



Nuclear Free Local Authorities Steering Committee

information

NFLA Media release - for immediate release, 14th April 2011

NFLA raises 35 key issues in its response to UK nuclear safety review

The Nuclear Free Local Authorities (NFLA) submitted a detailed list of questions and issues it wishes to see the Nuclear Installations Inspectorate (of the new Office for Nuclear Regulation) take up in its review of UK nuclear safety following the Fukushima incident.

As Japanese Police start today to search in radiation suits for over 1000 bodies following the earthquake and tsunami believed to be in the Fukushima evacuation zone, the UK nuclear safety review takes place amidst the multifarious issues in dealing with these heavily damaged reactors. Discharged low-level radioactive waste water is still going into the Pacific Ocean and concerns now remain with water levels in the basement of Reactor Number 2, which are unexpectedly rising (1). It seems clear that this incident is likely to go on for many more months at least.

The NFLA's submission of issues for Chief Nuclear Inspector Mike Weightman's review begins by arguing that the review needs to be lengthened given that the crucial interim report is due in mid May, at a time when it still looks highly unlikely that the Fukushima reactor incident will be under complete control (2).

The NFLA's submission considers four key areas – general concerns, engineering issues, marine pollution issues and emergency planning issues. Key points from the submission include:

- The NFLA asks how additional points of concern beyond the highly narrow issues of the review will be considered.
- The NFLA believes that the independent nuclear engineering specialist John Large should be co-opted on to the safety review panel of experts.
- The NII should urgently discuss with French nuclear regulators their concerns after its President suggested issues remain with the new EPR design reactor in Normandy – the same reactor being suggested for Hinkley Point in Somerset (3).
- The NFLA will make detailed analysis of marine pollution issues in a study being undertaken for it by the independent marine pollution specialist Tim Deere-Jones, with 9 key areas of study being considered.
- Emergency planning issues over the size of the evacuation zone, the preparedness of UK emergency service providers following deep staffing cuts, and how the health and safety of any staff at the sharp end of a nuclear accident will be managed, have also been raised.

The submission also includes the 8 key demands agreed by over 30 nuclear concerned groups on nuclear safety which have been submitted to Energy Minister Chris Huhne and Mike Weightman previously (4).

NFLA Chair George Regan, a Bailie (senior councillor) of Dundee City Council, comments: "The NFLA initial submission to the Weightman report comes up with 35 significant issues that need to be thoroughly considered by the review. I hope these can all be seriously considered by the nuclear regulators but I fear there is simply not enough time with the strict deadlines on it to prepare such a definitive report. Fukushima has raised so many different issues for the nuclear sector. In order to inspire full public confidence they all need to be rigorously considered. I hope they will be. The NFLA will actively and positively engage with the review to make sure they do."

Ends.

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

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT VOICE ON NUCLEAR ISSUES



Nuclear Free Local Authorities Steering Committee

information

Notes for editors:

- (1) BBC Online, 14th April, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-pacific-13078414>
- (2) The NFLA submission is attached on a separate pdf attached with this media release.
- (3) Stop Hinkley Group media release, 8th April, <http://stophinkley.org/StopPress.htm>
- (4) See NFLA website, http://www.nuclearpolicy.info/docs/news/NFLA_NGO_nuclear_demands_joint_statement.pdf

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT VOICE ON NUCLEAR ISSUES