



Press Release

23 August 2012

Follow US example: halt new nuclear until waste issue resolved – Stop Hinkley

The British government should follow the example of the United States and place a moratorium on licensing new nuclear power stations until crucial issues about radioactive waste have been resolved, the Stop Hinkley campaign said today.

Following a recent court case, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) has decided not to issue any new licenses for nuclear plants in the US until the full environmental consequences of the long term storage of nuclear waste have been investigated. (1) This has drawn a line under all ongoing proposals until the NRC has addressed these issues.

“The UK’s Office for Nuclear Regulation should follow the example of its American counterpart and call a halt to plans for new nuclear power stations until a long term solution to nuclear waste storage has been found,” said Stop Hinkley spokesman Crispin Aubrey. “This includes Hinkley Point C in Somerset.”

Proposals to build two French designed reactors at Hinkley Point are continuing despite the fact that there is no long term disposal site yet operating for the thousands of tonnes of highly radioactive waste they would generate over their lifetime. The government is currently consulting with communities and local authorities in Cumbria over a proposed site for an underground repository, but no agreement has yet been reached, no specific area chosen and no investigations made into the suitability of its geology.

Until any repository is up and running, highly radioactive waste will be stored at the Hinkley C site, potentially for more than 100 years.

The United States was originally going to bury its thousands of tonnes of nuclear waste inside Yucca Mountain in Nevada. But a series of technical and legal challenges have left the \$15 billion facility half-built and unused.

The US currently gets about 18% of its electricity from nuclear power and 14% from a range of renewable sources. No new nuclear power station has started construction

since 1977, however, whilst renewables are booming, especially wind, solar and geothermal power. The government's Energy Information Administration expects renewable sources to account for a third of new power generation capacity over the next three years. (2)

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Notes:

1. "Nuclear waste issues freeze permits for US power plants", CNN Money, 9 Aug 2012 <http://money.cnn.com/2012/08/09/news/economy/nuclear-plants-waste/index.htm>

2. "US renewable energy growth accelerates", Worldwatch Institute, 22 Aug 2012 <http://www.worldwatch.org/node/5855>