



*Nuclear Free Local Authorities Steering Committee*

# information

**NFLA Media release - for immediate release, 14<sup>th</sup> March 2012**

## **NFLA Welsh Forum 'surprised and disappointed' with Welsh Government policy change on new nuclear build at Wylfa**

The Nuclear Free Local Authorities Welsh Forum (NFLA) has written today to the Welsh First Minister Carywn Jones and the Welsh Environment Minister John Griffiths noting its dismay and deep disappointment with an important change in Welsh Government policy on nuclear power (1).

The First Minister launched today a new Energy Statement – 'Energy Wales: A Low Carbon Transition'. The updated Energy Statement outlines the Welsh Government's plans to seek to develop low-carbon forms of energy and become a major leader in such technologies, bringing substantial jobs and economic benefits to Wales (2).

Whilst the NFLA welcomes the leadership of the First Minister to pro-actively lead Welsh energy policy, and sees many positive developments in the promotion of renewable energy and energy efficiency in the report, it is both surprised and disappointed that the Government has directly changed its stance on the building of a new nuclear power station at Wylfa in Anglesey.

The Welsh Government expressly notes in the Energy Statement: "There are undoubtedly risks associated with nuclear power but the risks posed by climate change are now so serious that we cannot dispense with a key proven low-carbon technology. The Welsh Government supports the development of a new nuclear power station on Anglesey."

This considerably contradicts the major and detailed concerns over nuclear power the Welsh Government had expressed in its 2010 Energy Statement, including (3):

- "We remain of the view that the high level of interest in exploiting the huge potential for renewable energy reduces the need for other, more hazardous, forms of low carbon energy and obviates the need for new nuclear power stations.
- We have a way to go in justifying to the public what must done in dealing with future nuclear waste. We therefore support the call for a public inquiry on dealing with the waste arising from new nuclear build on the grounds of concern over the safety and security of its management. This carries with it the implication that any proposed new nuclear power station must contain credible plans for nuclear waste management.
- Maximise energy savings from energy efficiency and low-carbon energy production from renewables in Wales."

The NFLA believe all these risks remain the same and that the factors relating to the Fukushima incident have increased rather than reduced them. The NFLA is also disappointed that such an overt policy change was not discussed in a recent meeting between the NFLA and the Welsh Environment Minister. It was clearly also not shared in the views of a cross-party panel discussion made to the recent NFLA Welsh Forum meeting in Cardiff. In the NFLA's view, such a major policy change should be subject to more discussion and it should have been at the very least delayed until the Welsh Assembly's energy inquiry has been completed and reported (4).

In its letter to Carywn Jones the NFLA is calling for a direct meeting to discuss this policy change further and the wider development of a formal stakeholder dialogue with Welsh environmental and nuclear concerned groups on energy matters, as exists with the UK Government (5). It also disputes the need for nuclear new build at Wylfa and challenges the assertion that it is a low carbon technology

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given high carbon factors such as uranium mining extraction, the extensive construction issues of a new reactor and the management and transportation of radioactive waste.

NFLA Welsh Forum Chair Councillor Stephen Churchman said:

“I am somewhat taken aback by this change in stance by the Welsh Government that without any prior indication has led to a total change of policy direction. To say I am disappointed is an understatement. Their rush to create jobs at any cost seems to have overtaken their common sense. The alternatives of renewables can also offer valuable jobs, whilst producing much cleaner and safer energy for the whole of Wales and the UK.”

Ends

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

## **Notes to editors:**

- (1) The NFLA letter is attached with this media release.
- (2) Welsh Government - 'Energy Wales: A Low Carbon Transition', March 2012.  
<http://wales.gov.uk/docs/desh/publications/120314energywalesen.pdf>
- (3) Welsh Government Energy Statement, March 2010.  
<http://www.wales.gov.uk/docs/desh/policy/100331energystatementen.pdf>
- (4) The Welsh Assembly Environment and Sustainability Committee are presently holding an inquiry into the future development of Welsh energy policy. The NFLA Welsh Forum has made a submission to this inquiry and has been invited to address the Committee on March 29<sup>th</sup>.  
[http://www.nuclearpolicy.info/docs/consultations/NFLA\\_Welsh\\_Assembly\\_energy\\_inquiry\\_submission.pdf](http://www.nuclearpolicy.info/docs/consultations/NFLA_Welsh_Assembly_energy_inquiry_submission.pdf)
- (5) Since 2010 the UK Department of Energy and Climate Change has held a regular stakeholder dialogue with environmental and nuclear concerned NGOs. A sample copy of minutes from the meeting can be downloaded from:  
<http://www.decc.gov.uk/assets/decc/11/meeting-energy-demand/nuclear/3275-minutes-3rd-deccngo-forum-25-july-2011.pdf>

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