



Baroness Verma of Leicester
Parliamentary under Secretary of State
Department of Energy & Climate Change
3 Whitehall Place,
London
SW1A 2AW

Leader
Cumbria County Council
The Courts
Carlisle
CA3 8NA

Our Ref ETM/AW

1st October 2012

Dear Baroness Verma,

Thank you for a useful meeting on Tuesday. We agreed to write to you to set out the headline concerns and issues that have been raised with ourselves by our communities, to seek particular clarification with regards to the MRWS process, and to explain why we agree that a three month pause is the best course of action for all of us at this point in time.

First of all, there is the need to strengthen the right of withdrawal, to make it legally binding. We welcome DECC's commitment to looking at putting this on a firmer footing by the end of Stage 4, but we would like a better understanding of the detail and timescale behind such a commitment.

Secondly, whilst we welcome DECC's commitment to using the Partnership's 13 principles as a basis for negotiation on community benefits in Stage 4, we would wish to have further discussion to clarify the process of such a negotiation.

The third issue is that the suitability of the geology was of paramount concern to many residents of Cumbria due to the lack of definitive information presently available. But, as the process to secure this information will take a substantial period of time we feel that alternative radioactive waste management solutions should be considered in parallel with the MRWS programme, in case that process ultimately fails to secure a positive outcome.

These are some of the issues that we would like to explore with you, but clearly there are others such as the need for adequate engagement funding and Cumbria brand protection which remain unresolved and would be amongst the prerequisites for further participation in the MRWS process.

All of these issues relate to trust which, as you know, is one of the over-arching themes flagged up in the final report of the MRWS Partnership. The economic future of West Cumbria is inextricably linked to the future of the nuclear industry, so the community needs to be confident that the government's strategy for that industry takes account of the needs of West Cumbria as well as the national interest.

It is our belief that a pause in the process now, in accordance with your predecessor's letter of 7th November 2011, will enable us to work with you on the above issues, and will strengthen the level of trust we have in each other, and the level of trust the wider Cumbrian community has in us all.

Yours Sincerely



Eddie Martin
Cumbria County Council



Elaine Woodburn
Copeland Borough Council



Alan Smith
Allerdale Borough Council