



Comhshaol, Pobal agus Rialtas Áitiúil
Environment, Community and Local Government



Oifig an Aire
Office of the Minister

4 December 2013

Mr. Edward Davey, M.P.,
Secretary of State for Energy & Climate Change,
Department of Energy & Climate Change,
3 Whitehall Place,
London SW1A 2AW,
England

Dear Ed,

It was good to catch up during the Warsaw Climate Change COP and to share views regarding a number of policy areas of mutual interest.

As I indicated at our meeting, in lieu of submitting a formal response to the questionnaire associated with the public consultation process, I have decided to take the opportunity to write to you in connection with the "Review of the Siting Process for a Geological Disposal Facility" published by your Department of Energy and Climate Change earlier this year. Nonetheless, I have instructed my officials to send a copy of this letter to the relevant address for consultation responses.

The Irish Government respects the right of each State to determine its own energy mix, including the use of nuclear power. I am aware that decisions on how to deal with the radioactive waste from nuclear facilities are only now being fully addressed and I welcome the fact that your Department's consultation document highlights the need for a full inventory of waste planned for disposal in the proposed GDF.

The siting of a GDF is of interest to all stakeholders, including Ireland. However, until the actual selection of a site is made, it is difficult to raise specific concerns as some of our concerns will depend on the ultimate location of the facility. For example, site selection for the facility in certain regions may result in the need to transport materials to the facility through the Irish Sea, an issue of clearly major concern to the Irish Government. However, at this initial stage in the process and drawing on some of the material in the consultation document, there are some general concerns and matters of interest to Ireland which I would like to draw your attention to. These include, *inter alia*:

- The issue of retrievability,
- The inclusion of plutonium stocks in the baseline inventory,
- The on-site interim storage of spent fuel for an indeterminate length of time, and
- What happens if the "volunteerism" approach fails.

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Also of interest to Ireland is further developments in relation to external stakeholder engagement and your proposal to have a National Policy Statement in relation to GDF which would include an Appraisal of Sustainability and a separate Habitats Regulation Assessment.

In respect of the above issues, I will ask my officials to follow up with their counterparts in your Department to discuss these issues further and to gain a better understanding of our respective thoughts and concerns on the matters.

The UK Government's recognition of the Irish Government as a stakeholder in matters of UK nuclear policy is welcomed and I look forward to continuing our engagement at both Ministerial and official level on these matters as your policy in this area develops.

Yours sincerely,


A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Phil Hogan', is written over a horizontal line.

Phil Hogan T.D.

Minister for Environment, Community and Local Government