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Kirsty Williams AM

Dear Kirsty

Joint Fact Finding on radiation risk issues

I hope this letter moves us on from my 6th August letter which in part it repeats.

In this I represent two organisations — the Low Level Radiation Campaign (LLRC) and Cynghrair Wrth Niwclear Cymru/Welsh Anti-Nuclear Alliance (WANA). WANA is supporting a proposal for Joint Fact Finding on the science of radiation risk. This letter is to ask you to seek a meeting between Lesley Griffiths and me with Cllr Ernie Galsworthy, coChair of the Nuclear Free Local Authorities Wales Forum (NFLA), to discuss how we might usefully investigate circular arguments and a lack of clarity in material from the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) as I analysed in letters to NRW.^{1,2}

I should put this initiative in context. In 2013 the BEIS/Nuclear NGO Forum resolved to pursue Joint Fact-Finding on radiation but this was ultimately sidelined by a ministerial decision. In 2017 LLRC put key evidence to the BEIS Justification Application Centre. That context required BEIS to provide written answers and there was a second round of correspondence. This material forms the substance of what LLRC sent to NRW in connection with the mud dump licence 12/45/ML (fn 1&2). We analysed the arguments of BEIS and its advisers, making the point that they are so garbled and evasive that they raise an uncertainty about the radiological consequences of the dump. We offered NRW a pragmatic solution in the shape of a further series of sediment samples to be tested with alpha spectrometry — a more suitable technique than CEFAS had previously used; if no alpha emitting particulates were found LLRC would reconsider. NRW did not address any of the evidence and did not modify its position. I have summarised the situation to NFLA in the following terms:³

... there is a crisis of confidence in the science of radiation risk and, as a consequence, in existing radiation protection standards. Government departments and regulators are refusing to acknowledge or discuss the facts; those which cannot avoid discussion present garbled arguments. At the same time decisions are being made — like the mud dump — whose effects will be irrevocable. Such a situation is intolerable in a technological democracy. A bottom-up political initiative seems to be the only way forward.

¹ <http://www.llrc.org/campaigns/muddump/June2018docs/RB2NRW050618.pdf>

² <http://www.llrc.org/campaigns/muddump/June2018docs/RB2NRW210618.pdf>

³ <http://llrc.org/campaigns/muddump/JFFdocs/WANAJFFNFLA220818.pdf>

The bottom-up political initiative we propose is Joint Fact-Finding to evaluate and ungarble the scientific issues NRW has ignored. The appendix to this letter sets them out as an agenda.

NRW have repeatedly said I should take the issues back to BEIS. Two things need to be said about this. One is that my second letter to NRW (fn.2) had already told them BEIS sees the issues as closed and would treat any new attempt to discuss them as vexatious. The other is that, since NRW is so insistent about BEIS, I have asked for the matter to be discussed at the next meeting of the BEIS Nuclear NGO Forum on September 19th and it's on the agenda. I shall make the point that NRW doesn't appear to have the scientific expertise needed to participate in discussions of radiation risk and that the Environment Agency, on whom NRW relies for expertise, has refused to discuss it with members of the Forum. It will be interesting to see whether BEIS treats NRW's suggestion as vexatious. I think it is inevitable that the JFF will have to involve participants from outside Wales. Greenpeace has written to me:

*"the [JFF] suggestion sounds like a potentially a good idea as we want an open minded look at low level radiation impacts by an official body so that we could get to the bottom of the situation more fully. GP would borrow expertise from their **international** staff or consultants ...*
(emphasis added)

I would not be opposed to BEIS contributing to JFF but I think the peculiarly Welsh angle represented by the mud dump should lead AMs to feel a sense of ownership, especially since we are now hearing that EdF will need a second marine licence in 2020 (I don't know how reliable this information is — it came up on Facebook).

On a related but separate issue I asked NRW's Acting Chair Madeleine Havard how NRW assesses whether new information raises "uncertainties" in the terms of Section 4 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 and what NRW did to evaluate whether any uncertainty was raised by my two letters to Diane McCrea. Dr Havard's reply⁴ ignored those questions, merely repeating the advice to take the issues back to BEIS, but it seems unsatisfactory that NRW cannot even outline how they understand the high-level uncertainty provisions of an Act of the Welsh Assembly. I would like to hear the Environment Secretary's view of this.

Yours sincerely

Richard Bramhall

c.c. NFLA; Greenpeace UK

Proposed agenda for Joint Fact Finding

With reference to LLRC's first letter to NRW (footnote 1)

- 1) Do the Life Span Studies (LSS) of Hiroshima and Nagasaki survivors lack unexposed control populations and /or information on internal radioactivity? If so, what are the implications for radiation protection standards?
- 2) Do the studies of nuclear industry workers lack unexposed control populations and /or information on internal radioactivity? If so, what are the implications for radiation protection standards?
- 3) Is an average absorbed dose model appropriate for assessing risks from exposure to internal particulates? Can any discrepancies be quantified?

⁴ <http://llrc.org/campaigns/muddump/JFFdocs/NRWdutyofcare290818.pdf>

- 4) Does fragmentation of radioactive particulates on beaches lead to increased hazard following inhalation, ingestion or absorption?

With reference to LLRC's second letter to NRW (footnote 2)

- 5) Is there epidemiological evidence from weapons test fallout and Chernobyl to support the hypothesis that internal particulates are more hazardous than predicted by ICRP?
- 6) What are the implications for radiation protection of comments from BEIS and Professor John Harrison concerning individual dose estimates in ecological studies?
- 7) With reference to Public Health England advice to BEIS:
 - a) Did PHE use circular arguments about the linear dose response assumption?
 - b) Did PHE misdirect BEIS on internal contamination and Uranium?
 - c) Did PHE misdirect BEIS on the significance of rainfall in the LSS?
 - d) Did PHE misdirect BEIS on the significance of acute radiation syndrome in areas remote from Hiroshima and Nagasaki?
 - e) Did PHE misdirect BEIS on the interaction between natural gamma radiation and Uranium in body tissue?
 - f) Did PHE misdirect BEIS on the significance of dropping the LSS controls?
 - g) Did PHE use an inconsistent argument over how monitoring exposed study groups affects the results of epidemiological studies?
 - h) Did PHE fail to address LLRC's analysis of differences in ratios of male to female births?