



Newsletter

December 1994

NUCLEAR REVIEW - NO RESULT BEFORE SPRING 1995?

Over 180 submissions have been made by various organisations and individuals to the government's review of the "prospects for nuclear power" in Britain.

They include those both for and against a revival of nuclear power station construction. However, the Nuclear Electric case has not even been supported by those it might expect as allies.

The Confederation of British Industry, for example, says that no special treatment should be given to nuclear power, and it should be allowed to sink or swim in the market place. Nuclear Electric has already admitted that it cannot build a new nuclear station, whether Hinkley C or Sizewell C, without government subsidy and support.

Other submissions are equally critical of NE's case. The Consortium of Opposing Local Authorities (COLA)* says that the total amount of state subsidy needed to make Sizewell C competitive could be as much as £4.5 billion. The cost of its electricity would be twice as much as from coal or gas power stations.

COLA's figures are supported by submissions from PowerGen and National Power, the two main non-nuclear electricity generating companies.

A number of organisations back the view that there are no environmental or strategic reasons why nuclear power should be subsidised. They do not, for instance,

buy the NE argument that nuclear power, which produces a comparatively small amount of carbon dioxide, is vital in the battle against global warming. Other solutions, such as energy efficiency and renewable energy, would do the job better. >>>>

HOUSE OF COMMONS LOBBY AND PUBLIC MEETING - DEC. 8TH

The Druridge Bay Campaign has organised a lobby of parliament and public meeting about the Nuclear Review in the House of Commons on Thursday December 8th.

The meeting, which starts at 3.45pm in the Grand Committee Room, will focus on Nuclear Economics. Chaired by Liberal Democrat MP Alan Beith, the speakers include Nigel Mortimer and Helen Brownlie from the DBC on "Nuclear Under-Insurance", Fred Barker (COLA) on the "Economic Case Against New Power Stations" Jane Roberts (SHE) on the structure of the review, and Jamie Woolley (Nuclear Free Local Authorities) on how the EC might view special UK government support for nuclear power

The meeting will be preceded by a protest outside the House of Commons, organised by the DBC, at 2pm. They are taking banners and posters. For further details of this and the meeting, contact DBC, Tower Buildings, Oldgate, Morpeth, Northumberland NE61 1PY (0670 513513).

We hope to have at least some representation from SHE. If you are interested in travelling from Somerset, please contact Crispin Aubrey (0278 732921).



A Happy Christmas 1994 to all SHE supporters and a Nuclear Free 1995!

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According to information from the Department of Trade and Industry, which is conducting the review, there is unlikely to be any announcement of a "result" until at least next February, and possibly later. Whether this will take the form of a green (consultative) paper or a firm government policy is not yet clear.

*COLA's submission to the Nuclear Review is contained in six weighty volumes dealing mainly with the financial implications of renewed investment in nuclear power. Details are available from COLA, Planning Department, County Hall, Cwmbran, Gwent NP44 2XF (0633 832668).

Copies of SHE's submission to the review are still available free of charge from the address on the back page. A list of all those organisations which have made representations to the government can be obtained by phoning the DTI on 071 238 3150.

NUCLEAR WASTE COULD BE DUMPED IN LANDFILL RUBBISH TIPS

Increasing quantities of low level nuclear waste could be dumped on municipal rubbish tips, according to a new government report.

The report lists 39 local authority tips around the country which are already licensed to take radioactive refuse from hospital and research laboratories. Under the new scheme, they would also take nuclear waste from power stations like Hinkley Point.

The nearest tip to Hinkley Point is at Crooks Marsh Farm, Hallen, Avonmouth, just outside Bristol.

The purpose of this change in policy is to reduce the large amounts of waste which have to be sent to Drigg, near Sellafield in Cumbria, which is the country's only official low level waste dump. Nuclear industry plans for an underground repository, also near Sellafield, have been held up by problems with the geological

investigations. It is possible that this subterranean dump, if it's ever built, will not now be available until well into the next century.

According to Greenpeace research, testing of drinking water supplies around the Avonmouth site already show levels of contamination above those recommended by the World Health Organisation.

Greenpeace has mounted a campaign against any change in the rules which might force local councils to accept more radioactive waste at municipal tips. Part of the campaign is a video taken at Drigg, which shows that some of the waste dumped there in open trenches is much more radioactive than it should be.

Local Greenpeace supporters and others are collecting signatures to a petition to be presented to the next meeting of Avon County Council's Public Protection Committee on Dec.1st. They will also be given time to put their case to the committee. Avon is responsible for running the Crooks Marsh tip.

A copy of the petition is enclosed with this newsletter, as well as a Greenpeace leaflet. Further information on local action from Campaign Against Nuclear Dumping 18D Trenchard Street, Bristol BS. 5AN or phone Sonya on 0272 734348.



DECOMMISSIONING AND WASTE STRATEGY - YOUR VIEWS

Almost 40 members and groups responded to the request in the October newsletter for comments on the decommissioning and waste strategy drawn up at a meeting of anti-nuclear groups. Nearly all were in favour of the wording, but many made additional points. This is an edited selection:

"Storage on site with constant monitoring is better than transporting it. Rain can wash radioactive elements on to rail tracks, which frequently go near homes..."

"There should be weekly publication in local newspapers of background radiation at or near the site of the ex-reactor or facility. Monitors appointed from environmental groups should report to the district council and the national press twice a year. The (decommissioning) fund should be guaranteed by the state, and not available to the government for spending on other projects."

"I would support the strategy because it appears that Nuclear Electric would not have total control of the decisions."

"SHE would serve its members better by offering us more information on the arguments (if any) against the strategy. If it's just NIMBY - tough - we've got to live in the real world and deal with what has been created."

"Storage is currently the only safe and responsible action. Waste should be stored at ground level in a form which allows regular monitoring. Waste should not be buried underground. In the short term, it should be stored where it is produced, but in the longer term it may be appropriate to transfer "cooler" waste to a smaller number of specialist (storage) sites... Any movement should be carried out with the full agreement and cooperation of the local authorities concerned.

No new reactors of any kind should be built for the production of weapons or energy."

"In the case of Hinkley Point, which is situated close to villages, final storage should be off site in a more acceptable location well removed from such areas... There should be a date set for determining the final storage solution."

"We should not accept foreign radioactive waste in GB... Decommissioning should involve all local authorities so all factors are taken into account, e.g. weather conditions, dust generation."

"Mid-Somerset CND supports the paper... There is no other option. We are particularly concerned that there should be no removal of radioactive materials from sites, either for reprocessing or for disposal... It is unacceptable that funds earmarked for decommissioning are put at any kind of risk... Future management or shareholders of power plants should be liable for the associated risks attached to the generation of nuclear power."

"Nuclear Electric must pay. I am sick of paying for their criminally dangerous practices."

"I feel that the strategy is excellent, well thought out and feasible."

"This seems the lesser of the two evils, but storage sites would have to be very well policed."

"A sensible response to an impossible problem."

The Anti-Nuclear Network (supports "effective direct action") sent us their response to the strategy, made earlier this year:

"Until the decision that "the production of waste by nuclear power generation and reprocessing should cease" is taken, the anti-nuclear movement has nothing to

discuss with the government or the nuclear industry. As you say in your introduction, "the nuclear industry cannot be allowed to evade responsibility for clearing up the mess it has created".

"Unfortunately the rest of the document helps the nuclear industry do just that... To opt for one strategy as against another is to become involved in BNFL/Nuclear Electric's attempts to solve *their* problem - which is the continued opposition of the public to the nuclear industry. Inventing new quangos or

bureaucracies to "manage" nuclear waste and decommissioning, with or without "environmentalists" on the board, only compromises our opposition to the nuclear state.

"Our role in the anti-nuclear movement is to continue to disrupt, challenge, impede, obstruct and hopefully destroy the nuclear industry. We should not be co-opted by attempts to involve us in pseudo-consultation exercises where the main subject we want to discuss, the close-down of the nuclear industry, is not even on the agenda."

CHRISTMAS LIGHTS

How about giving a low energy light bulb to someone for Christmas? A national scheme means that up to 20 Watt (=100 Watt ordinary bulb) bulbs are reduced to £9.99 at many shops until Dec.2nd.

A 1994/5 catalogue and price list is also available from Green Light, the Somerset based low energy light bulb suppliers. They have a large range of different shaped bulbs in varying wattages, as well as desk lamps. The new address is Green Light, 15 Tipcote Hill, Shepton Mallet, Somerset BA4 5EQ (01749 346135).

ALTERNATIVE ENERGY COURSES

The Centre for Alternative Technology in West Wales runs a series of residential courses throughout the year on do-it-yourself alternative energy systems. Subjects include wind power and water power, as well as other practical green topics. Catalogue from CAT, Machynlleth, Powys SY20 9AZ (06543 703743).

ANOTHER MYTH DEMOLISHED...

A recent press release from the British Nuclear Industry Forum repeated the claim, often heard from the pro-nuclear lobby, that "people throughout the world receive more radiation from coal-burning power stations than from nuclear ones".

In the UK, the origin for this myth appears to be a 1984 report from the National Radiological Protection Board which suggested that coal burning resulted in a higher "collective dose" of radiation to the general public than nuclear power. The NRPB has since admitted that these findings were "appreciably overestimated", and the dose to the public from nuclear power is over three times as great as from the natural radioactivity found in coal, and released during combustion.

These findings also don't take into account the many different ways, unlike with coal, that the radiation produced by nuclear power can find its way into the human body.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

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| Dec.8 | Lobby of Parliament and Public Meeting, from 2pm, House of Commons. See front page for details. |
| Jan.9 | SHE Committee Meeting, 7.30pm, 54 South Lane, Nether Stowey (0278 732681 for directions) |

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