

Letter to Michael Meacher, Minister for the Environment

Dear Sir,

Monday 16th March is the final day for submissions to the UK Environment Agency in response to British Nuclear Fuel's plc (BNFL) application to commission the Sellafield MOX Plant (SMP) in West Cumbria.

A fierce debate is going on between the proponents and detractors of this process which mixes plutonium oxide extracted in nuclear reprocessing plants with uranium oxide and binds them in ceramic pellet form (MOX) for burning in thermal reactors.

BNFL has run an imaginative, and no doubt expensive, MOX PR campaign about turning burnt matches into fuel for future generations which even they admit is "just as miraculous as turning ashes back into matches". It was slick and colourful; but the target audience didn't understand it and it wasn't an accurate depiction.

The industry sees MOX as a means of returning plutonium to the contracting utilities in a safe and uncontroversial form and a lifeboat to cling to until international opinion swings back in their favour and they are called upon to build the next generation of nuclear power plants, and ultimately the fast breeder.

BNFL was permitted to build the Sellafield MOX Plant before the last Government had arrived at any policy on the merits, or otherwise, of mixed oxide fuel fabrication, increased transportation (notably by air) of radioactive materials, potential proliferation concerns (by blurring the distinction between civil and military end use) and spent MOX fuel management.

The present Government accepts that nuclear waste is a serious problem which must be addressed but are Ministers aware that BNFL has offered to ship spent MOX fuel back to Sellafield for possible storage or reprocessing in a modified THORP?

This Government must not repeat the mistakes of its predecessors. It must 'call-in' BNFL's application to commission the Sellafield MOX Plant. It must consider, in an open and transparent manner, the case for a public inquiry where all the issues can be thoroughly investigated in the context of the sustainable society this Government is committed to delivering in the future.

Yours sincerely,

Norman Abbey (Director Nanoose Conversion Campaign, Vancouver) Canada

Frank Barnaby (Former Aldermaston Scientist and Director SIPRI) UK

Bill Bires (President Northwest Vets for Peace, Portland) USA

Patricia Birnie (Chair Environment Cte, Women's International League for Peace & Freedom) USA

Patricia Birnie (Chair GE Stockholders' Alliance for a Sustainable, Nuclear Free Future, Tucon) USA

John Brierley (Regional Worker Yorkshire CND) UK

Gabriela Bulisova (Coordinator for Mother Earth, Michigan) USA

Sarah Burton (Campaign Director Greenpeace) UK

Patty Cahill (President Students for a Sustainable Earth, Michigan) USA

Corinne Carey (Secretary Don't Waste Michigan) USA

Nigel Chamberlain (Development Worker Cumbria & North Lancashire Peace Groups) UK

Brian Costner (Director Energy Research Foundation, Columbia) USA

Beverly Cumblidge (Chair Birmingham Friends of the Earth) UK

Scott Denman (Executive Director Safe Energy Communication Council, Washington DC) USA

George Farebrother (Hailsham and Eastbourne CND) UK Martin Forwood (Campaign Director Cumbrians Opposed to a Radioactive Environment) UK

Nigel Gilligan (Coordinator Furness Friends of the Earth, Ulverston) UK

Jenny Glover (Coordinator South Lakes Friends of the Earth, Kendal) UK

Pad Green (Senior Energy Nuclear & Climate Change Campaigner Friends of the Earth, London) UK

Keith Gunter (Coordinator Citizens' Resistance at Fermi Two, Michigan) USA

Xanthe Hall (Co-Director International Physicians for the Prevention of War, Berlin) Germany

Martin Kalinowski (International Network of Engineers and Scientists Against Proliferation) Germany

Michael Keegan (Coordinator Coalition for a Nuclear-Free Great Lakes, Michigan) USA

Sophie Kempin (Coordinator Worthing Friends of the Earth) UK

Dave Knight (Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, London) UK

Madeline Haigh (Coordinator West Midlands CND) UK

Martin Hemingway (Chair National Steering Committee Nuclear Free Local Authorities) UK
Ralph Hutchison (Coordinator Oak Ridge Environmental Peace Alliance, Tennessee) USA
Mark Johnston (North Lancashire Friends of the Earth, Lancaster) UK
Kevin Kamps (Coordinator People Against Unsafe Nuclear Transport, Michigan) USA
Scott Lange (Coleg Y Drindod, Carmarthen) Wales UK
Paul Leventhal (President Nuclear Control Institute, Washington DC) USA
Janet Lister (Coordinator Cirencester Friends of the Earth) UK
Brennain LLOYD (Northwatch, North Bay, Ontario) Canada
David Lowry (UK Rep Nuclear Control Institute, Washington DC) UK
Francis Macy (Director Centre for Safe Energy, Berkeley) USA
Lloyd Marbet (Director Don't Waste Oregon Caucus, Portland) USA
Arjun Makhijani (President Institute for Energy and Environmental Research, Washington DC) USA
Michael Mariotte (Executive Director Nuclear Information Resources Service, Washington DC) USA
Don Moniak (Program Director Serious Texans Against Nuclear Dumping, Amarillo) USA
Catriona Mowbray (Edinburgh University) UK
Di McDonald (Network Information Project, Southampton) UK
Viv Mountford (Halton Friends of the Earth, Cheshire) UK
NUS/USI Environmental Campaign Northern Ireland Student Centre, Belfast) UK
Kristen Ostling (National Coordinator, Campaign for Nuclear Phaseout, Ottawa) Canada
Jill Perry (Coordinator, North Lakes and West Cumbria Friends of the Earth) UK
Tom Pinkney (Lancaster Green Party) UK
Anni Rainbow & Lindis Percy (Campaign for the Accountability of American Bases, Yorkshire) UK
Ian Ralls (Coordinator Cambridge Friends of the Earth) UK
Alan Robinson (Scunthorpe CND, Yorkshire) UK
Vigina Salkowski (Coordinator World Tree Multicultural Community Centre for Peace, Justice and Mother Earth, Michigan) USA
Andy Savage (Southdowns Earth First, Brighton) UK
Betty Schroeder (Co-Chair Arizona Safe Energy Coalition, Tucson) USA
Thomas Smith (President Environmental Society, Imperial College London) UK
Debra Sullivan (North Bay Peace Alliance, North Bay, Ontario) Canada
Jill Stallard (General Secretary CND Cymru/ Wales) UK
Dr Jill Sutcliffe (Environmental Consultant, Chichester) UK
Grace Thorp (Director National Environmental Coalition of Native Americans) USA
Simon Tompsett (Energy Campaigner Richmond and Twickenham Friends of the Earth) UK
Judy Treichel (Nevada Nuclear Waste Task Force) USA
Dr Liz Waterson (Chair Nuclear Strategy Group MEDACT) UK
John Watson (Coordinator Socialist Environment & Resources Association, London) UK
Dave Webb (Secretary Headingley & Kirkstall CND, Yorkshire) UK

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