



Nuclear Free Local Authorities Steering Committee

information

NFLA Media release - for immediate release, 19th December 2012

As Dounreay rail transports to Sellafield begin, NFLA notes an increase in accidents involving rail transports containing radioactive materials

Last weekend the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority commenced the first of a long series of rail transports between Dounreay and Sellafield containing 'breeder fuels' and exotic fuels' of radioactive materials, including plutonium (1).

The NFLA have consistently opposed these transports and believe the material should be stored and managed safely at their point of origin. It has also raised a number of security and emergency planning concerns and urged the NDA to ensure each local Council on the rail routes are informed of the transports, which the NFLA believes is currently not happening (2).

The NFLA's concerns in this area are heightened by the recent release, under the Freedom of Information Act, of figures from the Office of Nuclear Regulation (ONR) which show 38 reported accidents involving the transportation of radioactive materials in 2011 (3). The information, uncovered by investigative journalist Rob Edwards, was initially not going to be provided, and what has actually been provided remains quite inadequate.

The information that has been released has been provided in a manner that makes it very difficult to accurately match the sites with previously published accounts of individual accidents. The ONR has also refused to name any of the hospitals, universities and other agencies outside of the nuclear industry involved with some of these accidents.

The list of 38 accidents recorded in 2011 is an increase from 30 accidents in 2010. Almost half of the accidents – 18 – were going to or from the Sellafield facility.

The NFLA is concerned about the general lack of openness and transparency from the ONR in releasing this information and it also challenges the NDA's assertion of a glowing safety record of rail transports, given the increasing rather than decreasing trend in recorded accidents. The sparseness of the information also precludes consideration of the severity of each accident.

New NFLA Chair, Councillor Mark Hackett said:

"I am concerned that accidents involving rail transports of radioactive materials is increasing. Given the nature of the materials and their radioactive nature, the commencement of such transports from Dounreay to Sellafield across the Scottish and Cumbrian rail network needs to be reconsidered urgently. I urge the NDA and ONR to meet with the NFLA and local council emergency planning officers to discuss the safety of these transports and appropriate arrangements in the event of an accident. As a matter of principle these transports should not take place but rather the waste should be stored safely at Dounreay."

Ends

Further information - Sean Morris, NFLA Secretary - 0161 234 3244 or 07771 930186.

Notes to editors:

(1) Scotsman 17th December 2012

<http://www.scotsman.com/news/environment/first-rail-shipments-of-nuclear-material-from-dounreay-to-sellafield-take-place-1-2696056>

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT VOICE ON NUCLEAR ISSUES



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- (2) NFLA Radioactive Waste Briefing 33 - NDA consultation on exotic fuels and nuclear materials stored at the Dounreay decommissioned site, March 2012
http://www.nuclearpolicy.info/docs/radwaste/NFLA_RWB_33_Dounreay_exotic_fuels.pdf
- (3) Rob Edwards' website, 18th December 2012 <http://www.robedwards.com/2012/12/sellafield-involved-in-18-nuclear-transport-accidents.html>

ONR's list of transport accidents involving radioactive materials from licensed nuclear sites, 2011 (taken directly from link off Rob Edwards' website).

From	To	Notes
Aldermaston	Springfield	
Berkeley	Dungeness A	Berkeley, Gloucestershire
Chapelcross	Sellafield	
Dounreay	Details not held	Van stopped near Dingwells
Dungeness A	Kent	
Hartlepool	Southampton	
Hinkley Point B	Hunterston B	
Hinkley Point B	Sellafield	
Hinkley Point B	Windscale	
Hunterston	Sellafield	
n/a	n/a	Generic issue with AGR flasks
n/a	n/a	Generic issue with AGR flasks
Sellafield	Hinkley Point B	
Sellafield	Workington	
Sellafield	Barrow	
Sellafield	Capenhurst	
Sellafield	Details not held	
Sellafield	Chapelcross	
Sellafield	Japan	
Sellafield	Japan	
Sellafield	Hartlepool	
Sellafield	Sweden	
Sellafield	Drigg	
Sellafield	Hinkley Point B	Collision happened nr Walsall
Springfields	Spain	
Springfields	Sellafield	
Springfields	Sellafield	
USA	Springfields	
Workington	Wales	