



*Nuclear Free Local Authorities Steering Committee*

# information

**NFLA Media release - for immediate release, 6<sup>th</sup> October 2013**

## **NFLA All Ireland Forum holds meeting on the extent of Sellafield derived waste on the west coast of Ireland, the prospects for Irish renewable energy and Ireland's potential role to challenge UK new nuclear build**

The Nuclear Free Local Authorities All Ireland Forum (NFLA) is holding an important seminar on key aspects of nuclear health and safety and wider energy policy in Galway City Hall on Friday, October 11<sup>th</sup>. (1)

Holding its first meeting on the west coast of Ireland, the NFLA have invited independent marine radiation consultant Tim Deere-Jones to inform councillors and officers over the level and potential risk of Sellafield derived radioactive discharges detected on the west coast of Ireland, from Donegal in the north, to Galway Bay and Bantry Bay in West Cork.

In his presentation to the Forum, Tim will note that Sellafield derived radioactivity has been identified in samples of seawater, coastal sediment and seaweed at the three west coast monitoring sites since the 1980s. The presence of Caesium 137, Technetium 99, and Plutonium 238, Plutonium 239 and Plutonium 240 is also confirmed.

Tim will argue that, since the major source of sea discharged Caesium 137 has been much reduced, and because Caesium has a relatively short half life, it is possible that the overall trend of concentrations in samples may reduce over time. However, since Plutonium and other alpha actinides tend to have such extended half lives, and because there are other sources (yet to peak) of alpha emitters by decay, it is possible that concentrations of these radionuclides in west coast samples may increase over time.

The seminar will also consider the prospects for a major move forward with renewable energy in Ireland, particularly onshore and off the west coast of Ireland. Former Irish Senator, TD and Councillor Dan Boyle will address the planning and political issues that are required to bring about a 'low carbon renewable energy revolution' across the island of Ireland. Such a policy move will not just generate more Irish-owned energy; the country could become a significant energy exporter and generate lots of new jobs across the country. (2)

The third issue the seminar will consider is the impacts to Ireland of a UK new nuclear reactor programme and the role the Irish Government could play in challenging it. If a deal is signed shortly between the UK Government and the French state nuclear utility EDF on financing new nuclear reactors it will have to go to the European Commission to determine whether it is a legal form of state aid. This could be a real opportunity for the Irish Government, in liaison with the likes of Germany and Austria, to promote its legal nuclear free status and challenge the Commission in regards to UK and wider European new nuclear build. The NFLA Secretary will provide councillors with the current state of play with this debate and how the Irish Government could have a positive role to play within it.

NFLA All Ireland Co Chair, Councillor Mark Dearey said:

"I am pleased that the NFLA All Ireland Forum is meeting for the first time in Galway to give councillors on the west coast of Ireland the opportunity to engage in our important policy agenda. As ever, we are seeking to inform Irish councillors of the risks of nuclear energy, the benefits of renewable energy and the important role Ireland can play in a positive way to encourage a sensible and jobs rich low carbon energy revolution. I encourage Irish councillors to come to Galway and hear more about it."

**THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT VOICE ON NUCLEAR ISSUES**



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Ends

**Further information** - Sean Morris, NFLA Secretary – 00 44 161 234 3244 or 00 44 7771 930196.

**Notes to editors:**

- (1) **NFLA All Ireland Forum seminar, Ireland's future energy needs and risks from radioactive discharges, Friday 11<sup>th</sup> October 2013, Council Chamber, Galway City Hall, College Road, Galway, Ireland.**

**PROGRAMME (speakers may be subject to change)**

- 10.30am Registration.
- 11.00am Opening welcomes by Councillor Colette Connolly, Galway City Council and Councillor Mark Dearey, Dundalk Town Council and Co-Chair of the NFLA All Ireland Forum.
- 11.05am What are the planning and political considerations behind developing low carbon energy in Ireland, and is the public adequately informed? Dan Boyle, former councillor, TD and Senator.
- 11.35pm Is the Irish west coast susceptible to radioactive discharges, like the east coast? And what are the risks? Tim Deere-Jones, independent marine radioactivity pollution consultant.
- 12.05pm Brief update on nuclear issues in the UK and Ireland's involvement in the European nuclear policy dimension – Sean Morris, NFLA Secretary.
- 12.25pm Panel discussion chaired by the Co-Chair of the NFLA All Ireland Forum, Councillor Michael Carr, Newry & Mourne District Council.
- 1.00pm Seminar conclusion.

- (2) The NFLA's assessment of developing a renewable energy revolution in Ireland is available on its website:

[http://www.nuclearpolicy.info/docs/briefings/A201\\_\(NB87\)\\_Ireland\\_and\\_renewable\\_energy.pdf](http://www.nuclearpolicy.info/docs/briefings/A201_(NB87)_Ireland_and_renewable_energy.pdf)

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