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Dear Robert,

Liaison Meetings with NuLeAF

I write to thank you and colleagues for meeting with us on Monday 13 November, to highlight and develop some key points that were made at the meeting, and to suggest a possible approach to continued liaison over the coming months.

As stated at the meeting, NuLeAF wishes to respond positively to the Secretary of State's invitation to engage in discussions about development of the MRWS process and, in particular, the implementation framework. We particularly welcome the commitment to explore the way in which the concepts of willingness to participate, partnership and support packages can be built into the Government's approach.

Key Points Made at the Meeting on 13 November

In terms of initial views on the Government's response to CoRWM's recommendations, the points made at the meeting included the following:

1 NDA as implementing organisation

There is concern about the pace and process of decision making about arrangements for developing the NDA's role as implementing organisation. As stated in NuLeAF's attached policy statement on 'Institutional Arrangements for Implementation' (October 06), there are disadvantages associated with the NDA model and, to ensure stakeholder confidence, there will be a need for Government to show how these disadvantages can be overcome, reduced or managed.

In particular, there will be a need to ensure that the NDA's drive to accelerate the decommissioning and

clean-up of nuclear sites does not put undue pressure on the timetable for repository siting. To increase the prospect for success, we consider that the siting process must allow sufficient time for potential host communities to participate effectively and for their concerns to be properly addressed. A second issue is that careful thought will need to be given to how to develop the NDA's capacity to work effectively in genuine partnership with potential host communities. A third will be to ensure that the NDA's contractor model enables an appropriate level of NDA involvement in decisions about repository design as site investigations and development proceeds.

2 Reconstituted CoRWM

It will be important for developing stakeholder confidence that: (a) the reconstituted committee is able to deliver timely advice and recommendations on any aspect of the implementation programme; (b) its advice and recommendations are given formal consideration by the relevant bodies; and (c) responses from these bodies are published.

To this end, it might be appropriate to make an addition to the Committee's terms of reference along the lines of: "The Committee's advice and recommendations will be central to Government's determination to maintain general public, and local community, confidence in the delivery of a geological disposal facility. Government will expect all parties subject to CoRWM's advice and recommendations to publish responses within a jointly agreed timeframe."

3 Process for inviting participation

Based on CoRWM's recommendations, there is an expectation that an initial screening of the UK will be undertaken so that invitations to participate in the siting process are only issued to those local authorities in areas that are potentially suitable for repository development. This approach attracts support because it would enable local authorities in areas, for example, with little prospect of having potentially suitable geologies, to avoid unnecessary and difficult discussions about whether to participate in the siting process.

4 Developing appropriate forms of partnership with participating communities

In essence, the purpose of a local partnership would be to ensure that all the concerns of participating communities are properly addressed. Its role would be to scrutinise, research, consult, and negotiate as appropriate, so that decisions within the siting process are fully informed and secure the confidence of local stakeholders. In developing appropriate models of partnership, there is no need to start from a blank sheet because there is considerable UK and international experience, as recently reviewed in the attached NuLeAF briefing ('Proposals for Siting Partnerships', October 06). This briefing highlights the need to build on current learning about partnership working, including issues associated with development of a shared vision, representation, skills development, resourcing and timescales for effective working.

5 Resourcing of local authority involvement

CoRWM's proposals for Involvement Packages to meet the financial costs of participation in the siting process are strongly supported. In addition, we drew attention to the need to address issues of resourcing local authority involvement in the steps prior to participation in the siting process, including engagement in developing the implementation framework, and responding to invitations to participate in the siting process.

Finally, as explained at the meeting, the NuLeAF Steering Group meets on 11 December and it may wish to express views on additional points associated with the Government's response to CoRWM.

Proposed Approach to Continued Liaison

We very much welcome the offer of continued liaison meetings that will enable NuLeAF to contribute to the development of the implementation framework and address issues of concern.

We would like to suggest that liaison meetings take place on a monthly basis in the period Dec-April, with a two part agenda. The first part could enable a review of progress, for example, on developing the draft implementation framework and outline repository plan, on absorption of Nirex into the NDA, and on arrangements for wider stakeholder engagement. The second part of the agenda could enable us to present and discuss NuLeAF inputs on a topic-by-topic basis.

In terms of topics for the second part of the agendas, our preliminary suggestions are:

- January: proposals for siting partnerships
- February: proposals for initial steps in the siting process (screening and invites to participate)
- March: proposals for participation and benefits packages
- April: rights of withdrawal and integration with the planning process.

Our intention would be to make a presentation on each issue, thereby providing a basis for discussion. Each presentation would be accompanied by a discussion paper that would (a) seek to cover the range of issues that you have indicated require further discussion and (b) incorporate views canvassed from NuLeAF member authorities.

We think there would be value in inviting the NDA to participate in these liaison meetings.

We hope that this proposal provides the basis for continued liaison and look forward to agreeing appropriate arrangements.

Yours sincerely,

Fred Barker

Executive Director, NuLeAF