many more shipments from Berkeley and other UK decommissioned reactors to Sweden, with all the accompanying risks."

Tim Deere-Jones added:

"The UK's deal with Studsvik will generate a significant increase in the number and volume of radioactive cargo travelling through UK and European waters and a consequent increased risk of a "radioactive shipping accident" involving potential loss of the cargos. Any such incident will

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undoubtedly have a massive socio-economic impact on a wide range of important marine related industries such as fishing, tourism and marine water sports."

Ends

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Notes to editors:

- (1) The NFLA Policy Briefing is attached with this media release and will be available on the NFLA website – <http://www.nuclearpolicy.info>.
- (2) See NFLA Policy Briefing No 85, 25th July 2011, 'Proposed transport of Canadian steam generators to Sweden'.
[http://www.nuclearpolicy.info/docs/briefings/A199_\(NB85\)_Canadian_waste_shipments.pdf](http://www.nuclearpolicy.info/docs/briefings/A199_(NB85)_Canadian_waste_shipments.pdf)
See also Council of Canadians website article, 3rd February 2012.
<http://canadians.org/blog/?p=13379>

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