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DECC - 25/11/13

17th November 2013

GDF siting process consultation
Department of Energy and Climate Change
Room MO7
55, Whitehall
London
SW1A 2EY

Review of the Existing Process for a Geological Disposal Facility

Dear Sirs

I am writing to express my utter dismay at the latest attempt by the Government to overrule democracy in the county of Cumbria by changing the rules to suit their agenda, in order to, yet again, impose a GDF in this beautiful county.

It is appalling that DECC is now saying that Cumbria County Council and the Parish and Town Councils will only have a say in the 'siting process' of a GDF and none at all on the 'Right of Withdrawal' which, DECC are now proposing, can only be made by the District Council. I find this absolutely unbelievable, undemocratic and totally unacceptable.

I strongly disagree with the changes that allow District Councils to act as the Representative Authority. The powers of responsibility for the GDF and the Right of Withdrawal should not be held by any one Body. DECC appears to be removing **any** obstacles in order to obtain the outcome that they want.

Cumbria County Council has already said a resounding '**No**' in January 2013 to hosting a GDF in Cumbria and by removing them from the declaration process, DECC is removing a layer of democracy to get the result that it wants. How undemocratic is that - words fail me!!

A referendum should be held for the whole of Cumbria regarding this huge and extremely important issue, as the building of a GDF would have a significant impact on the whole county with regard to decimation of tourism, property blight (which is already happening by the way, by the proliferation of wind turbines in Allerdale both onshore and offshore).

Also, nothing has been mentioned about protected areas in Cumbria such as the National Park, AONB's and environmentally sensitive sites. Why has DECC not ruled out these areas? **NIREX** did so for a reason.

If Cumbria County Council and the Parish and Town Councils do not have a voice (and who would also almost certainly be against a GDF, as proved earlier this year), then the district councils are definitely in the minority and do **not** represent the views of the majority in Cumbria.

So much for democracy' which appears to have 'flown out of the window' in

this country!

If a GDF is in the **national** interest, then why, as a country, are we not looking nationally for the safest places? This should be done as a matter of urgency, so why is this not happening? Is this because DECC already has a specific location in mind?

A national search for geological safety is paramount for the siting of a GDF and not the most convenient site.

Other areas of the UK have been proven to have more suitable geology to host a GDF and, **as safety is paramount**, why is Cumbria being looked at yet again? The geology has already been tested here by **NIREX** - cost over £400million - surveyed 60x65km of West Cumbria and sank 29 bore holes at Longlands Farm up to 1km deep and the geology was found to be unsuitable. So is DECC predetermined to site a GDF in Cumbria, come what may, even if it means relying on 'engineered solutions'? How can an engineered solution last 100,000 years and how could we finance an engineered solution given the size of a repository?

No other civilised country is doing so and namely all are relying on natural geological barriers.

As far as 'community benefits' for hosting a GDF are concerned, this appears to be telling a community that their entire future and economy are solely dependant on this. That certainly does not sound right to me. Does the community have to return the 'benefits' if the geology is found to be unsuitable?

How much more money is DECC prepared to spend and how much time is it prepared to waste in seeking a GDF in unsuitable geology and therefore in deeply mistrusting communities?

Its failure to adopt a **safety first** approach is not just damaging its own credibility but also contrary to the national interest.

Also, it would appear that DECC have totally disregarded the strength of feeling of the majority of Cumbrians on this issue, which by the way, is that of being totally against the building of a GDF **anywhere** in the county!

DECC has obviously decided to turn a blind eye to this.

A handful of District councillors voting in West Cumbria do not represent the views of residents **in all Cumbrian communities.**

Is this just a case of, by any means, get it as far away from London as possible. I and many other people in this county are beginning to think so.

Yours faithfully

S.A. Green

Susan Green (email:)