

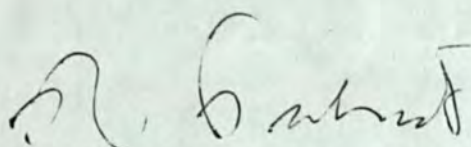
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SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

01 211 6402

The Rt Hon Patrick Jenkin MP
Secretary of State for the Environment
2 Marsham Street
LONDON
SW1P 3EB

20 July 1984



I understand that you are considering making oral statements to the House next week on nuclear waste disposal policy and (immediately after the Prime Minister's meeting planned for 24 July) on reductions in Sellafield's discharges.

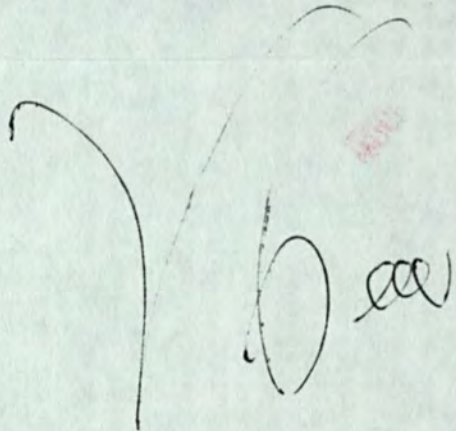
These are both highly sensitive issues which currently involve serious differences between our two departments and their presentation will need careful handling. I do not believe the climate is right for us to rush them through in the last days of the session, especially as they would come on top of publication of the Black Report on leukaemia in the Sellafield area.

Black has not in fact found any connection between Sellafield and the Seascale leukaemias, and his report contains a considerable measure of reassurance for the local population. But it would be seen in a totally different light if it appeared to be followed by a massive Government response in the form of a programme of reduced Sellafield discharges. For this reason I believe that a considerable gap is needed between the publication of Black and any announcement of new Sellafield discharge objectives.

I have considerable sympathy with a policy of cutting out the preliminary planning inquiry for nuclear waste disposal sites by giving approval for exploration by Special Development Order. But such a course is bound to be controversial especially as it will be seen as a reversal of previously announced policy. Careful consideration within Whitehall of both this and other aspects of your proposals and amongst the other parties will be essential before we attempt to move forward in this area. I recognise that your Department is committed to providing a document on nuclear waste strategy for the Sizewell Inquiry shortly. But I would hope that this can be achieved without anticipating Government thinking on planning policy by concentrating on the technical disposal options and bringing out the limited significance of Sizewell wastes in relation to the wastes arising in any case from the industry as a whole.

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I am copying this to the Prime Minister, Willie Whitelaw, Geoffrey Howe, George Younger, Nicholas Edwards, Norman Fowler, Norman Tebbit, Tom King, Michael Jopling, Peter Rees, Nicholas Ridley and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Walker', with a large, sweeping initial 'P' and 'W'. There is a small red stamp or mark above the signature.

PETER WALKER

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