Dear Sir/Madam

I am writing to you on behalf of Greenpeace UK concerning the Government's consultation on the UK's plutonium stockpile.[1]

We understand the Government's preferred option is that the stockpile be re-used in nuclear reactors in plutonium-uranium fuel (known as mixed-oxide - MOX - fuel).

Since the launch of the consultation there have occurred the tragic and serious events at the Fukushima nuclear reactors.

It is possible that some of the initial and ongoing problems in No 3 reactor at Fukushima are linked directly to the MOX fuel in the reactor. Given what is known about Fukushima - and what what is yet to be learnt - it is simply not sensible for the Government to continue with its proposals until the full extent of the risk of MOX fuel use in accident scenarios is fully understood.

Even under normal conditions there are a number of issues regarding the use of MOX fuel in reactors which give rise to concern, over and above the many problems attached to using 'conventional' uranium fuel.

Burning MOX creates spent fuel which is even more radioactive and problematic to deal with than the high-burn up fuels which would result from new build reactors. Recent estimates show that disposing of MOX fuel is much more costly than the very high costs of dealing with spent fuel from current reactors and proposed new build.

Given the above, Greenpeace asks that the Government call a halt to this consultation as:

- The Government cannot continue with its 'business as usual' approach for the nuclear industry in the UK. It is a nonsense to continue with proposals to use plutonium-fuel in reactors without regard to major events such as those at Fukushima.

- The Government has called for a review of nuclear safety in the UK because of the situation in Japan. The plutonium consultation must, therefore, be stopped and proposals reconsidered in light of what emerges from the review of safety - both nationally and internationally - on Fukushima. This can only be done when a detailed picture of the extent of the impact of MOX use in the Fukushima crisis is known.

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1 http://www.decc.gov.uk/assets/decc/Consultations/plutonium-stocks/1243-uk-plutonium-stocks.pdf

- It is vital to stop now and reassess whether the Government's proposals on MOX are appropriate for safety, costs *and* proliferation concerns. There has not been a proper debate with all stakeholders on the potential proliferation impacts - internationally - of the UK's plutonium management options and policy decisions.

Your sincerely

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