
From:
Sent: 21 May 2013 11:02
To: radioactivewaste (DECC)
Subject: Views on the site-selection aspects of the ongoing MRWS programme

I participated in the MRWS programme ever since its inception, as an interested local resident rather than as a member of any group. My views are as follows:

1. The emphasis upon finding a volunteer community before identifying geologically adequate sites was, and still is, wrong-headed. As was shown in practice, the natural reaction was to do anything but volunteer, especially at the start of the process, when the advantages of volunteering were not at all clear. Left with no alternative, the Government found itself in the farcical position of planning to insert large amounts of highly radioactive waste under the country's premier tourist destination, or under an AONB, these being the only sites having any geological potential within the volunteer area. Is there a reputable geologist who seriously considers West Cumbria as anything but the least suitable place in England for a GDF?
2. It was not obvious what the MRWS process was about during its early days. The Government appeared completely unwilling to state what advantages would accrue to the local communities, and in those circumstances the local authorities could do nothing to convince their residents – especially those who were educated enough to understand the fundamental long-term dangers of a geologically inadequate site (and, it has to be said, one where the waste storage would probably be managed by people who had, according to the 2012 NAO report, performed so inadequately over the last 40 years at and around Sellafield).
3. The overall strategy for a GDF appears to have ignored an obvious class of potential sites: those owned by the MoD (who, of course, generate a large fraction of the radioactive waste in the first place). Military sites such as firing ranges and training areas are often very large in area and, crucially, are uninhabited. Hence, no need for volunteers. Given the geological situation, the Stanford military training site in Norfolk is an obvious candidate – but there may be many more, once the geological assessment has been made.

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