

Jean McSorley  
[Address removed]

17 March 2011

Dear Jean

## **West Cumbria MRWS Partnership**

Thank you for the letter dated 28<sup>th</sup> February 2011 from Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth and CORE.

We regret that you do not wish to meet to discuss the MRWS process, either at a broad level or to discuss the specific challenges that the West Cumbria MRWS Partnership faces in its work to advise on whether West Cumbria should participate in the Government's siting process for a geological disposal facility.

We believe that nuclear legacy waste needs to be managed in the long term regardless of whether new reactors are built. It is in this light that we have entered into discussion with Government, despite the fact that some members of the Partnership do have pro-new build policies. New build may or may not come to pass: either way the legacy needs dealing with safely and securely.

The Partnership does not feel it is appropriate to re-open or re-run the debate on which long-term management option is best. We are mindful of CoRWM's work, which was long running, thorough, and received wide-ranging support from experts and the public. We do acknowledge however that you did not support CoRWM's final recommendations to Government so you may not agree with this.

We agree with you regarding the need for continued safe interim storage of the waste. We also recognize that in the event of geological disposal not happening in West Cumbria, it is likely that the Government's option would be - at least in the short to medium term - to continue to store waste on the surface at Sellafield.

Community representatives are clear that the facility will only go ahead if they believe it is safe, and would benefit people in West Cumbria. A full right of withdrawal exists which gives community representatives the power to stop the process at various stages, right up until construction. We are not yet even part of the formal siting process.

The Partnership's Public and Stakeholder Engagement has offered an unprecedented opportunity for us to engage with organisations and residents of West Cumbria and beyond. Given the effort and resource being put into proactive and deliberative engagement at various levels and through various channels, we would welcome examples of how you believe the Partnership's engagement could realistically be more consultative. Whilst the detail of delivering the PSE activities may not always run smoothly, it is worth noting that the Partnership is far exceeding any requirement in either the MRWS White Paper or the statutory duty to involve communities in policy-making.

In order for us to better understand your concerns, we would also welcome your suggestions on how the process could be more fair, rigorous and open.

Our invitation remains open to meet to discuss issues around MRWS.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Elaine Woodburn', written in a cursive style.

Elaine Woodburn  
Chair of the West Cumbria MRWS Partnership

*Note: Letter also sent to Ruth Balogh (FoE) and Martin Forwood (CORE)*