



Unite Submission to the Department of Energy & Climate Change Call for Evidence on Managing Radioactive Waste Safely: Review of the Siting Process for a Geological Disposal Facility

Introduction

This submission represents the views of Unite the Union. Unite is the UK's largest trade union with approximately 1.5 million members working in a raft of industrial sectors including construction, energy, manufacturing, engineering, transport, information technology, finance, local authorities and the National Health Service.

Unite is the largest Trade Union in energy with extensive membership in all aspects of the UK nuclear sector as well as in other forms of power generation, distribution, retail and metering.

Unite is also the sole or joint signatory Trade Union for every national collective agreement in the UK construction & contracting industry. For the purpose of this submission it should be noted that Unite members in the engineering construction industry fall within the jurisdiction of the National Collective Agreement for the Engineering Construction Industry (NAECI).

Decision Making Process

Unite is fully aware of the recent respective decisions made by Copeland and Allerdale Borough Councils and subsequently by Cumbria County Council.

Being particularly mindful of the role that a geological disposal facility could play in the UK's nuclear renaissance, Unite are concerned about the potential consequences of the decision made by Cumbria County Council.

However, at this stage of the process Unite welcomes the stated intention of the Department of Energy & Climate Change to review the siting process for a geological disposal facility. Unite also look forward to making a formal submission to the full consultation on this issue which we understand will follow later this year.

Unite Position

- Unite would strongly encourage government to press ahead swiftly with identifying further potential sites for a geological disposal facility.
- Being an organisation based on the principle of democracy, Unite are fully supportive of the current government policy of 'voluntarism and partnership'.
- It is now clear from experience that some communities will readily recognise the substantial benefits of hosting a geological disposal facility whilst others will be less convinced.
- Unite hold the view that additional resources need to be deployed and co-ordinated to encourage positive engagement by local communities in the siting process.
- Unite believe that such resources need to be made available from the outset of the process to bring the potential economic benefits to the attention of the respective local communities.
- Unite remain available to positively engage with all stakeholders and extol the benefits of economic growth and job creation that will result from the eventual siting of the geological disposal facility.

Finally, Unite would welcome the opportunity to be kept informed of developments with the Managing Radioactive Waste Safely programme and do not have any requirement for this submission to be kept confidential.

For further information please contact: