



Government Chief Whip
12 Downing Street, London SW1

W. R. ...

None, I think, N. ...

to be ...

*update on the
point*

*NCW
25.4.*

April

25 February 1986

CONFIDENTIAL

Miss Joan MacNaughton
Private Secretary to the
Lord President of the Council
Privy Council Office
68 Whitehall
LONDON SW1

Dear Joan,

The Chief Whip has made some very informal soundings of those back bench colleagues who are most concerned with the Special Development Order. They still hope that by one means or another they can delay everything until the Autumn, and in that way shift the Government off its course and destroy the whole NIREX based approach. In the Chief Whip's view this would increase the chances of much more widespread opposition in the House and he cannot commend that course.

However we could try and meet their other point which is a debate on the policy of waste disposal before the laying and approval of the Order, and in the Chief Whip's view, this whole process should be completed before the House rises for Whitsun. This would involve two debates, not one as he hoped, but it could still be within the timescale worked out between him and the Secretary of State for the Environment on Sunday 20 April. Thus the timetable is tight but can be achieved as follows:

- By 2 May: Government response to the appropriate part of the Select Committee Report
- 8 May: Announce debate on principle
- 13 May: Hold debate on principle
- 13 May: Lay Order
- 13 May: Prayer tabled against Order
- 15 May: Announce debate on Prayer
- By 22 May: Hold debate on Prayer.

This could be managed without disruption to other essential Government business.

The alternative is to have one debate before Whitsun. This could be done but it must increase the chances of guerrilla tactics by disgruntled government back benchers.

The Chief Whip's strong view is that we should do everything in our power to proceed resolutely but in as conciliatory a manner as possible, and without delay.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Nigel Wicks (No.10), Geoff Dart (Department of Energy), John Howe (Ministry of Defence), Robert Gordon (Scottish Office), Colin Williams (Welsh Office), David Morris (PS/Lord Privy Seal), Sue Killen (PS/Mr Goodlad), Barbara Jones (PS/Mr Waldegrave), Rhodri Walters (PS/Chief Whip, Lords) and to Michael Stark in Sir Robert Armstrong's Office.

Yours ever,

Murdo

MURDO MACLEAN

