



**DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY & CLIMATE CHANGE**

**CONSULTATION INTO MANAGEMENT OF UK  
PLUTONIUM STOCKS**

**Submission by**

**WESTINGHOUSE ELECTRIC COMPANY**

*May 2011*

## **ABOUT WESTINGHOUSE**

Westinghouse Electric Company, a group company of Toshiba Corporation, is the world's pioneering nuclear power company and is a leading supplier of nuclear plant products and technologies to utilities throughout the world. Westinghouse supplied the world's first Pressurised Water Reactor in 1957 in Shippingport, Pennsylvania. Today, Westinghouse technology is the basis for approximately half of the world's operating nuclear plants.

Westinghouse is headquartered in Pittsburgh Pennsylvania and employs around 15,000 people around the world – around 30% of them in Europe. The company has three core business areas – nuclear fuel, nuclear reactor services and nuclear power plants.

Four Westinghouse AP1000 reactors are currently under construction in China - two on the Sanmen site and two on the Haiyang site. Construction on all four plants is on schedule and the first of these plants, at Sanmen, will send its first electricity to the Chinese grid in late 2013. Additionally, six AP1000 plants have already been ordered by customers in the US, with more in the planning stage.

UK regulators are currently in the closing stages of assessing the Westinghouse AP1000 in detail to determine if it meets the UK's safety and environmental requirements.

Westinghouse has recently moved to a Regional organisation, reflecting the growing importance of business outside the US. One of the three regions is Europe, Middle East and Africa, and within that region, the UK is a key market. In the UK Westinghouse runs the Springfields site in Preston, Lancashire (where around 1650 people are employed), and in March 2010 the company agreed a 150 year lease to operate the site on behalf of the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority. The vast majority of the UK's nuclear fuel has been made at Springfields, over a period of more than 50 years.

Westinghouse welcome the opportunity to respond to this important consultation. We recognise that this is an areas where Government need to set out clear preferences and options for discussion, in order to demonstrate that there is a will to progress from the current arrangements (albeit that those are safe and secure) towards a long-term solution.

We agree with the preliminary view that reusing plutonium in MOX fuel to generate electricity is the optimum approach. Whilst there is no urgent need to rush towards implementation of this approach, it is important to signal the way forward and to ensure that this option remains open.

Our responses to the specific consultation questions are as follows:

**Q1 Do you agree that it is not realistic for the UK Government to wait until fast breeder reactor technology is commercially available before taking a decision on how to manage plutonium stocks?**

Yes. The timing for commercial development of fast reactor technology is far from certain, and it is important to demonstrate now that solutions exist for the management of plutonium and to ensure that the option remains open to pursue those approaches which appear the most attractive.

**Q2 Do you agree that the UK Government has got to the point where a strategic sift of the options can be taken?**

Yes. A large amount of work has been done on this topic over a great many years. A sift is possible at this time to separate out the more attractive options from those which are clearly less likely to be optimum.

**Q3 Are the conditions that a preferred option must in due course meet the right ones?**

Yes. We agree with Government that the preferred option which is selected should be safe, secure, affordable, deliverable and provide value for money along with benefit to the UK, as noted in Section 5.3. We also recognise the importance of maintaining public acceptance in order that the preferred option can be implemented.

**Q4 Is the UK Government doing the right thing by taking a preliminary policy view and setting out a strategic direction in this area now?**

Yes, for the reasons noted above.

**Q5 Is there any other evidence Government should consider before coming to a preliminary view?**

We are not aware of any relevant evidence which has not been included in the considerations by Government to date.

**Q6 Has the UK Government selected the right preliminary view?**

Yes, for the reasons noted above.

**Q7 Are there any other high level options that the Government should consider for long-term management of plutonium?**

We are not aware of any other high level options which could credibly be seen as alternatives to the two main options identified – either disposal as waste or reuse in the form of MOX fuel.