

Bressendon Place
LONDON
SW 1E 5DU

27th May 2013

Dear

Managing Radioactive Waste Safely

In response to your letter of 13th May regarding the government's MRWS process, may I submit the following for your consideration ?

1. Key aspects of the site selection process.

Unlike some countries which choose a site first and then tell the community that they are going to have a repository (eg. Switzerland) the UK has chosen a strategy of asking the community if they are prepared to host one.

By definition, this places all decision-making in the hands of rural county councillors (ie. no space in the towns and cities) These councillors work hard and , generally speaking, represent their communities well. However, mention radio-activity and they will immediately look over their shoulders at the next election.

Actually, what they forget, or choose to ignore, is that their party rule books tell them that when there is an issue which is being dealt with at a national level, then they must give way to what the national party wants. It is written in their party rule books.

Therefore, one part of the process in overcoming resistance at local level is for central government to persuade its constituency MPs to remind councillors of their obligations to their party rule book and their government. As the government wishes to pursue a repository programme, they ought obviously to work towards a solution between themselves and the local authorities. This applies to all political parties. And it would give 'comfort' to any council that had the bravery to become interested in hosting a GDF.

2. What can be done to attract communities into the MRWS site-selection process ?

In previous attempts to interest councils, explanatory letters from the NDA were either 'binned' by Chief Executives or put on the shelf for another day. Members knew nothing about the proposals because senior officers decided that it wasn't in the best interests of their council to generate potentially negative publicity

Following this and, after advice from stakeholders, the NDA was asked to write to individual councillors on the basis that it takes only two members – a proposer and a seconder – to introduce the topic and create a debate. I have seen no evidence that this ever happened.

Now would be a good time to try again. The last time NDA made contact with councils an election loomed. As of this month, most rural councils have new councils and will therefore have four years in which to explore the proposals and make up their minds, whilst at the same time having this four- year 'cushion' before the next elections.

They will obviously need to be thoroughly and expertly appraised and assured that there are no dangers (contrary to pressure-group exaggerations) and that, after construction of the facility their rural countryside will be restored to 'bucolic' peacefulness, with nothing 'industrial' showing. The compensation package would also have to be very attractive.

All this is explained in a book entitled 'Slaying the Nimby Dragon.' I thoroughly recommend that NDA executives familiarise themselves with this book. It is exactly what is needed at this time. It is by Herbert Inhaber (Transaction Publishers, 1998. ISBN 1-56000-219-0) It is still available on Amazon and an excellent video of its contents is given by the author after selecting Google with the book's title and then going to the YouTube page.

3. What information do you think would help communities engage with the MRWS site selection process ?

The information I would suggest that best enables communities to engage in a controversial issue is one which is firstly conveyed by the local broadcast media, ie., radio and television.

There is then usually a follow-up period in the local press if the issue is 'front-page' material, thus ensuring that the issue will get the widest hearing across the community. If the NDA understands and anticipates this process, then it can be fully prepared to engage with councils and make its case, a la Inhaber.

I hope this will be of some use.

best regards