



Newsletter March 2009

Stop Hinkley protests at Buckingham Palace

Stop Hinkley joined a protest outside Buckingham Palace on 5th February during a formal dinner for heads of the nuclear industry hosted there by Prince Andrew.

The protest coincided with a gala dinner laid on for nuclear industry chiefs and included campaigners from Stop Hinkley, Shut Down Sizewell, Nuclear Power People and CND. Hundreds of tourists stopped to watch the demonstration which drew attention to Prince Andrew's controversial role in promoting a nuclear revival.



Photo © Nuclear People Protest
Jim Duffy holding the banner.

The dinner was hosted at the palace by HRH Prince Andrew, the Duke of York in his role as the UK's Special Representative for International Trade and Investment. As such the top-level event is likely to be vaunted by the industry to glean support for new nuclear reactors at English and Welsh sites such as Hinkley point and Oldbury.

Jim Duffy, Stop Hinkley Coordinator said: "Prince Andrew has made a misjudgement in promoting nuclear power, now linking the Royal family with this controversial industry. Local communities are divided on the issue with many concerned about the long-term

environmental and health consequences of reviving this previously moribund technology. It's poor judgement for the Royals to side with the industry in this debate."

He added: "We were closely shepherded by obviously nervous police, led by a Chief Inspector, who were waiting for us in numbers. Their searches of several campaigners evidently showed that their fear of terrorism is very much alive, confiscating a pair of scissors needed for the banner. But then building terrorist targets in the shape of nuclear power stations must surely be a much bigger fear."



Photo © Nuclear People Protest

Justifying the unjustifiable

Stop Hinkley has supported calls from a group of academics for an inquiry into the issue of 'Justification' for new reactors such as Hinkley C.

Currently the government is conducting a public consultation on the balance between advantages of operating nuclear reactors and the disadvantages of linked health effects including those arising from accidents. But Energy Secretary Ed Milliband will decide the outcome despite his public support for nuclear power and his relationship with a top lawyer for E.ON who plan to build reactors in the UK. Stop Hinkley supports calls for a public inquiry on the issue to allow full scrutiny of the arguments.

Stop Hinkley will be contributing to the consultation and has amassed much research on the health effects of Hinkley Point discharges on local populations on the coastline near Hinkley and downwind in Burnham-on-Sea. And international evidence, particularly Russian, is also mounting following the Chernobyl accident in 1986. Routine discharges seem responsible for a doubling of childhood leukaemia near every nuclear power station in Germany, reported in a German Government sponsored study last year.

The KiKK study shows health effects within ten kilometres of Pressurised Water Reactors which are the same type as proposed at Hinkley although different models. The European Pressurised Reactor (EPR) will be the largest nuclear reactor in the world and French energy giant EdF proposes to build two such reactors at the coastal site, which is likely to add to the existing breast cancer and infant mortality which has been found in research Stop Hinkley has commissioned.

EdF has nominated Hinkley as a site under the Government's Site Selection Assessment process, despite Stop Hinkley's charge that the site is unsuitable.

Once the 'Justification' consultation has been decided by Ed Milliband, the

Infrastructure Planning Commission will conduct local planning inquiries under the Government's new streamlined planning laws. It will consider the health issue resolved and not allow it to be raised at the local Hinkley Inquiry. Ordinary local people who know nothing of this consultation will have no platform to have a say on their future health risk.

Jim Duffy, spokesman for Stop Hinkley said: "The Government should do this properly and fairly. There's a clear conflict of interest in Ed Milliband promoting nuclear power on one hand then signing off on this crucial issue which affects the health of Somerset (and for Oldbury - Gloucestershire) residents. Once he makes a judgement the health issue can no longer count in the deliberately narrow local planning inquiries. This is grossly unfair."

Supporters are urged to send this letter in response to the Justification consultation.
www.stophinkley.org/JustificationLetter.pdf
If you would prefer a Word version of the document so that you can add your own comments, please contact Val.
val@stophinkley.org

Thanks to Hugh Richards for some of the text.

Prof Busby wins atom-test cancer case

Professor Chris Busby has won an appeal court case against the MoD on behalf of an airman who flew through radioactive clouds during a nuclear bomb test in 1974. The airman later contracted Non-Hodgkins Disease which Chris Busby successfully argued was caused by inhaling radioactive particles.

Last year Prof Busby won another case where several plaintiffs were awarded a very large out-of-court settlement due to health effects of living near a US factory using radioactive materials.

New nuclear plants will produce far more radiation

Independent on Sunday, 8 February 2009

Industry documents reveal modern reactors more dangerous in an accident than the ones they replace

The new European Pressurised Reactor under construction at Flamanville, Normandy. New nuclear reactors planned for Britain will produce many times more radiation than previous reactors that could be rapidly released in an accident, *The Independent on Sunday* can reveal.

The revelations – based on information buried deep in documents produced by the nuclear industry itself – calls into doubt repeated assertions that the new European Pressurised Reactors (EPRs) will be safer than the old atomic power stations they replace. Instead they suggest that a reactor or nuclear waste accident, although less likely to happen, could have even more devastating consequences in future; one study suggests that nearly twice as many people could die.

The EPR is the most advanced of the new generation of nuclear reactors. One is already being built in Finland and one in Normandy, France. And last week President Nicolas Sarkozy announced plans to build another in Normandy, while India signed a draft accord to buy between two and six of them. The French company EDF has said that it plans to build four in Britain. Two are expected for each of two existing nuclear power station sites, Hinkley Point in Somerset and Sizewell in Suffolk.

Until now the reactors have been widely thought to be less dangerous than those already in operation, largely because they contain more safety features and produce less waste. But the information in the documents shows that they produce very much more of the radioactive isotopes

technically known as the "immediate release fraction" of the nuclear waste, because they could get out rapidly after an accident.

Data in one report, produced by EDF, suggests that they would produce four times as much radioactive bromine, rubidium, iodine and caesium as a present-day reactor. Information in another – by Posiva Oy, a nuclear waste company owned by two Finnish reactor builders – indicates that seven times as much iodine 129 is produced. And material in a third, by the Swiss National Co-operative for the Disposal of Radioactive Waste, implies that they will give rise to 11 times as much caesium 135 and 137.

This happens because the reactors are designed to burn their nuclear fuel almost twice as thoroughly as normal ones. Independent nuclear consultant, John Large, says that this "changes the physical characteristics of the fuel" and increases the immediate danger if the radiation should escape. After comparing the consequences of an accident at the new EPR being built at Flamanville, Normandy with one at an existing reactor nearby, he found that, in the worst case, it would increase the number of deaths from 16,000 to over 28,000.

Areva, the French firm that designs the reactor, says that the total radioactivity of the waste is only slightly increased, but Mr Large points out that it is the very much greater part that can easily escape that is of most concern. Areva adds that the reactors are specially designed to stop radioactivity escaping, but Mr Large argues no system can be foolproof. And in an accident during the transport of waste such protection would be irrelevant.

EDF said: "We are confident that new plants can be built and run safely."

Slash renewables target to protect nuclear, says EDF

Times 12th Mar 2009 (extracts)

The development of new nuclear plant could be prevented if the government allows too much wind power to be built, energy giants EDF and Eon have claimed.

EDF – the world’s largest nuclear operator with 58 plants – is calling on the government to lower its proposed renewable electricity target from 35% of supply in 2020 to just 20%.

The company says building the wind capacity needed to hit a 35% target is “not realistic or indeed desirable” due to the problem of intermittency.

EDF’s views were revealed last week when the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) published a summary of responses to its consultation on its renewables strategy.

EDF’s response says that at times of high wind, output from wind and nuclear could exceed demand. “As a result... plant will need to be curtailed i.e. instructed not to generate.” In reality, only nuclear will be curtailed, it says, as wind generation is subsidised so operators will pay to continue generating. The UK will also need wind farms to operate to meet its EU renewable energy target.

If nuclear plants have to be regularly turned off, this “damages the economics of these projects, meaning that less will be built.”

Thanks to all our supporters who renewed so promptly this year. Receipts are enclosed.

It is crucial that Stop Hinkley increases our membership at this time to show the strength of feeling against nuclear power, not only in the south west, but nationally.

Our leaflet can be downloaded at www.stophinkley.org/Leaflet.htm or contact Val to request copies to pass onto friends or interested groups.

More on EDF...

Investigators from the European Commission raided the offices of Electricite de France (EDF) yesterday seeking evidence of price-fixing in the French electricity market. Commission officials were joined by inspectors from the French Competition Authority in a raid on the utility’s headquarters in Paris. The Commission said that it suspected that EDF was engaged in activity that abused its dominant position in the market. “The suspected illegal conduct may include actions to raise prices on the French wholesale electricity market,” it said.

Bradwell

The operator of a nuclear power facility has been fined a quarter of a million pounds [plus costs] after allowing radioactive waste to leak from a holding tank over 14 years.

Environmental Health News
13th Mar 2009

Events

Stop Hinkley AGM
7.30pm Tuesday 19th May
West Bow House, Milton Place
off West Street, Bridgwater

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