

Sellafield Workers' Campaign

Date 25th September 2012

Dear Baroness Verma,

I write as [redacted] of the Sellafield Workers Campaign, an organisation made up of elected trade union convenors and senior stewards which exists to promote the interests of our nuclear industry and our West Cumbrian community.

My first task is to congratulate you on your appointment as a Minister in the Department of Energy and Climate Change. Our Campaign aims to work in close, credible partnership with HMG, and we believe we had a very decent relationship with your predecessor, Lord Marland.

For us, of course, there is no more important post in all of Government than the one you now occupy.

We understand you will soon make a visit to the Sellafield nuclear site, and we will be extremely pleased if you can find time to meet our [redacted] Secretariat, or even our senior stewards. However, you will doubtless be under strict time pressures, so we will put that idea before you, and leave it for now.

Our purpose in writing to you so soon after your appointment is straightforward: the GDF issue.

As you will know, on October 11, 2012, three local authorities in Cumbria will vote on a 'Decision to Participate' (DtP) in the search for a GDF site. With this in mind, we would like to make our own position clear on the GDF search. Our position has been consistent and has been put on the record in the local and regional media plus a publication by the MRWS itself where they sought one Yes and one No position of the DtP.

We are totally and unambiguously in favour of the search for a GDF going ahead. We have made it very clear that we want the three Councils vote Yes to the DtP.

The history of dealing – or not dealing – with Britain's nuclear waste goes back at least to the foundation of NIREX, in 1982. We believe that 30 years of indecision, during which our workforce packages and repackages materials left over from the Cold War, is quite enough.

We would like to see as much 'retrievability' as is possible, but unlike others we trust British science and engineering to deliver – should the search be successful – a design and construction solution which will satisfy our community and our workforce. After all, few people know as much about the safe handling of radioactive materials as the Sellafield workforce.

So: an unambiguous Yes to the DtP is what we in the SWC seek.

And should one authority choose not to go ahead with the search, then we will be good partners in the task of finding another way forward.

Kind Regards

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