Dear DECC

Consultation on Plutonium Stockpile

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).

The consultation needs to be halted. 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.

In 2002 The former Local governor in the area of Fukushima REFUSED to allow MOX to be loaded into the reactors because the fuel is much more volatile and the nuclear plant was known to be damaged with cracks to pipes.

Japan admitted in 2002 that it has found cracks in the pipes of Fukushima - the plant destined to burn mixed oxide (Mox) fuel made at BNFL's Sellafield Mox Plant in Cumbria in a process known as reprocessing.
Reprocessing makes already dangerous spent fuel, sent from Japan to Cumbria millions of times more dangerous. The high level wastes from reprocessing are left here while dangerous MOX fuel is sent by armed ship back to Fukushima.

In 2002 The Independent reported that at Fukushima nuclear plant..
"Details of cracks have been kept secret for more than two years. Tepco has shut down the two reactors at Fukushima Daiichi and Kashiwazaki Kariwa and has delayed restarting them until hundreds of pipes are checked. Both reactors were scheduled to be test sites for the burning of new Mox fuel shipped from either BNFL or the Belgian-French reprocessing company, Cogema. Tepco has now delayed the tests indefinitely. The discovery has led to bitter recriminations, with local governments in Japan vowing not to allow Mox fuel to be loaded into any reactors as part of the central government's ambitious plutonium-burning "pluthermal" programme". (as reported in the Independent)

The local authorities were bribed and groomed by Japanese taxpayer money, in much the same way as we are being bribed here in Cumbria to accept geological disposal and new build. Japan began offering subsidies of $250,000 a year for five years to local governments that agreed to the use of the fuel in the reactors in their regions, according to documents available on the Tokyo-based Citizens' Nuclear Information Center website.

The Fukushima plant recieved Mox in August 2010 despite the warnings of whistleblowers.

Following the terrible natural disaster which triggered the man-made catastrophe, the most this has prompted around the world is a "review" of Government policies on nuclear energy. Radiation Free Lakeland support the call that Governments around the world right now should be:

- Closing down all Nuclear facilities immediately (Including ensuring that
all the other Japanese reactors are closed down immediately and defuelled as promptly as can be achieved).

- Bring in outside expertise to manage this process - it should not be

left to the nuclear industry. At the very least this should be done in collaboration with the expertise of those who have been raising these concerns for the last 50 odd years.

- The use of Public Relations companies should be banned immediately – here Cumbria is being groomed with PR to accept risky new build and the insane dumping of high level wastes deep underground in leaky geology.

- The very least the government should do is call a halt on the consultation on plutonium reuse, it is a nonsense to continue with proposals to use plutonium-fuel in reactors without regard to major events such as those at Fukushima.

yours sincerely,

Marianne Birkby
on behalf of Radiation Free Lakeland

refs

http://www.aolnews.com/2011/03/18/japans-own-erin-brockovich-hitomi-kamanaka-laments-i-wish-i/

http://www.independent.co.uk/environment/new-nuclear-scandal-in-japan-threatens-viability-of-sellafield-641519.html

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Mary Lawley Radiation Free Lakeland