



Nuclear Free Local Authorities Steering Committee

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NFLA Media release - for immediate release, 4th September 2014

With Heysham and Hartlepool closed until as late as December, NFLA argues now is the time to move from nuclear towards renewables

The Nuclear Free Local Authorities (NFLA) notes today an announcement by EDF that the temporary closures of its nuclear reactors at Heysham and Hartlepool could last until the end of 2014. (1) NFLA argues this is one of the many reasons why it is now time for the UK Government to move away from nuclear power in favour of an energy policy increasingly dominated by a wide renewables mix, energy efficiency demand management measures and microgeneration projects.

As the NFLA noted in its earlier media release last month (2), when the safety issues at Heysham meant two reactors at the Lancashire site and two similar reactors at Hartlepool would need to be closed, renewable energy has taken up much of the slack.

As the trade body for the renewable energy industry, Renewable UK, commented earlier this week, August was a record breaking month for wind energy generation in the country, with it reaching 22% of UK electricity needs on August 17th. Wind energy surpassed coal fired electricity plants on five separate occasions in the month and on August 29th even exceeded that of the diminished nuclear fleet. (3)

This closure also comes at a time when it has been reported in Finland - which is developing the same type of nuclear reactor as EDF plans for Hinkley Point and Sizewell - that the Olkiluoto new nuclear reactors will not now open until 2018, a whole nine years behind schedule. (4) With the European Commission still determining the legality of the huge state aid package between the UK Government and EDF for Hinkley Point, it is sobering to think that an added 9 year delay for such a reactor being built in the UK could mean a new reactor may not be operational until around 2030.

In that time, renewable energy sources like onshore and offshore wind, solar, tidal lagoons – like the one proposed at Swansea Bay, district heating, geothermal, hydroelectric and others could be developed much more quickly and be generating considerably more than the types of electricity generation being mooted for Hinkley. Even large financial powerhouses like UBS, Bloomberg and Citibank have been arguing investors should be funding such renewable energy solutions (5). If added in to a more comprehensive demand management energy efficiency programme and microgeneration projects led by innovative Local Authority Energy Service Companies, a more sustainable, radioactive waste free and almost certainly cheaper future energy vision is clearly attainable.

NFLA fully endorses the Green Alliance manifesto which argues for such an energy future (6), and also urges all our political parties across the UK and Republic of Ireland to get away from their nuclear and fossil fuel addictions towards genuine, sustainable and clean carbon-free energy solutions. With reports like the NFLA briefing on Local Authority Energy Service Companies showing that new jobs and the alleviation of fuel poverty can be additional positive benefits of such energy strategies (7), this temporary reduction of nuclear power should be seen as an opportunity for government and our political parties to start thinking differently.

NFLA Chair, Councillor Mark Hackett said:

“I am genuinely concerned of what the ramifications of EDF’s announcement on the Heysham and Hartlepool nuclear reactors could be, particularly if there is a very cold winter. I welcome the National Grid’s decision to initiate its emergency plans to cope with this 25% reduction of nuclear power. As

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renewable energy starts really showing its potential in the absence of so much electricity generation, I think that government and our political parties really need to start looking for sensible alternatives. If the mishaps in Finland are anything to go by, the UK simply cannot wait until 2030 for new nuclear to come on stream. The renewable revolution is taking place across the world – it really is time for governments in the UK and Ireland to finally get fully on board.”

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For more information please contact Sean Morris, NFLA Secretary on 0161 234 3244 or Pete Roche, NFLA Scotland Policy Advisor on 0131 444 1445.

Notes for editors:

- (1) BBC News Online, 4th September 2014 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-29058644>
- (2) NFLA Media Release, 12th August 2014
http://www.nuclearpolicy.info/docs/news/NFLA_EDF_Heysham_Hartlepool_closure.pdf
- (3) Renewable UK Media Release, 1st September 2014
<http://www.renewableuk.com/en/news/press-releases.cfm/2014-09-01-wind-power-beats-nuclear-and-coal-in-record-breaking-august>
- (4) Energy Business Review 3rd September 2014
<http://nuclear.energy-business-review.com/news/finlands-nuclear-project-olkiluoto-3-commissioning-delayed-to-2018-030914-4361299>
- (5) See a summary of the UBS report in The Guardian, 27th August 2014
<http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2014/aug/27/ubs-investors-renewables-revolution>
and <http://safenergy.org/2014/08/27/ubs-its-time-to-join-the-solar-revolution>
- (6) Guardian 1st September 2014
<http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2014/sep/01/election-manifestos-greener-britain-national-trust-greenpeace>
- (7) NFLA Policy Briefing on Local Authority Energy Service Companies, 18th August 2014
[http://www.nuclearpolicy.info/docs/briefings/A239_\(NB125\)_Local_authority_energy_trusts.pdf](http://www.nuclearpolicy.info/docs/briefings/A239_(NB125)_Local_authority_energy_trusts.pdf)

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