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## UK : Assembly to debate 'nuclear mud' petition as campaigners call for more testing

### Assembly to debate 'nuclear mud' petition as campaigners call for more testing

Anti-nuclear campaigners have raised new questions about what they fear is 'radioactive mud' to be dumped near Cardiff Bay, as the Assembly prepares to debate a petition against the plans.

Over 7,000 signed a petition calling for a suspension of a license to dump the mud so that a full Environmental Impact Assessment can be carried out under the auspices of Natural Resources Wales.

109,000 also signed a [Greenpeace petition](#) expressing concerns that the mud could be toxic and requesting that EDF respond.

Campaigners are calling on Lesley Griffiths, the Environment Minister responsible for Energy and Planning, to call in the application to dump the mud.

They claim that the Welsh Government had already decided to agree to the request by EDF Energy, the company building a new nuclear power station at Hinkley Point, to dump 30,000 tonnes mud before it was properly tested.

According to the campaigners, the government had already come to the opinion that the "disposal" of the radioactive mud did not require any form of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) before handing the decision over to the supposedly independent Natural Resources Wales (NRW).

Marine pollution consultant Tim Deere-Jones claims that NRW has confirmed that the Welsh Assembly Government had already come to the opinion that the "disposal" did not require any form of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) by the time the license application was passed on to them.

“The Welsh Assembly Government should apply a simple rule of European Law which is there to protect us,” Tim Deere-Jones said.

“It is the precautionary principle, that requires that before a decision about possible health risks in our environment is made, a full evaluation of the evidence must be undertaken to ensure that any plans are safe and in this case that cannot be done until further thorough research has been carried out.”

NRW told the Petitions Committee that an EIA had been conducted on the development of the Hinkley Point C site overall, but not specifically on the dredging proposal.

It explained that this decision was taken by the Welsh Government’s Marine Consents Unit, which was responsible for administering the marine licensing system at the time the application was received.

### **‘Inadequate’**

EDF has said that the mud poses no risk to human health or the environment. Independent testing has been carried out by The Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (CEFAS) which, they say, shows that the sediment is not classed as radioactive under UK law.

“The original testing and radiological impacts were assessed using internationally accepted best practice and the original findings have been confirmed by the latest analysis,” and EDF spokesman said.

However, Tim Deere-Jones expressed concerns that the evidence supplied by EDF in favour of their application was too superficial.

EDF say that the radioactive dumping issue had been covered by the Hinkley Environmental Statement amongst the thousands of pages in EDF’s documented submissions on the Hinkley C proposal, he says.

However, Tim Deere-Jones said that he could only find five pages covering issues related to the disposal of the dredging of the mud sediments.

None of them, he says, are about a specific Environmental Investigation or Assessment of the Cardiff Grounds site in the Hinkley Environmental Statement.

He also says that only three of the 50 plus radio-nuclides known to be in that mud have been identified because EdF had only taken samples near the surface.

“You do not need to be a scientist to realise that the Welsh Assembly is being invited to make decisions based on biased and inadequate research,” he said.