



*Nuclear Free Local Authorities Steering Committee*

# information

**NFLA Media release - for immediate release, 28<sup>th</sup> October 2014**

## **NFLA alarmed, but not surprised, by leaked Sellafield photographs which show dilapidated state of parts of the site**

The Nuclear Free Local Authorities (NFLA) is highly alarmed, but not surprised, to see the state of parts of the Sellafield site, after photographs were published in 'The Ecologist'.

The photographs were sent to 'The Ecologist' by an anonymous source and show quite disturbing scenes of dilapidation of spent nuclear ponds left derelict and cracked concrete tanks. (1)

The NFLA shares the concerns raised in the article by the independent nuclear engineering consultant John Large who said in 'The Ecologist' article:

"This pond is built above ground. It's like a concrete dock full of water. But the concrete is in dreadful condition, degraded and fractured, and if the ponds drain, the Magnox fuel will ignite and that would lead to a massive release of radioactive material."

"Looking at the photos I am very disturbed at the degraded and run down condition of the structures and support services. In my opinion there is a significant risk that the system could fail."

"If you got a breach of the wall by accident or by terrorist attack, the Magnox fuel would burn. I would say there's many hundreds of tonnes in there. It could give rise to a very big radioactive release. It's not for me to make comparisons with Chernobyl or Fukushima, but it could certainly cause serious contamination over a wide area and for a very long time."

For the NFLA these are all very serious matters, and it does beg the question of why the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA) have left these facilities in such a serious state of disrepair. The NFLA Chair will be attending the NDA's National Stakeholder Dialogue tomorrow and will be raising this issue directly with senior members of the NDA. The NFLA will also raise this issue with the Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR) over the regulatory control of the site.

Representatives from the NFLA have visited the Sellafield site and were not reassured by the state of the facilities then. The concern over the state of the Sellafield site has also been raised in detail by the National Audit Office (2) and the Parliamentary Public Accounts Committee (3). It therefore continues to concern the NFLA that a site close to Sellafield is still being developed for new nuclear reactors, when it is clear Sellafield's massive problems in dealing with existing nuclear facilities should be the absolute priority of the nuclear industry.

NFLA Chair Councillor Mark Hackett said:

"It comes as no surprise to see these photographs of the Sellafield site and the dilapidated nature of parts of the site. The comments made by John Large emphasise the huge urgency that is required by the site owners, the NDA and the ONR to completely get to grips with the complex nature of the Sellafield site, and the real dangers it poses. Public health and safety, public protection, and the health of the workforce are clearly at risk if these sites are not dealt with as soon as is practical and possible. I will be seeking answers from the NDA at its Stakeholder Dialogue meeting tomorrow. It is disgraceful that these facilities are in such a terrible state of disrepair."

Ends

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**THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT VOICE ON NUCLEAR ISSUES**



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For more information please contact Sean Morris, NFLA Secretary on 00 44 (0)161 234 3244 or Pete Roche, NFLA Policy Advisor on 00 44 (0)131 444 1445.

Notes for editors:

- (1) The Ecologist 27th October 2014  
[http://www.theecologist.org/News/news\\_analysis/2611216/leaked\\_sellafield\\_photos\\_reveal\\_massive\\_radioactive\\_release\\_threat.html](http://www.theecologist.org/News/news_analysis/2611216/leaked_sellafield_photos_reveal_massive_radioactive_release_threat.html)
- (2) National Audit Office report, Managing Risk Reduction at Sellafield, 7<sup>th</sup> November 2012  
<http://www.nao.org.uk/report/managing-risk-reduction-at-sellafield/#>  
Also see NFLA Media Release, 7<sup>th</sup> November 2012  
[http://www.nuclearpolicy.info/docs/news/NFLA\\_NAO\\_NDA\\_report.pdf](http://www.nuclearpolicy.info/docs/news/NFLA_NAO_NDA_report.pdf)
- (3) Parliamentary Public Accounts Committee report on progress at Sellafield, 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2014  
<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201314/cmselect/cmpubacc/708/70802.htm>

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