



Committee on Radioactive Waste Management

Professor Robert Pickard

Chairman of CoRWM

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Dear Rhuari,

I am writing to confirm that no further evidence has been presented to cause CoRWM to change the view that was expressed in my letters to Councillor Elaine Woodburn and CALC [CoRWM doc 2902 (2011) and CoRWM doc 3023 (2012)].

There is evidence to show that the hydrogeology of West Cumbria is considerably more varied than suggested by Professors Smythe and Haszeldine, supporting the position that more investigations will be required during site identification and assessment, and consistent with the MRWS staged process.

With respect to geology, the area contains both crystalline rocks and mud rocks, both of which have been shown to be potentially suitable hosts for repositories abroad. We draw your attention to the letter of the 26th October 2011 sent by Dr Jeremy Dearlove to the Partnership in which he provided arguments that the geology and hydrogeochemistry of West Cumbria, as presently understood, does not warrant the conclusion that it is all unsuitable. In response to questions arising from their presentation to the MRWS Steering Group meeting of the 29th of March 2012, Chris McDonald (the Lead Inspector from the 1997 Nirex Inquiry) and Colin Knipe (the Technical Assessor and advisor on Geology and Hydrogeology for the 1997 Nirex Inquiry) confirmed (p.13) that they had never stated that “the whole of the geology of West Cumbria is unsuitable”, and indicated that it is not possible to rule out some areas at this stage.

It is clear that resolution of many of the issues raised by the respondents to PSE 3 require the levels of geological investigation that are planned for Stages 4-6 of the MRWS process. In our view it will not be possible to settle the arguments about the geology and hydrogeology of West Cumbria until further data have been obtained in the later Stages of the MRWS process.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Robert Pickard". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'R' and a distinct 'P'.

Robert Pickard
Chair of CoRWM