

Sirs,

My position is an interested observer and REDACTEDREDACTEDREDACTEDREDACTED near Carlisle.

If you don't mind me saying so, up to now your process has been fundamentally flawed. Voluntarism won't work: NOBODY wants a nuclear dump in their area.

Further, historic nuclear industry secrecy, avoidance and misinformation, plus scaremonger journalism has persuaded the population at large never to trust what the nuclear industry tells it. For the last 20-years the general consensus at this end of the country has been: 'the Government and nuclear industry intend to find only one site for disposal and that is in West Cumbria. The rest of their approach is just a cynical operation to justify it.'

A more sensible approach to storage would be to:

- 1 Ensure above-ground facilities are as good as they can be, whilst
- 2 Establishing what the correct geology and depth for a dump is.
- 3 Locate potential sites with the correct geology. I understood this is what NIREX did 20-years ago – the geology can't have changed since.
- 4 consultation - negotiate whether favourable identified sites can be used and what effect there will be on the surroundings (short, medium and long-term).
- 5 Simultaneous with 1 to 4 a public education campaign to elucidate and explain all issues and risks; including how you will mitigate all risks. Without public understanding of intention and methodology, our answer will always be 'no, you can't put a dump here'.
- 6 Finally the Government will have to legislate to force the dump to be at the correct site(s). The correct site is never a political location – it is only the scientific one.  
Prove to us that the science is correct.

This process and digging the hole is going to take a long time: decades. In the meanwhile aging nuclear storage facilities at Sellafield need urgent attention. These won't last and should be improved before it's too late and we experience the very thing the dump is intended to prevent. We must act now because everything the nuclear industry does takes decades to implement (even without any public interplay – it's a phenomenon far beyond my powers of explanation).

Public information: typical questions to answer for us might be:

Is underground storage a good idea? Why? How do we access a specific container when it leaks (as it will eventually)?

Why do we think putting waste into a hole in our tiny crowded country is a good idea? Have we considered other bigger, emptier countries? Putting it back where it came from? Is there a reciprocal deal we can do: swap reprocessing for storage?

Who's waste is going into this hole – just England's or everyone's? I don't suppose there's much opportunity to use a dump in lower population density Scotland or Wales now they are devolved?

Are all the eggs to be in one basket? There will be more than one site won't there? Just in case you need to clear a site to repair something ...

How do we stop waste getting into ground water?

How many decades does concrete encasement/ vitreous enamel/ stainless steel containerisation last? Do we replace the containment at regular intervals?

What happens if there's a new fault-line right through your store? (or earthquake or serious roof collapse).

Where's the BBC Horizon programme explaining all this?

I think you delude yourselves in this statement (taken from the Call for Evidence document):

6. The fact that two local authorities in west Cumbria voted in favour of continuing the search for a potential site for a GDF demonstrates that communities recognise the substantial benefits that are associated with hosting such a facility – both in terms of job creation and the wider benefits associated with its development.

Copeland and Allerdale are job-poor and reliant upon the nuclear industry for work: submarines and Sellafield (which is ran from Warrington, not W. Cumbria). Because of this and other factors (substantially higher nuclear remuneration and benefits than the area norm; nuclear sponsorship of recreational facilities, public halls etc.) people feel compelled to offer support to anything nuclear. It upsets local Councils ability to make balanced judgements: effectively W. Cumbria is 'bought off' by circumstance, with little choice but to say yes. The 'dump or no-dump' issue was a struggle: Parish Councils voted approximately 50-50 in Allerdale and Copeland. We're divided on the 'job creation' carrot too – digging a hole may employ a few supporting-role locals for a while but mostly it will be outsiders: big projects aren't done locally in this country, not even in London.

I'm not against a dump but would like to see it properly thought through and located correctly. We have time to get it right if we properly store waste above ground in the meantime.

For above-ground storage no better location exists than the old Battersea Power Station – being directly upwind from Whitehall would ensure the best possible facility and the site would be amongst those grateful 'primary users' of nuclear energy.

For below ground storage the best place is probably in the Earth's Mantle but it's beyond us to put it there.

Kind Regards  
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