



*Nuclear Free Local Authorities Steering Committee*

# information

**NFLA Media release - for immediate release, 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2012**

## **NFLA strongly opposes new NDA proposals to transport Dounreay spent radioactive fuels to Sellafield for security and environmental reasons**

The Nuclear Free Local Authorities (NFLA) today (1) submits its official submission to the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA) on its public consultation of credible and preferred options for dealing with the exotic spent radioactive fuels held at the Dounreay site in Caithness, Scotland (2).

Like with its previous consultation on breeder fuels issued last year, the NDA suggest that much of these materials can be transported by rail from Dounreay through Scotland to the Sellafield site in Cumbria. A long period of decommissioning of the site is continuing. The NFLA met up with Scottish Government radioactive waste officials this week to note its consistent concern over the rail transportation of such radioactive materials across Scotland's limited rail network.

The NFLA is also very disappointed that there was only 6 weeks to respond to this consultation, when the UK and Scottish Government's suggest a 12 week consultation period. The NFLA feels this is due to the NDA having a preferred view and not actively seeking to engage with those community groups, like the NFLA, who may have a different view.

The NFLA make 5 critical conclusions of the latest NDA's proposals:

- This consultation exercise has been very poorly executed. The consultation period is much too short and the information provided is very patchy.
- With the demise of the Sellafield Mixed Oxide Plan (MoX) Plant it is high time that spent fuel and plutonium are classified as waste.
- The NDA's proposals will breach at least two environmental principles – the proximity principle and the concentrate and contain principle.
- Whether or not the proposal includes reprocessing of the irradiated fuels in the THORP is unclear. If it does this will mean an increase in discharges from Sellafield at a time when it is already failing to make progressive a substantial reductions in discharges and achieving close to zero by 2020, in accordance with to the UK international commitments.
- It appears likely that the 30-60 or so transports from Dounreay to Sellafield would need to be accompanied by armed police for security reasons. Added to the 50 rail journeys to transport breeder fuel to Sellafield this is going to mean constant armed shipments between now and 2020 travelling the length of Scotland.

The NFLA strongly opposes the NDA's proposals on both security and environmental grounds. It believes the proposals go very much against the policy of the Scottish Government that highly active radioactive waste should remain and be stored safely near its site of origin. It clearly stated this in its recent meeting with the Scottish Government and its previous consultation response.

NFLA Chair Councillor Brian Goodall said:

"I am very concerned that the NDA have developed another consultation on Dounreay radioactive waste materials and not learnt from their mistakes with its previous consultation. All Scottish Councils, not just Highland Council, are very concerned with these proposals. They clearly breach two key environmental principles and I am very worried about the movement of such sensitive materials across Scotland to Sellafield. I ask the NDA to think again with these proposals and discuss them in more detail with local and relevant Councils, the NFLA, the Scottish Councils Committee on Radioactive Substances and the emergency services as a matter of urgency. As they stand they set some very worrying precedents for the future."

**THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT VOICE ON NUCLEAR ISSUES**



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**Further information**

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**Notes to Editors:**

- (1) NFLA Radioactive Waste Briefing 33 on the Dounreay consultation is attached with this briefing.
- (2) See the NDA website for this and the earlier Dounreay consultation. <http://www.nda.gov.uk>

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