

Dear Sir / Madam - I write with regard to the above.

I am extremely concerned with the new process for selecting a site for a geological disposal facility (underground nuclear waste store) in England, as outlined by the Department for Energy and Climate Change in the new consultation. Vitally, the decision-making process sidelines county councils' waste and strategic planning expertise, lacks independent evaluation and it fails to truly engage with all relevant affected groups, organisations and communities, including town and parish councils.

I agree with the Friends of the Lake District response in which they note that the decision-making process contained within the consultation represent a step backwards. Unless fundamental changes are made, once again public and political mistrust will build and undermine the intentions and principles recommended for the Geological Disposal Facility (GDF) process.

I endorse their call for:

- A broad membership National Commission to oversee the whole process, determining
- Which areas go forward based on suitable geology and other safety and environmental conditions.
- The local decision making body to be truly representative of all the community interests, including County Councils, Parish and Town Councils and other affected organisations
- A legally binding, continuous Right of Withdrawal at any stage.
- It is absolutely essential that the identification of safe and suitable geology conditions comes before the identification of volunteer communities
- More up front information on all aspects of developing a GDF as part of the public awareness campaign before communities volunteer to participate
- A local public referendum before any area enters the detailed siting stage.
- Community benefits should play no part in the process for identifying a safe and suitable GDF site.
- The siting and management strategies for medium and longer-term interim storage of existing legacy and future wastes must also be covered, not least in the event of a repository being delayed or no suitable site being ultimately being found.
- An environmental bottom-line must be established that intrusive borehole investigations, any potential surface infrastructure or GDF, should not be permitted within, or adversely affect, national and international protected areas, such as National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, World Heritage Sites or Natura 2000 sites.

Yours faithfully

Penny Ozanne
REDACTED
REDACTED