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From: REDACTEDREDACTEDREDACTEDREDACTEDREDACTEDREDACTED

Sent: 01 May 2013 11:20

To: Yates Tom (Office for Nuclear Development)

Subject: RE: For Baroness Verma

Dear Tom,

I would like to contribute to both the current "lessons-learned" exercise as well as any future public consultation please.

At a time when I REDACTEDREDACTEDREDACTEDREDACTED a CALC meeting was addressed by the Leader of Copeland Borough Council on the MRWS process; this must have been one of the very earliest occasions on which she spoke.

Her input provoked a lot of questions and concerns and I carried these issues and reassurances back to my REDACTED for their next meeting.

Their conclusion though can be characterised by the following:

- . "The timescales of this are so long we'll all be dead by then"
- . "They would never get permission to put it in the National Park"
- . "They are probably just angling to put a facility at Sellafield in which case OK"

The most telling reassurance from Councillor Woodburn was that, "this is a staged process and if any community, at any stage, wished to withdraw then the whole process would stop." Ironically the failure to enshrine the "right to withdraw" in statute prior to the process starting coupled with the failure to define what was meant by a "host community" were early signs of strategic weakness that were to be telling.

However those early attitudes and reassurances led to a level of complacency that was later to be interpreted as offering support for the process. This may explain why a substantial and expensive attempt to inform the general public about the MRWS process largely passed people by. It seems that much of the literature was consigned to household bins and the public remained largely unaware.

It was the controversy of the geological discussion that suddenly raised consciousness; whether or not this was factually accurate, it was suddenly clear that MRWS process was much more immediate than had been assumed and that possible locations for an underground repository were close to, in or under the National Park.

In REDACTED the impact was sudden and unexpected. A meeting called to discuss the issues was very well attended and, as people heard the logic of the pro and anti arguments, apathy was replaced by anger. The 'party line' was to dismiss any discussion about possible sites as "scaremongering; after all no site had been chosen and therefore any argument not to proceed to Stage 4 was based on speculation". For many it was clear that there were few possible locations and the National park was one such. The politician's refusal to express any view on the Lake District Batholith as a possible location for the repository fatally undermined political credibility.

Other areas of Cumbria were dismissed as being of value because they represented a potential resource for the Government. The Communities in Cumbria could not understand why a National park was not seen as a resource

too. The process may well have succeeded if a site in or under the National Park had been excluded from consideration.

One of the most serious flaws in the MRWS process was in identifying a "volunteer community" first and then checking the geological suitability almost as an afterthought. Any revised process should look at geology first and foremost and then approach affected communities and persuade them to "volunteer".

The MRWS process in signing up "partners" and to engage them as part of the consultation was sound. However, the process itself tied them into slavishly being led by the nose, constrained not to offer any contrary view, towards what seemed like a predetermined conclusion that West Cumbria would host an underground repository. Whilst such groups were not allowed to make public pronouncements on the merits of different possible solutions, many did speak privately to us, partly to express their frustration and being gagged, as they saw it, and partly to reassure us that when they were free to do so they would speak out and campaign strongly against a west Cumbrian solution. In fact this silencing of the opposition voice merely served to galvanise people to protest.

The failure of politicians locally was further undermined by the public pronouncements of the local Labour MP. In Hansard he was quoted as saying, "I am the MP for Sellafield"; his partisan view of his constituency responsibilities was reflected again and again in his increasingly frantic interventions. Those who did not know before soon understood that as a former Sellafield employee, he was strongly aligned to the nuclear industry and with the Sellafield Workers Union. The strident and sometimes threatening behaviour of some of their members added fuel to the local perception that this was a "Sellafield stitch-up". Our contacts with workers at Sellafield argued that the Sellafield Workers Union did not represent the views of that workforce; no ballot had ever been taken of the membership and the union leaders had no mandate.

Part of the political mantra was about the benefits to be found in increased employment locally. Arguments were dismissed that the hotel and tourist trade, which employs many more people than Sellafield ever would, were put at risk by the negative impact on tourism of such a repository in the Lake District National Park. Sellafield's MP even dismissed the part of his constituency around Keswick as "not having a legitimate voice in the debate" (I guess he wrongly anticipated Boundary changes would leave him immune from negative reaction to those comments) In fact the whole of Cumbria, indeed the UK, has an interest in what happened in the National park and it is of greater concern than transient jobs on the west coast of Cumbria.

The behaviour of the majority of politicians, especially in the way they condemned the genuine public concerns as the work of extremists and trouble makers, added to the opposition to the MRWS process and didn't weaken it. This appeared not to be an impartial fact finding mission, rather a strategy devised to create a repository in West Cumbria by stealth and both local and national politicians seemed complicit in that conspiracy. In the vast majority of cases these protests were not from people with a political or partisan view of the world, they were ordinary constituents with significant anxieties about the process as practiced in Cumbria.

By the time the Leader of Copeland Council came to our village to answer villagers concerns any political trust had evaporated. Her plea, "I love this area just as much as you; do you think I would damage the Western Lakes?"; the silence spoke volumes. Politicians locally and nationally did not cover themselves in glory and it will take a generation or more before people forget that behaviour.

Lies, damn lies and statistics; the use of a Mori Poll to argue that an overwhelming majority of West Cumbrians were in favour, was clearly fundamentally flawed. In the telephone poll people were asked about the general principal of underground storage and so many raised no objection to investigation; had they been told, "even if this means putting it under the National park", their answers would have been different. The assertions about the Mori poll outcomes were not supported by the poll data and the "spin" placed on that data was unsound by any mathematical measure. Later the emphasis was changed to imply that the "popular mandate" came from the ballot box; unfortunately the issue was never raised as an election issue locally or nationally and so that argument continues to fall.

It was the disingenuous use of the Mori poll that led to the setting up of several 38 degrees on-line petitions. In the four weeks from the first village meeting to the vote by the 3 Councils on the MRWS process our petition, the most successful, had amassed over 50,000 signatories. Our ability to use postal codes (otherwise the data was anonymous) allowed us to demonstrate two things; massive objection nationally to the proposition of storing nuclear waste under a National park, and the number of Cumbrians voting against the proposition that dwarfed the small sample used by Mori. As a consequence less biased local politicians were persuaded that the level of opposition was very substantial and this was a key issue in the final debate in Cumbria County Council.

There was consternation locally as it became clear from the Audit commission report and from the work of Rt Hon. Margaret Hodge MP and the public accounts committee that management of Sellafield were presiding over a chaotic facility. The failure to secure the short term safety of legacy and imported radioactive materials was putting the lives and health of West Cumbrians at risk. Further the failure to curb costs was seen as throwing good money after bad.

"What worked well in west Cumbria, what didn't work, and any suggestions that would improve the site selection process if we revise it in the future?"

The siting of an underground repository is anathema in this National Park as it would be in any. National parks should be excluded from such storage solutions.

The starting point was geology; the proposition that you can store nuclear waste in an unsuitable geological site and allow the "engineering" to mitigate against later problems is arrant nonsense. Start the search for suitable geology and then move to identify volunteer communities in those areas deemed suitable. The cost of the failed MRWS process in West Cumbria cannot be continually repeated; it is financially unsustainable. By focussing on geology-first makes the outcome more likely to be positive.

Openness and responding to genuine concern: The MRWS process appears to close down real debate rather than being clear about the issues. Whether or not

there was any predetermination of the outcome, the unwillingness to debate all of the issues at every point of the process gave the impression that from a political and nuclear industry standpoint the outcome was a foregone conclusion.

The Department were clearly poorly advised about the likelihood of success in West Cumbria; the closer the consultation got to real people the more objections were evident. Look for example at the spread of "no to stage 4" votes taken by Parish Councils; only the heartland of the Sellafield mafia voted in favour. So Sellafield mafia seems like a strong term?; look at the extent to which political balance has been lost to the voracious demands of one industry. Count the number of Councillors (and then add the MP of course) who are or who have been employed by Sellafield; no wonder the advice was so biased and so poor. These are constituencies where any balanced discussion about the future of the nuclear industry is not possible; the political process is run by Sellafield, for Sellafield. For the Department the question has to be to ask how an unbiased view of the potential for a site can be sought.

Before launching any revised MRWS process, first ensure the immediate short term (100 year) security of existing waste.

Sorry it's long and rambling, but I hope that in some small way it helps.

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