

Response form

Please use this form to respond to this call for evidence on Managing Radioactive Waste Safely: Review of the Siting Process for a Geological Disposal Facility.

The closing date for the submission of responses is **10 June 2013**.

Responses can be returned by email (preferable) or post.

Email address: radioactivewaste@decc.gsi.gov.uk

Or by post to: The Managing Radioactive Waste Safely team
Department of Energy and Climate Change
Room M07
55 Whitehall
London
SW1A 2EY

Name	REDACTED
Organisation / Company	
Organisation Size (no. of employees)	
Organisation Type	
Job Title	
Department	
Address	REDACTED REDACTED REDACTED
Email	REDACTED REDACTED
Telephone	REDACTED REDACTED
Fax	

Would you like to be kept informed of developments with the MRWS programme?	Yes.
Would you like your response to be kept confidential? If yes please give a reason	No

The Government is interested in your views on the geological disposal facility site selection process outlined in the 2008 Managing Radioactive Waste Safely (MRWS) White Paper. To assist us you may wish to consider the following issues in your response:

- What aspects of the site selection process in the MRWS White Paper do you think could be improved and how?**
- What do you think could be done to attract communities into the MRWS site selection process?**
- What information do you think would help communities engage with the MRWS site selection process?**

Having been concerned about the recent proposals in the Copeland district of Cumbria and the (in my opinion) extremely poor PR once the proposed move to stage 4 of the process became public, I hope that future proposals will be thought through more carefully.

The selection process should start by eliminating areas that are unlikely to be geologically sound. The agreed initial criteria for an underground storage facility are low relief, stable geological areas, so suggesting that any of the mountainous regions of Britain might be suitable seems to me to be a mistake. They are not low relief, and would not be mountainous if the geology was stable (assuming we are looking at geological time frames, not human ones).

The second point that seemed to be overlooked by the 'pro' group recently was the need to preserve the legacy of our countryside. National Parks were created to help preserve our heritage, ignoring their boundaries seems contrary to the spirit which created them in the first place, and the laws that were passed to protect them. Recognising that we need to create a safe storage for our legacy of nuclear developments should not come at the cost of other equally important legacies. Indeed, much of the protest over the recent stage 4 proposals would have evaporated if the need to recognise the sacrosanct nature of the National Park boundaries had been agreed.

If all members of local communities are to see the MRWS process as a benefit to them. (and not just those that have a close vested interest), then the benefits package must be made much clearer, and be legally binding. As a recent parliamentary committee found, the Nuclear Industry has not provide the sort of benefits a large industrial complex would normally have provided the local area, and indeed frequently uses companies and travelling labour rather than the local community.

Having lived in other parts of the UK, and seen the sort of benefits other

areas have had from their local industries, when I moved to West Cumbria in 1986, I was shocked at how little benefit the West Cumbrian communities seemed to get from their major industry. As other industries in the area have shrunk and closed, the dependency on the Nuclear Industry has become even greater, but the community benefits have shrunk. Unless you are actually employed in the industry, or supported by them (as many local politicians are), the 'benefits' amount to busy minor roads, some support for local sports teams,

and a few high profile events and developments. Infrastructure in the area is extremely poor, there is limited public transport, roads are narrow; rail connections very limited; sports and leisure facilities are limited; mobile communication signals are inconsistent. We do have the beauty of the Lake District on our doorstep, but the MRWS proposals for stage 4 did not exclude damaging this (or even closing parts of it).

If the general public are to be attracted to the idea of applying to be considered as a possible site, then the improvements to the area, the benefits (direct or indirect) need to be clear and binding. It is important that the communications and discussions about the proposals take place actually within the communities that will be affected. The recent exercise in West Cumbria did not take enough cognisance of the feelings at a local level, relying on the Borough politicians rather than the Parish Councils who have a better understanding of their local rural communities.

If local communities are to feel involved in the process of site selection, then their needs to be a much more detailed explanation of the possible outline proposals. The consultation over the recent stage 4 proposals kept saying that 'there was no site selected'. This was only true up to a very limited point. No site had been selected, but it was not hard, by a simple process of elimination, to see the areas that would be considered. It was disingenuous to suggest otherwise, led to a lack of trust, and ultimately led to the County Council taking a more objective view than the local Borough Council as to the lack of clarity of benefits, the lack of thought given to the local communities that would be directly affected by the proposals.