



2 MARSHAM STREET  
LONDON SW1P 3EB

01-212 3434

My ref:

Your ref:

19 October 1983

Dear Peter,

The Nuclear Industry Radioactive Waste Executive (NIREX) are developing disposal facilities on land for low and intermediate-level radioactive wastes in accordance with last year's White Paper on radioactive waste management (Cmnd 8607), which was generally welcomed. They intend to announce before the end of this month that they have identified two promising sites at which they wish to carry out further investigations. I shall need to state the Government's position, and at the same time clarify what is happening about sea disposal of low-level wastes. I am enclosing the text of the statement which, subject to any comments you and other colleagues may have before Monday 24 October, I propose to make for that purpose.

This year's sea disposal operation has been blocked by the National Union of Seamen and the rail unions, who received heavy support at this year's TUC. Ian Gow reviewed the options thoroughly with colleagues from the other Departments concerned. However in the end they accepted the view of the industry and the Ministry of Defence that attempting to carry out the operation by other means carried unacceptable risks of repercussions, given that the wastes can be stored on land for the time being. There is some prospect of changing the TUC's attitude and I am meeting them for that purpose next month. But this could not be achieved before next year at the earliest and might have to await completion of the further review of scientific evidence within the London Dumping Convention. Of course, the unions' view is completely unsupported by scientific evidence. Sea disposal will therefore continue to be one element in our waste management policy, and we shall continue to defend it strongly both at home and internationally, as safe and environmentally acceptable.

The abandonment of this year's operation will be claimed as a victory by anti-nuclear groups. However opponents of sea disposal have advocated disposal on land as the alternative. That should give a fairer wind to the projects on land (for a wider range of wastes) which NIREX were due to bring forward in any case, and which are vital to the continuing credibility of nuclear power in this country.

As there is bound to be opposition in the areas affected, my concern at this stage will be to reassure the public if,



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after their further investigations, NIREX submit proposals to use the named sites for disposal facilities, those proposals will be carefully examined at public inquiries, and will have to satisfy other stringent statutory safeguards. To provide a clear framework for such public inquiries, I shall publish draft principles for the assessment of proposals by my Department (or, where appropriate, the other authorising Departments under the Radioactive Substances Act 1960). These have been drawn up in consultation with the Nuclear Installations Inspectorate and the National Radiological Protection Board. Initially they will take the form of a consultation document, and a definitive set of principles will then be prepared in the light of the comments received, and with the help of the independent Radioactive Waste Management Advisory Committee.

A further issue is whether disposal installations should be licensed by the Nuclear Installations Inspectorate, which would then regulate the safety of on-site operations. My own view, reflected in the draft statement, is that they should be licensed, but the Scottish and Welsh Offices have reservations, and I trust this point can in fact be resolved before the statement is made.

These procedures will take time, but I believe they are the minimum necessary to retain public confidence on this controversial subject; and that, by carrying them through without unnecessary delays, we should aim to complete the process well within the lifetime of the present Parliament.

I am copying this letter and the enclosure to the Prime Minister and other members of E(A), Willie Whitelaw, Geoffrey Howe, Norman Fowler, John Wakeham and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

Your ever  
Patrick

PATRICK JENKIN



DRAFT MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

RADIOACTIVE WASTES

1. The White Paper of July 1982 emphasised the great importance which the Government attached to the safe and effective management of radioactive wastes. These wastes, which vary greatly in type and source, are an inescapable problem of modern society. The solution lies in disposal in ways which have been shown to be safe.

2. It has been decided already that the high-level heat-generating wastes from nuclear fuel should be solidified and stored for at least 50 years. This will allow the radioactivity to decline and the necessary information to be collected for an eventual choice of the best means of disposal. However there is no scientific reason for deferring the disposal of other categories of waste.

3. For many years, low-level waste has been regularly disposed of, both on land and at sea. The Government believes that sea disposal is a safe method for certain kinds of waste. It has been authorised by successive Governments; it is permitted under the London Dumping Convention; and it has not yet been called into question by any scientific evidence. The Government has accepted however that a sea disposal operation should not take place this year. The waste which was to have been disposed of in this way will be stored on land for the time being.



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4. There is in any event a need to bring into operation by the end of the decade land disposal facilities for intermediate-level wastes. The responsibility for providing those facilities lies with NIREX, the Nuclear Industry Radioactive Waste Executive, a copy of whose First Report has been placed in the Library of the House. The technology for constructing and monitoring such facilities is well developed and NIREX will be able to draw on extensive research and operational experience in other countries.

5. Two new facilities are likely to be needed, one consisting of a concrete-lined trench and the other of a deep underground cavity. NIREX is today announcing two sites which it considers sufficiently promising to justify further investigation. The possible site for a deep facility is at / /, and the possible site for a shallow facility at / /. Copies of the NIREX statement are available in the Library.

6. The decision by NIREX whether to proceed with proposals for these sites will depend on the outcome of survey, drilling and other investigatory works. It is possible that such works may require planning permission. If so, I shall call in the relevant applications for determination after public inquiries. I emphasise that these inquiries would give an opportunity for expressing views on the investigatory works themselves, having regard to their own planning implications. They should not be seen as an opportunity for premature debate on the merits of disposing of wastes at the sites: the proper time for that will be if and when investigatory works are authorised and subsequently yield results which confirm NIREX's wish



to proceed with disposal.

7. If NIREX decides that a disposal facility should be established at one of these sites, or at any other site, planning permission will be necessary. It is my intention to call in any such application and arrange for a public inquiry to be held under an independent Inspector at which all relevant aspects can be considered in the light of the views of all concerned.

8. In addition any arrangements for disposing of radioactive waste will also have to be authorised by me, acting jointly with my rhf the Minister of Agriculture Fisheries and Food, under the Radioactive Substances Act 1960. I have today published, and placed in the Library of the House, a consultation document embodying the principles which it is proposed that the authorising Departments should apply in assessing schemes. All concerned are invited to comment on the draft principles. I intend to seek the advice of the Radioactive Waste Management Advisory Committee and to strengthen the Committee by the appointment of additional members. The final statement of principles will be published as a framework for consideration of the individual schemes.

9. I intend to lay regulations so that the sites are subject to licensing by the Nuclear Installations Inspectorate of the Health and Safety Executive. Approval of the schemes will depend on satisfying a comprehensive range of exacting requirements designed to safeguard the public and the workforce.



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10. The Government is committed to the safe and effective management of radioactive wastes. Additional land facilities for the disposal of intermediate level waste are the major current gap in waste management which must be remedied. It is essential that decisions should be taken after the most rigorous study of the views of all concerned, and that the installations and operations should be subject to stringent scrutiny and monitoring. The Government believes that these proposals represent an effective procedure for achieving these ends.



1972



  
 14 OCT 1972  






*With the Compliments  
of the  
Lord Privy Seal*





2 MARSHAM STREET  
LONDON SW1P 3EB  
01-212 3434

My ref:

Your ref:

19.10 18 October 1983

*Dear Uncle*

*D  
D/10*

We spoke about the statement my Secretary of State proposes to make next week about radioactive waste.

In the 1982 White Paper on Radioactive Waste Management (Cmnd 8607), the Government made important commitments to deal with the disposal of waste from the nuclear programme. The UK Atomic Energy Authority, the generating boards and British Nuclear Fuels have since been working jointly to develop new disposal facilities on land. They are coordinating their efforts through the Nuclear Industry Radioactive Waste Executive (NIREX), which was set up for the purpose and was endorsed in the White Paper.

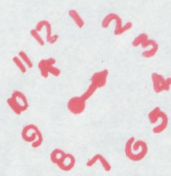
In parallel with the search for suitable disposal sites by NIREX, this Department has drawn up basic principles which any detailed proposal by the Executive will have to address. The principles include objectives for environmental protection, radiological protection and information requirements. These principles will be an important aid in securing public confidence. They will be subject to a measure of public consultation in themselves, with the Radioactive Waste Management Advisory Committee taking an important part in the process.

The principles have already been the subject of extensive discussion among officials (who have consulted their respective Ministers) in Scottish and Welsh Departments, the Department of Energy and the Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food. Specialist agencies such as the Nuclear Installations Inspectorate and the National Radiological Protection Board have given advice and the Treasury is apprised of the financial implications.

From a long list of possibilities, NIREX have now identified the two sites they would most like to examine in depth with a view to developing new disposal facilities. The risk of leak is ever-present, and in order not to delay progress on this important project, my Secretary of State proposes to make an oral statement, immediately after First Order Questions on 26 October. The statement would announce publication of the Draft Principles for Protection of the Human Environment, in relation to disposal facilities for radioactive waste, and name the NIREX proposed sites. Details of the sites and how NIREX would proceed further would then be given by the Executive in a press conference later the same day.



19 OCT 1983





The statement will also cover the abandonment of this year's sea-disposal operation.

My Secretary of State favours an oral statement because on a controversial topic like this there will inevitably be questions and demands for supplementary information. Moreover the Government could be an easy target for criticism if a Written Answer were given so close to the time when it was the turn of Environment to take First Order Questions. The Secretary of State will be writing separately seeking colleagues' clearance for the text of the statement but would be grateful first for the Lord Privy Seal's agreement to his proposals concerning the timing and form of the statement.

Yours sincerely

L. Robinson

LUCY ROBINSON  
Private Secretary





2 MARSHAM STREET  
LONDON SW1P 3EB  
01-212 3434

My ref: J/PSO/16015/83

Your ref:

*Just  
14/10*

11 NOV 83

*Dear Nicky,*

RADIOACTIVE WASTE

Thank you for your letter of 24 October drawing attention to reported statements by Mr Jim Slater about land disposal for low and intermediate-level radioactive wastes.

Transfer of waste to the proposed new sites would not start for a number of years, but I am anxious to avoid any risk of non co-operation by unions in the investigations and construction that will have to come first.

My meeting with the TUC, now fixed for 5 December, will cover the overall strategy for land as well as sea disposal. The primary objective will be to appeal to moderate opinion in the unions, and that is why we must point out the irresponsibility of the minority of wreckers who would like to block any sensible form of disposal.

We must also try to identify positive steps which would have a beneficial effect on union attitudes, and clarify the consequences - in terms of constructing extra stores and treatment plant - of not dumping at sea for several years. In preparation for my meeting with the TUC Ian Gow is holding further discussions with colleagues from other Departments directly concerned.

I shall report on the TUC's response.

I am copying this letter to the recipients of the previous correspondence.

*Your ever  
Patrick*

PATRICK JENKIN

The Rt Hon Nicholas Ridley AMICE MP



Home Affairs: Disposal of Nuclear Waste  
7/79



14 NOV 1983



**Sir Geoffrey Howe:** I have told the House that I am not able to give information about the present position of the Governor-General.

**Mr. Doug Hoyle** (Warrington, North): If the Foreign Secretary says that the British nationals there were not in danger, what is the difference between them and the Americans? Will he stop wringing his hands like Uriah Heep and condemn in the Chamber this American folly?

**Sir Geoffrey Howe:** As I have told the House several times, the difference between our group of citizens and the American one is that the American group is five times more numerous than ours. It contains people who are more visible within the community and the President of the United States had received reports, as he told the nation today, that a large number of them were seeking to escape from the island. We had received no such reports in respect of our citizens.

**Mr. Healey:** I should like to start with a tribute to the Foreign Secretary. Nobody, on the basis of his performance this afternoon, could accuse him of megaphone diplomacy. I must tell the right hon. and learned Gentleman that the British people will not relish the spectacle of their Prime Minister allowing President Reagan to walk all over her for a second time. Is this just an example of the resolute approach mark II, and will it form the whole of Her Majesty's Government's policy during their second term of office?

**Sir Geoffrey Howe:** The subject does not deserve jibes of that quality. [HON. MEMBERS: "Resign".] The action being discussed is not the action of this Government. The views of the Government on this matter were made plain yesterday.

**Mr. Healey:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to give notice that at the appropriate time I shall seek to move the Adjournment of the House under Standing Order No. 10.

## Radioactive Wastes

4.13 pm

**The Secretary of State for the Environment (Mr. Patrick Jenkin):** With permission, Mr. Speaker, I wish to make a statement about the procedures for dealing with radioactive wastes.

The White Paper of July 1982 stressed the great importance that the Government attach to the safe and effective management of radioactive wastes. These wastes, which vary greatly in type and source, are a necessary product of modern society. Their effective disposal, in ways which have been shown to be safe, is well within the scope of modern technology.

It has been decided already that the high-level, heat-generating wastes from nuclear fuel should be solidified and stored for at least 50 years. This will allow the radioactivity to decline and the necessary information to be collected for an eventual choice of the best means of disposal. However, there is no scientific reason for deferring the disposal of other categories of waste, and that is what the rest of this statement is about.

For many years, low-level waste has been regularly disposed of, both on land and at sea. The Government firmly believe that sea disposal is a safe method for certain kinds of lower-level wastes from laboratories, medical uses and other sources. It has been authorised by successive Governments, and is permitted under the London convention. It is overwhelmingly supported by scientific evidence but the Government regret that they have not so far succeeded in persuading certain trades unions of this. If there were authoritative evidence of a real risk to human health, or of significant and permanent damage to the marine environment, of course it would cease to form part of the national waste management strategy. A sea disposal operation will not take place this year, and the waste for which sea disposal is planned will be stored on land for the time being.

There is, in any event, a need to bring into operation by the end of the decade land disposal facilities for intermediate level wastes. The responsibility for providing those facilities falls to the nuclear industry and the generating boards acting through NIREX, the Nuclear Industry Radioactive Waste Executive. A copy of its first report has been placed in the Library of the House. The technology for constructing and monitoring such facilities is well developed. NIREX will be able to draw on extensive research and operational experience in other countries.

Two new facilities are likely to be needed, one consisting of a concrete-lined trench and the other of a deep underground cavity. NIREX is today announcing two sites which it considers sufficiently promising to justify further investigation. The possible site for a deep facility is at Billingham in Cleveland, and the possible site for a shallow facility at Elstow in Bedfordshire. Copies of the NIREX statement are available in the Library.

The decision by NIREX whether to proceed with proposals for these sites will depend on the outcome of survey, drilling and other investigatory works. It is possible that, depending on what is involved, such works may require planning permission. If so, I shall call in the relevant applications for determination after public inquiries. And I emphasise that these inquiries would give an opportunity for expressing views on the investigatory



[Mr. Patrick Jenkin]

works themselves, having regard to their planning implications. They should not be seen as a forum for considering the merits of disposing of wastes at the sites.

If NIREX wishes in due course to propose that a disposal facility should be established at one of these sites, or at any other site, planning permission will be necessary. It is my intention to call in any such application and arrange for a public inquiry to be held under an independent inspector at which the merits of disposal at the proposed site will be considered in the light of the views of all concerned.

In addition to planning permission, any arrangements for disposing of radioactive waste in England will also have to be authorised by me, acting jointly with my right hon. Friend the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, under the Radioactive Substances Act 1960. I have today published, and placed in the Library of the House, a consultation document embodying the principles which it is proposed that the authorising Departments should apply in assessing schemes. All concerned are invited to comment on the draft principles. I intend to seek the advice of the Radioactive Waste Management Advisory Committee and to strengthen the committee by appointment of additional members. The final statement of principles will be published as a framework for consideration of the individual schemes.

The sites will also be subject to licensing by the Nuclear Installations Inspectorate of the Health and Safety Executive, and appropriate regulations will be brought forward in due course. Approval of the schemes will depend on satisfying a comprehensive range of exacting requirements designed to safeguard the public and the work force.

The Government are committed to the safe and effective management of radioactive wastes. Additional land facilities are needed for the disposal of intermediate level waste. It is essential that decisions should be taken on the basis of informed scientific advice and after rigorous study of the views of all concerned, and that the installations and operations should be subject to stringent scrutiny and monitoring. The Government believe that the proposals I have announced represent an effective procedure for achieving these ends.

**Mr. Denis Howell** (Birmingham, Small Heath): The Secretary of State will appreciate that his statement is of the greatest importance to those concerned, especially, for example, those represented by my hon. Friend the Member for Stockton, North (Mr. Cook). Indeed, yesterday, my hon. Friend very properly expressed their real fears to this House, and no doubt similar considerations apply to Bedfordshire.

Therefore, I shall ask the right hon. Gentleman a few relevant questions. What consultations took place between his Department or NIREX and the appropriate local authorities prior to his announcement today. Does the right hon. Gentleman appreciate that when he says in the second paragraph of the statement that the effective disposal of such wastes is safe and well within the scope of modern technology, and in the fifth paragraph that the technology for construction and monitoring is well developed, he is making assumptions that many people believe are far from proven, especially given the time scales involved.

The right hon. Gentleman has made a unique proposal in the decision to hold two public inquiries. Am I right to assume that they will be preliminary inquiries before the surveying and site investigation begin, and well before the full-scale planning inquiry? If so, what rules will govern that new and unique procedure? What will be possible? What evidence can be given? Who can be represented?

In the seventh paragraph, the Secretary of State says that the inquiries will not be a forum for considering the merits of disposing of wastes at the sites. How is it possible or proper to divorce the merits of waste disposal from the choice of site and investigation, especially when the chosen area for the first site is beneath a housing estate? How will that local authority and the representatives of the people be able to express their concern about their houses unless they can discuss the merits of dumping waste beneath them?

In the 1982 White Paper the Government said that "economic and social factors" were an important consideration and would have to be considered. Does that apply to these inquiries? Will the right hon. Gentleman give an assurance that it will be proper for the representatives of the people and the amenity and environmental organisations to concern themselves with such economic and social factors at the preliminary inquiries? Will he note that although we appreciate that he has placed a consultation document in the Library of the House and that he says that appropriate regulations will have to be laid before the House, this is a matter of such fundamental importance that we shall insist on holding a debate on that document?

**Mr. Jenkin:** I certainly agree about the importance of the subject matter, and the fact that I came to the House to make the statement underlines that point. I understand the right hon. Gentleman's request for a debate, and no doubt that can be discussed through the usual channels. Consultations with the local authorities would not have been appropriate at this stage. We are making the statement at the earliest possible moment when the possible sites have been identified by NIREX. However, nothing can be done until full consultations have taken place and the planning inquiries have been held. Obviously, they will provide ample opportunity for local authorities and other groups, such as the local residents, to be consulted and to express their views.

The right hon. Gentleman drew attention to some of my remarks about safety. Of course, I shall receive very high level scientific advice from the Radioactive Waste Management Advisory Committee, and from the National Radiological Protection Board about the difficult decisions that will have to be taken. I have made it clear that I regard the public's safety and the integrity of the environment as paramount.

The right hon. Gentleman also asked several questions about the public inquiries. The procedure that I outlined was intended to provide a double safeguard. We envisage that the first inquiry, if it is necessary, will be of comparatively limited scope, and will relate to the investigatory works themselves. The point is that if somebody wished to undertake, for example, test drilling to determine the character of the subsoil or to undertake some other such work, that would of itself require planning permission. The location of the drilling and so on would be a very proper matter for investigation at that stage. However, there would be no presumption whatever at that



stage that it would result in a firm proposal, which would open up the much wider issue of whether facilities should be used. Those questions would be aired at the second public inquiry.

It may well be that investigations can proceed on, for example, an underground mine without engaging in any operations that would require planning permission. In those circumstances I would envisage that there would only be the one major inquiry on the application to use the site for disposal. Such cases would involve any evidence relevant to the use of the site, and of course those concerned would be entitled to be represented. The right hon. Gentleman also asked me whether the criteria in the 1982 White Paper, which my predecessor published July last year, still stood, and the answer is yes.

**Mr. Nicholas Lyell** (Mid-Bedfordshire): Does my right hon. Friend recognise that such an announcement is bound to cause grave anxiety to my constituents in Elstow and Stewartby and the surrounding villages? Can he confirm that no radioactive waste will be placed in the soil of Mid-Bedfordshire, whether on an experimental or permanent basis, without the Government's absolute assurance that it is perfectly safe to do so? Will he further assure the House that full planning considerations, including the possible blight to neighbouring districts, will be taken into account so that land that could otherwise be profitably used for residential, industrial or agricultural purposes is not so blighted?

**Mr. Jenkin:** I can well understand the anxiety to which my hon. and learned Friend has drawn attention. Perhaps it will go some way towards reassuring him and his constituents if I say that in the two areas in question, NIREX will undertake a substantial public information—[*Interruption*—]campaign, as it is extremely anxious that people should understand the full nature of what is—or, I must say at this stage, might be—proposed. They can then make an informed judgment about the matter if it comes before a public inquiry.

I can confirm that the disposal of radioactive waste will be conducted in such a way as to ensure the safety not only of present but future generations. After all, the half life of some of the products extends well beyond one generation.

After the work has been completed on a site such as is currently envisaged might be established at Elstow, there would have to be some limited restriction on what might happen at that site. However, it will be considered perfectly safe—if appropriate—for the public to have access to the site. That is the standard of safety that is applied by other countries that have adopted similar facilities for the disposal of their intermediate waste.

**Mr. Frank Cook** (Stockton, North): The announcement that the right hon. Gentleman has made today ends more than nine months of acute anxiety in my constituency. In February of this year we had word that Billingham might be under consideration. During those nine months we tried to obtain information from Nirex but that has been singularly unforthcoming. The Secretary of State has assured us that there will be a public inquiry. Will he ensure that the inquiry is informed of the 35,000 people who live only 400 ft above the site of the proposed waste? Will he also ensure that the inquiry is fully informed of the nature of the high concentration of industry in that area, of the wide range of very volatile substances that are stored in subterranean caverns, cheek

by jowl in the same area, as well as the liquified petroleum gas, the Calor gas, the propane, the ethylene and the ethylene oxide?—[*Interruption.*]

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. We must have questions to the Secretary of State.

**Mr. Cook:** Will the right hon. Gentleman ensure that the inquiry is made fully aware that 14 per cent.—one-sixth—of the registrable hazardous locations in this country are located in that area? [*Interruption.*] Am I, Mr. Speaker, allowed one question or two?

**Mr. Speaker:** I would not wish to be pressed on that. If the hon. Member is brief, that would be helpful.

**Mr. Cook:** I shall try to be as brief as possible. The Secretary of State referred to the half life of waste which goes beyond the life of a generation. We are referring to toxic substances that can have a 5,000-year half life at an intermediate level and at the end of 5,000 years still remain toxic. It is worth noting that 5,000 years is more than twice the period since Julius Caesar landed on these shores. Will the Minister ensure that the inquiry understands what is meant by "half-life" and that the substances may have a toxic duration of 200,000 years?

**Mr. Jenkin:** I fully understand the problems faced by the hon. Gentleman and his constituents. I am sorry if he considers that he has not been given the required information. This is the earliest possible opportunity that the Government or any public inquiry have had to come forward with a firm proposal that there exists in the hon. Gentleman's constituency a site that is worth examining further. That is the only decision that has been made. My statement was intended—I hope that it has in some way succeeded—to reassure the hon. Gentleman that the procedures and safeguards and the various steps which must be taken before a single ounce of radioactive material is stored in the anhydrite mine at Billingham are stringent and will give his constituents every possible opportunity to express their views.

I have the responsibility, as Secretary of State for the Environment, to ensure that the management of such radioactive waste material is conducted in a way that will ensure the safety of this and future generations. Judgments must be made in some cases. The Government are correct to consult and take the advice of the most authoritative members of the scientific establishment in this country because they are the people best able to advise us on this.

If either the hon. Gentleman or my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Mid-Bedfordshire (Mr. Lyell) wishes to discuss this matter with me or my Ministers, we shall be very pleased to see them.

**Mr. T. H. H. Skeet** (Bedfordshire, North): Does the Secretary of State agree that the amount of radiation is likely to be within international standards and that only a fraction of the natural radiation will be in either area? Does he also agree that the Bedfordshire water table will not be polluted nor will any untreated effluence be allowed to enter the river Ouse? Will he also ensure that there are two meaningful planning inquiries before either of the procedures goes ahead; and is 1990 the possible completion date of such a project?

**Mr. Jenkin:** I am grateful to my hon. Friend who has the advantage of great knowledge in this area, which I respect. I confirm the Government's intention and that of



[Mr. Jenkin]

the industry is to operate well within the international standards laid down by the International Commission on Radiological Protection.

As to the inquiries, an initial preliminary inquiry would be appropriate only if the investigatory works were such as to require planning permission. If not, there appears to be no reason why any obstacle should be put in the way of further investigation. It is important to state that if it is subsequently decided, in the light of those investigations, to use the site for the disposal of radioactive wastes, that proposal would then be the subject of a full public inquiry.

My hon. Friend referred to the water table. It is not appropriate for me to answer questions of that type, but Nirex and, subsequently, the public inquiry would need to have the fullest evidence to ensure that there is no possible risk of pollution of the water table through the escape of nuclear radioactivity.

My hon. Friend also asked when this project would come to fruition. I believe that we must have these facilities by the end of the decade, but it would be rash to try to forecast precisely how long these complex but necessary procedures will take.

**Mr. John Cartwright** (Woolwich): However skilled the public relations campaign might be, or however expert the scientific advice available, does the Secretary of State realise that ordinary people will take a lot of persuading that nuclear waste can safely be stored on land for long periods? Is it not, therefore, extremely unwise to propose the storage of highly radioactive waste in areas of concentrated housing such as Billingham?

**Mr. Jenkin:** That matter will have to be considered in the greatest of detail. I remind the hon. Gentleman that at the Trades Union Congress this year, in a debate in which objections were raised to the use of sea dumping, Mr. Ray Buckton on behalf of the General Council asked the Government to accelerate action on land-based methods of dealing with waste.

The Government believe that land-based disposal of intermediate wastes is the safest and the best method, provided that a site can be found with sufficient geological certainty and stability which will remain safe for the necessary period of time.

I understand the difficulty of persuading ordinary people of the safety aspect of this matter. I can say that no stone will be left unturned. I remind the hon. Gentleman that the Radioactive Waste Management Advisory Committee includes trade union members nominated by the TUC. I am sure that that organisation will be well placed to advise Nirex and the Government as to the best way of approaching the public in these difficult matters.

**Mr. David Madel** (Bedfordshire, South-West): Will my right hon. Friend remember that land suitable for industrial development in Bedfordshire should be used quickly to create long-term jobs rather than for the dumping of radioactive waste? Will he also remember that Bedford already takes a great deal of domestic and industrial waste which adds to the traffic congestion within the county? Will he also remember that there is a great deal of public unease about the future of the nuclear industry? The Government have a considerable task in allaying public anxiety. I do not think that they make the job any

easier by choosing an area such as Elstow which is near an industrial and highly developed part of Bedfordshire. Will the Secretary of State ensure that a relatively small county is not asked to do too much for too many too quickly?

**Mr. Jenkin:** I fully understand my hon. Friend's anxiety. The actual quantities of intermediate waste that would need to be stored in the site currently envisaged for the location in his constituency are tiny compared with the volumes of normal waste to which he referred. The relevant site, a former brick clay pit, was earmarked some years ago for the building of a power station which, in the event, has not taken place. There is some development on the site at present and if it is decided after a public inquiry to proceed with the use of the site for radioactive disposal the existing users will need to be relocated. The question of immediate jobs—I understand my hon. Friend's point on this matter—must be subordinated to the need to ensure the most rigorous safety procedures and standards for a course of action that is essential, bearing in mind the quantities of intermediate waste that already exist as a result of past generation of power by nuclear means.

The question of the future of nuclear power stations is rather wider, and perhaps should be addressed to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Energy.

**Mr. Ted Leadbitter** (Hartlepool): May I draw the attention of the Secretary of State to the third paragraph of his statement? After dealing with the "high-level, heat-generating wastes from nuclear fuel", he concludes

"However there is no scientific reason for deferring the disposal of other categories of waste."

It appears from those words that the Secretary of State has pre-empted the situation and that on those grounds he has come to a conclusion.

Then in the eighth paragraph of his statement he said: "planning permission will be necessary"?

In the light of those two references and of his kind comments earlier that he would be available for discussion, does he accept that if the planning authority of Cleveland county concludes that because of the already high proportion of overhazardous industries in the area it cannot give planning permission, he will give way to that consideration?

Finally, in view of the right hon. Gentleman's invitation to consult, will he agree at the earliest possible moment to receive a deputation of hon. Members from the area, including the representatives of the Cleveland county council?

**Mr. Jenkin:** I assure the hon. Gentleman that I am always happy to receive a deputation of which he is a member. I shall of course be happy to do that.

In answer to what the hon. Gentleman said about planning, I have made it clear that I intend to call in any application which it would not be fair to leave to the local planning authority. I should call it in so that there might be a public inquiry, and at that, of course, the county council would be a key witness. The fact that Cleveland—and the Billingham area in particular—has been the centre for the chemical industry, particularly the organic chemical industry, for a number of years, is scarcely relevant to the use of the anhydrite mine for the storage of radioactive waste. There is no conceivable risk of anything such as an explosion. That is not the concern. The concern is about whether the site is safe to contain the



radioactinides and nuclides which might damage health and poison the environment. The fact that there are chemicals on the surface, as the hon. Member for Stockton, North (Mr. Cook) said, is not a factor in that connection, but no doubt these matters will be explored thoroughly in any public inquiry that is held.

**Mr. Richard Holt** (Langbaugh): Will the Secretary of State consider the fact that he might well have made a similar statement a few decades ago in a scientific manner when the subject of asbestos was first brought to attention? At that time the Secretary of State would have got up, as he has done today, and said that full scientific advice had told him that it was perfectly safe. Can the Secretary of State guarantee today that it is perfectly safe, or that it will be in the future? You state that there is to be a public inquiry. Will you say what alternative sites you have if the public inquiry turns you down?

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. I know that the hon. Gentleman is a new Member, but he should address his questions to the Secretary of State, not to me.

**Mr. Holt:** I thank you, Mr. Speaker, for what you said about my being a new Member, but that does not mean, I hope, that the questions will be dodged.

Will the Secretary of State kindly advise those of us who have not yet had the benefit of reading the paper of the difference between a deep cavity and a deep hole, because it seems that one of the scientific reasons for choosing my constituency of Cleveland is that a hole already exists there which someone thinks should be filled in? That is the worst scientific reason for putting radioactive waste there.

**Mr. Jenkin:** I assure my hon. Friend that that factor would not weigh with me in the choice of site. If I may put the subject in layman's language, the difference is that some substances have a fairly high radioactivity—I am talking about intermediate-level waste—where the half-life is short and the radioactivity declines fairly rapidly, and in those circumstances it is sufficient—so we are advised by the advisory committee—for them to be stored in relatively shallow—about 30m deep—in appropriate pits of that nature and covered in. For substances that have a longer half-life, and when there needs to be a much more permanent safeguard against the escape of radioactivity, it is considered that a deep pit, a mine or something of that nature, is the best place. Of course, the geological stability and the other conditions in the mine are critical in this connection.

I understand my hon. Friend's difficulty about scientific advice, but I firmly believe that Governments should always seek to act on the best scientific advice that is available. Of course, no one can say that that is infallible for all time. No one would be so foolish as to say that. However, we have a problem. We have intermediate waste, and it is important for us to make permanent arrangements for its suitable and safe disposal. That is what my statement is intended to lead to, and that is why I have spelt out the procedures, and they are very stringent procedures, to ensure that the waste is as safe as we could possibly make it.

**Mr. John Evans** (St. Helens, North): Will the Secretary of State accept that his statement today is of great significance to every citizen in this country and that there is enormous public interest in the matter? Is he

aware, on the subject of the public inquiries, which we on these Benches naturally applaud, that the utilities—the CEGB, the Atomic Energy Authority, and so on—have enormous funds at their disposal and a large number of experts to present their case, but that there is a terrible feeling that the objectors have to scrape around for pennies to present their objections? In view of the tremendous importance of this issue, will the right hon. Gentleman take this opportunity to state that the objectors to the proposals will have state finance to present their case to the public inquiry?

**Mr. Jenkin:** I entirely accept the importance that the hon. Gentleman rightly attaches to my statement and to this whole subject. The matter of funds for objectors at public inquiries has been considered many times by successive Governments, and in particular has been raised many times in connection with the Sizewell inquiry. I do not believe that it would be right for me to give any fresh undertakings on that at this stage. However, local authorities themselves are powerful bodies which can command considerable resources — [HON. MEMBERS: "Oh!"] — and I am sure that the local authorities, whether in Cleveland county or the district councils in the area or, indeed, in Bedfordshire, will be well able to represent the views of their residents effectively and thoroughly at the public inquiry. It is our intention to ensure that all those who have a legitimate point of view to put forward will have an opportunity to do so. I have already pointed out that I cannot go further than I have in connection with other inquiries.

**Several Hon. Members rose—**

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. I have to protect the business of the House. There is another statement, a further debate and a prayer later in the evening. So I ask for briefer questions. I shall allow questions on this important matter to go on until 5 o'clock, so I ask that the questions be short and I hope that everyone who wishes will have an opportunity to speak.

**Mr. Anthony Steen** (South Hams): While people at Billingham and in Bedfordshire will understandably be concerned, is my right hon. Friend aware that a fair amount of nuclear waste is being transported by rail through Totnes railway station nearly every night? Is the handling of that nuclear material safe and are the wagons which carry it safe? Will my right hon. Friend assure my constituents in South Hams that they are safe?

**Mr. Jenkin:** I think that my hon. Friend is referring to the transfer of irradiated fuel by techniques that are now well established. That is a matter for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport, but it is the Government's intention and that of all the protective agencies that we have to ensure that all those operations are as safe as they possibly can be.

**Dr. M. S. Miller** (East Kilbride): The right hon. Gentleman is right to pay attention to the TUC's wish for a permanent method of disposal to be found, and I am glad that the Government are proceeding along those lines. However, the right hon. Gentleman is being a little premature in giving assurances that cannot yet be claimed to be 100 per cent. effective. This matter is of great concern, as I am sure the right hon. Gentleman knows.

Will the right hon. Gentleman expand on the first aspect of his statement. He rightly divided radioactive wastes into



[Dr. M. S. Miller]

two—high-level and intermediate and low-level waste. The right hon. Gentleman said that the high-level waste would be solidified. Does he mean that it will be vitrified, and when will it be done?

I am partly responsible for a parliamentary hearing through the Council of Europe's sub-committee on nuclear energy of the Committee on Science and Technology in Stockholm on this subject. The most important aspect of the problem is to try to prevent the scientists from adopting the lofty attitude that they know all the answers. Radioactive waste can be made safe, but there must be dialogue between the people involved and the scientists. It is not good enough to lay down the law and say that it will be safe. Will the right hon. Gentleman take that on board and ensure that every effort is made to bring the public into this so that they can be reassured?

**Mr. Jenkin:** I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for his view that nuclear waste can be safely stored. I am sure that that is right, and it is our intention that it should be.

I am looking forward to meeting representatives of the TUC general council to discuss those matters in the near future. We shall want to maintain a dialogue on this.

The hon. Gentleman's final point is important. I spent two years as a shadow spokesman on energy in the 1970s and I met many nuclear scientists. One quality of that distinguished profession that struck me was their ability to communicate their science to the public. Had they not done so they would never have been allowed to do anything. Nuclear scientists understand better than scientists in some other fields the need to explain things to the public.

**Mr. John Carlisle** (Luton, North): While my constituents in South Bedfordshire will not doubt my right hon. Friend's sincerity and that the safety requirements will be met, he must understand the anxiety and distress that this decision has caused. I endorse the comment of my hon. Friend the Member for Bedfordshire, South-West (Mr. Madel) that Bedfordshire has had its fair share of waste over the past few years.

Why was this extraordinary decision—as I believe it to be—made to put waste in such a heavily populated area? What transportation will be used to bring that waste into Elstow?

**Mr. Jenkin:** It would be inappropriate for me to hazard a guess as to how that might be done. These are clearly matters that require further investigation and that will be thoroughly aired at any public inquiry. The site in question is close to a railway and has road access to motorway networks. Several options therefore exist.

I understand the anxiety of my hon. Friend and his constituents. It will be the intention of all concerned, not least myself, to ensure that as the various procedures are carried through every opportunity is taken to explain what is involved to the public and to seek to allay their anxiety.

The choice of the site as one for possible investigation is for NIREX and I commend the statement that it has issued today which explains why it has picked on this as one of the two sites.

**Mr. Simon Hughes** (Southwark and Bermondsey): While I welcome the right hon. Gentleman's statement that intermediate level waste should be stored on land

rather than at sea, does he accept that his responsibility as Secretary of State for the Environment is to ensure that Britain sees less and less nuclear waste, not more and more? Will he use his influence to ensure that Government policy is to decrease rather than increase nuclear waste?

Will the right hon. Gentleman give an undertaking to publish the shortlist of sites as suggested by the management advisory committee? Will he make known the criteria for the selection of the two proposed sites so that we can be sure that the selection was made on scientific not political or quasi-political grounds?

**Mr. Jenkin:** There has never been any question of disposing of intermediate waste at sea, only low level waste, and that we believe will be safe on scientific evidence.

On questions of nuclear policy and the generation of more waste I must defer to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Energy who is responsible for such matters.

The hon. Gentleman asks whether we ought to publish a shortlist of the sites from which the two that I have mentioned were drawn. That would not serve any useful purpose at this stage. If and when NIREX decides to go ahead with proposals for developing disposal facilities I shall hold a public inquiry and NIREX will have to justify its choice of site to the independent inspector in the light of the assessment principles which are the subject of the consultation document that I have put in the Library. I prefer to leave the matter there.

**Mr. Stuart Bell** (Middlesbrough): May I say, as a Member of Parliament in Cleveland, that we welcome the right hon. Gentleman's statement that the safety of the public will be paramount? However, is it not the perception of that safety that is paramount? A constituent of my hon. Friend the Member for Stockton, North (Mr. Cook) said that if this waste is deposited 400 ft below his house it will be like living above a nuclear time bomb. That is the kind of dangerous feeling that exists in my area of Cleveland as a result of these announcements. We welcome the fact that there will be a public inquiry, that planning permission will have to be granted and that the decisions will have to be taken by the Department of the Environment along with the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food. However, have the mine owners been consulted? What would happen if they refused to give permission for such deposits to take place? Will the right hon. Gentleman give an assurance at the end of the day that he will take note of the views of the people of Cleveland and not seek to impose a solution by making these deposits in Cleveland?

**Mr. Jenkin:** As the hon. Gentleman obviously understands these matters I am sure that he will do his best to seek to allay the exaggerated fears of his constituents. There is no conceivable question that these wastes will constitute anything remotely approaching a bomb. That is part of the danger that comes simply from using the word "nuclear" which people associate with explosions, and it is not the case. We must bend every endeavour to try to allay such anxieties.

Of course we shall take account of other people's views. That is precisely why I have outlined the complex procedures and safeguards that exist.

I am not sure whether the question of where the waste would be put if the owner of the mine did not consent



would arise in the case of the anhydrite mine at Billingham. I understand that the owner, ICI, has been informed about this and that it has said that if it is in the national interest it would be prepared to allow its facility to be used for this purpose, subject to all the necessary safeguards.

Whether I would impose any decision is a hypothetical question that does not arise at this stage.

**Dr. Jeremy Bray** (Motherwell, South): Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the anhydrite mine at Billingham is a very big hole indeed and that at the rates of depositing which NIREX is proposing, by the end of the century only 1 per cent. of the available space will have been filled up? Is it wise to go through all the hazards of preparing public opinion to accept a facility which will be so grossly problematic, and could not the geology have been explored at a much less sensitive site?

**Mr. Jenkin:** I am sure that the criterion that was uppermost in the mind of NIREX was to find a site that would provide the most suitable and safest storage for the intermediate waste with which it is concerned. The area of this mine is, I am told, about one mile by one mile by 15 feet, which is a vast volume, and the hon. Gentleman is right to say that it would provide storage facilities for many years, if that should be necessary. That is a matter for NIREX. My concern is to see that if its investigations lead it to conclude that it is a place where it would wish to store the categories of intermediate waste, I must be satisfied that all the criteria, particularly those spelled out in the consultation document, are fully complied with before there is any question of consent being given.

## National Health Service (Management Inquiry)

5.1 pm

**The Secretary of State for Social Services (Mr. Norman Fowler):** With permission, Mr. Speaker, should like to make a statement on the publication of the advice given to me by the National Health Service management inquiry.

As the House will recall, I set up an inquiry into the management of the Health Service under the chairmanship of Mr. Roy Griffiths, the deputy chairman and managing director of Sainsbury's, in February of this year. I asked him to review current initiatives to improve the efficiency of the Health Service in England and to advise on the management action need to secure the best value for money and the best possible service to patients. I have today placed in the Vote Office copies of the report which I have now received from the inquiry team.

The inquiry team endorses the main initiatives that the Government have already taken to make health authorities accountable for the performance of the services they provide. However, it says that an enormous programme of management action is still needed. The inquiry team found that at all levels in the National Health Service there is a lack of a clearly defined general management function. Responsibility is too rarely placed on one person. Although it would like to harness the best of the consensus management approach, it finds that, at present, consensus management can lead to lowest common denominator decisions and long delays in the management process. Another effect is that the process of devolution of responsibility is ineffective. Accordingly, the inquiry team proposes a series of changes aimed at making the existing organisation work better rather than aiming at yet another restructuring of the service.

Inside the Department of Health, the team proposes that I should set up and chair a new Health Services supervisory board. The board would have some external members and directly accountable to it would be a management board which would bring together the present management functions of my Department relating to the hospital and community services, the family practitioner services and special health authorities. A new chairman of the management board would be appointed probably from outside the service. The report also proposes that a personnel director should be recruited.

At the regional and district level, the report recommends the identification of a general manager for each authority. Such a manager would be drawn from any discipline—that is, from any of the professions engaged in the management of the National Health Service—and his job would be to secure effective management of the authority's services.

The report also recommends that hospitals and other units of management should as far as possible take all the day-to-day management decisions. Doctors should be closely involved in local management through the development of management budgets for which they be accountable. The team also recommends the identification of a general manager for every major hospital and other unit of management.

In short, the key recommendation is that a clear management responsibility should be identified for



STATEMENT BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE  
RADIOACTIVE WASTES

1. With permission, Mr Speaker, I wish to make a statement about the procedures for dealing with Radioactive Wastes.
2. The White Paper of July 1982 stressed the great importance which the Government attaches to the safe and effective management of radioactive wastes. These wastes, which vary greatly in type and source, are a necessary product of modern society. Their effective disposal, in ways which have been shown to be safe, is well within the scope of modern technology.
3. It has been decided already that the high-level, heat-generating wastes from nuclear fuel should be solidified and stored for at least 50 years. This will allow the radioactivity to decline and the necessary information to be collected for an eventual choice of the best means of disposal. However there is no scientific reason for deferring the disposal of other categories of waste.
4. For many years, low-level waste has been regularly disposed of, both on land and at sea. The Government firmly believes that sea disposal is a safe method for certain kinds of lower-level wastes from laboratories, medical uses and other sources. It has



been authorised by successive Governments, and is permitted under the London Convention. It is overwhelmingly supported by scientific evidence but the Government regrets that it has not so far succeeded in persuading certain unions of this. If there were authoritative evidence of a real risk to human health, or significant and permanent damage to the marine environment, then of course it would cease to form part of the national waste management strategy. A sea disposal operation will not take place this year, and the waste for which sea disposal is planned will be stored on land for the time being.

5. There is, in any event, a need to bring into operation by the end of the decade land disposal facilities for intermediate level wastes. The responsibility for providing those facilities falls to the Nuclear industry and the generating boards acting through NIREX, the Nuclear Industry Radioactive Waste Executive. A copy of its First Report has been placed in the Library of the House. The technology for constructing and monitoring such facilities is well developed. NIREX will be able to draw on extensive research and operational experience in other countries.

6. Two new facilities are likely to be needed, one consisting of a concrete-lined trench and the other of a deep underground cavity. NIREX is today announcing two sites which it considers sufficiently promising to justify further investigation. The possible site for a deep facility is at Billingham in Cleveland, and the possible



site for a shallow facility at Elstow in Bedfordshire.

Copies of the NIREX statement are available in the Library.

7. The decision by NIREX whether to proceed with proposals for these sites will depend on the outcome of survey, drilling and other investigatory works. It is possible that, depending on what is involved, such works may require planning permission. If so, I shall call in the relevant applications for determination after public inquiries. I emphasise that these inquiries would give an opportunity for expressing views on the investigatory works themselves, having regard to their planning implications. They should not be seen as a forum for considering the merits of disposing of wastes at the sites.

8. If NIREX wishes in due course to propose that a disposal facility should be established at one of these sites, or at any other site, planning permission will be necessary. It is my intention to call in any such application and arrange for a public inquiry to be held under an independent Inspector at which the merits of disposal at the proposed site will be considered in the light of the views of all concerned.



9. In addition to planning permission, any arrangements for disposing of radioactive waste in England will also have to be authorised by me, acting jointly with my rhf the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, under the Radioactive Substances Act 1960. I have today published, and placed in the Library of the House, a consultation document embodying the principles which it is proposed that the authorising Departments should apply in assessing schemes. All concerned are invited to comment on the draft principles. I intend to seek the advice of the Radioactive Waste Management Advisory Committee and to strengthen the Committee by appointment of additional members. The final statement of principles will be published as a framework for consideration of the individual schemes.

10. The sites will also be subject to licensing by the Nuclear Installations Inspectorate of the Health and Safety Executive, and appropriate regulations will be brought forward in due course. Approval of the schemes will depend on satisfying a comprehensive range of exacting requirements designed to safeguard the public and the workforce.



11. Mr Speaker the Government is committed to the safe and effective management of radioactive wastes. Additional land facilities. are needed for the disposal of intermediate level waste. It is essential that decisions should be taken on the basis of informed scientific advice and after rigorous study of the views of all concerned, and that the installations and operations should be subject to stringent scrutiny and monitoring. The Government believes that the proposals I have announced represent an effective procedure for achieving these ends.



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*From The Secretary of State for Wales*

The Rt Hon Nicholas Edwards MP

*DWB  
 25/10*

25 October 1983

*Den Pwri*

NIREX DRAFT ASSESSMENT PRINCIPLES AND MINISTERIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

Thank you for your letter of 19 October about your intention to make a Statement (now to be on Tuesday, 25 October) about the disposal arrangements for radioactive waste to coincide with the NIREX announcement of 2 potentially suitable sites.

I have to say that I had not been happy about your proposal but I see from George Younger's letter that the Scots are seeking a compromise solution which should go some way towards meeting my reservations. I hope you will be able to accept such a solution.

I only have one other comment on your proposed Statement. Paragraph 8 is of course correct so far as England is concerned but, since the reference to "any other site" in paragraph 7 of your Statement significantly widens its scope, I suggest that "in England" be added after "waste" in line 2 of paragraph 8. At the end of that sentence, an addition will be necessary recording the position in Wales, where I have the responsibility. Similar considerations will of course apply in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

/ I am copying this letter to the recipients of yours.

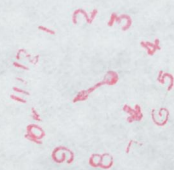
*Jen*  
*Ned*

The Rt Hon Patrick Jenkin MP  
 Secretary of State for the Environment



Home Aff,  
July 79,  
Disposal of  
Nuclear Waste.

24 OCT 1983





*Policy Unit*



DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY  
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The Rt Hon Patrick Jenkin MP  
Secretary of State for the  
Environment  
2 Marsham Street  
London SW1

24 October 1983

*JMB  
24/10*

*John Patrick*

*with AT*

Thank you for your letter of 19 October to Peter Walker covering a draft statement on land radioactive waste sites. He has asked me to reply. This issue is of vital importance for the future of the nuclear industry and we welcome the positive steps that you are taking to tackle it. I have recently discussed the subject with William Waldegrave. Nuclear waste disposal will never be a popular issue and there will always be opposition, hopefully narrowly based. If we are to press forward now - which I agree we should - it must be on the basis that we are prepared to face up to a degree of opposition in actually developing the sites - assuming, of course, that they have been shown to be safe through the proper planning and regulatory procedures. Recent experience has shown that this may require considerable determination. We must, of course, at the same time do everything possible to bring public opinion onto our side.

I recognise that the planning procedures and consultations required are largely a matter for your judgment. I would hope that it might be possible to avoid preliminary public inquiries into site investigation. However I welcome the firm assurance in the statement that if they should become necessary they will not be regarded as an opportunity for preliminary discussion of the merits of the sites for disposal.

Like you I consider that the disposal sites should be subject to licensing by the NII and I hope that George Younger can agree that we should make the necessary regulation soon.





Turning to sea disposal, I am glad to learn that you are meeting the TUC on this question. I hope that they can at least be persuaded to abide by the outcome of the two year scientific study now taking place under the auspices of the London Dumping Convention. I also hope that they will recognise that the delay in sea dumping underlines the need for the land disposal route.

My specific suggestions on the draft statement are attached. Most of them are self explanatory but I would like to explain the thinking behind the more significant changes:-

- i) the changes to paragraph 1 are intended to make the tone much more positive.
- ii) The changes to paragraphs 6 and 7 are designed to avoid suggestions at this stage that the planning inquiry for a site could be anything like as wideranging as the Sizewell Inquiry is turning out to be.
- iii) I think it is unnecessarily defensive to indicate in paragraph 8 of the statement that you intend to strengthen the Radioactive Waste Management Advisory Committee.

I am copying this letter to the recipients of yours.

*Giles Shaw*

GILES SHAW





AMENDMENTS TO DRAFT STATEMENT

- Para. 1 Line 4 delete 'An inescapable problem'  
insert 'a necessary product'
- Line 5 delete 'The solution lies in disposal'  
insert 'Their effective disposal'
- Line 6 add to the end 'is well within the scope  
of modern technology'.
- Para. 3 Line 1 after 'waste' add 'such as protective  
clothing or contaminated materials from  
hospitals and laboratories'.
- Line 2 after 'Government' add 'firmly'.
- Line 3 delete 'certain kinds of waste'  
add 'lower level wastes'
- Line 5 delete 'it has not yet been'
- Line 6 delete 'called into question by'  
insert 'is supported by'
- Line 7 after 'that' insert 'as a result of  
opposition from a number of Trades Unions'.  
Change 'should' to 'can'.
- Para. 6 Line 9 delete 'an opportunity for premature  
debate on'  
insert 'is supported by'
- Line 10 delete from 'the proper time' to the end  
of the paragraph
- Para. 7 Line 5 Change last sentence to finish 'Inspector  
at which the merits of the sites for disposal  
can be considered in the light of the views  
of all concerned'.
- Para. 8 Line 10 omit 'and to strengthen ..... members'.
- Para. 9 Line 1 delete 'I intend'  
add 'It is the intention of my rt hon Friends  
the Secretaries of State for Energy and  
for Scotland'.
- Para. 10 Line 2 after 'facilities' add 'are needed'
- Lines 3 delete from 'are the major' to 'remedied'  
& 4
- Line 5 after 'taken' insert 'on the basis of  
informed scientific advice and'  
delete 'the most'



HOME AFFAIRS  
Disposal of Nuclear Waste  
July 79.

24 OCT 1983

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CONFIDENTIAL



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT  
2 MARSHAM STREET LONDON SW1P 3EB

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

24 October 1983

*DMW  
24/10*

*Dear Patrick*

Thank you for your letter of 19 October about land disposal for low and intermediate level radioactive wastes.

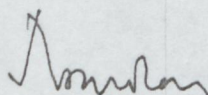
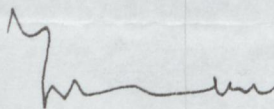
I am not as sanguine as you about the opponents of sea disposal favouring land disposal instead. Mr Jim Slater (General Secretary, National Union of Seamen) - the architect of union opposition to sea disposal - has already said that his members will have no truck with the movement of radioactive waste for land disposal if such disposal is against "the wishes of the people in that (the disposal) locality". Moreover, Mr Slater is now seeking support for that approach from the main rail unions (NUR and ASLEF) and the Transport and General Workers Union. Whether he will be able to enlist their support is by no means clear; but if he does then we may face in land disposal many of the problems we encountered in seeking sea disposal.

CONFIDENTIAL



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I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister and other members of E(A), Willie Whitelaw, Geoffrey Howe, Norman Fowler, John Wakeham and to Sir Robert Armstrong.



NICHOLAS RIDLEY

CONFIDENTIAL





FB  
SCOTTISH OFFICE  
WHITEHALL, LONDON SW1A 2AU

The Rt Hon Patrick Jenkin MP  
Secretary of State for the Environment  
Department of the Environment  
2-12 Marsham Street  
LONDON

JMB  
21/10  
21 October 1983

Dear Secretary of State

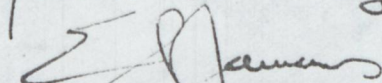
Thank you for your letter of 19 October seeking my agreement to the terms of the statement you propose to make about radioactive waste disposal. I am content with your proposed statement subject to the proviso set out below.

I note that you intend that radioactive waste disposal facilities will be brought within the site licensing provisions of the Nuclear Installations Act 1965 (incidentally, such regulations have in the past been made by the Secretaries of State for Energy and Scotland rather than by the Secretary of State for Environment). As you note, my officials have already expressed to yours strong reservations because the Environment Secretaries of State through their appropriate Inspectorates can already exercise the necessary supervision of radioactive waste disposal under the Radioactive Substances Act 1960. In addition, in the present climate of public opinion in Scotland it is in my view essential that the Government should be seen to maintain their long term control in matters concerning the disposal of radioactive waste and not appear to be abandoning that control to some other body.

I understand, however, that officials think it possible to ensure that duplication will be kept to a minimum and that the presentational benefit of dual supervision of disposal facilities will not lead to a diminution of our powers as Secretaries of State. On this basis, therefore, I am willing to agree to the licensing of waste disposal facilities. It can be left to officials to ensure that the proposed regulations and any working documents drawn up between the Nuclear Installations Inspectorate and our Departments will safeguard our position and our ultimate control.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister and the other recipients of yours.

Yours sincerely

  
Approved by the Secretary of State  
and signed in his absence



Home Affairs : Disposal of Radioactive waste  
July '79

21 OCT 1983

11 12 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10





FCS/83/208

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR ENVIRONMENT

Thank you for your letter of 19 October inviting comments on your proposed draft statement on the disposal of radioactive waste.

As you are aware I had considered that, if we were forced to abandon the dumping operation this year, there would be considerable advantage to be gained in public relations both domestically and internationally in agreeing to abide by the London Dumping Convention moratorium but I quite understand your reasons for not wanting to give up, at this stage, the option of a dump next year. Moreover, I doubt whether, at this stage, any attempt to link abandonment with the moratorium would have any credibility at home or abroad.

Nevertheless, we must recognise that your statement may arouse considerable interest abroad. I would therefore suggest that your paragraph 3 should contain the following sentence to confirm the pledge made earlier this year at the LDC Consultatives meeting:

"If there were any authoritative scientific evidence of a real risk to human health or significant and permanent damage to the marine environment the UK would be prepared to cease dumping."

/This would





This would go some way to emphasise to those foreign governments who criticise our sea dumping option that our policy takes full account of the environmental dimension.

I am copying my letter to the recipients of yours.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'G. Howe', written over a faint red circular stamp.

GEOFFREY HOWE

Foreign and Commonwealth Office  
21 October 1983



Home Affairs : Disposal of  
Nuclear Waste,  
July 79

21 JUN 1983

