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EUROPEAN UNION TO REVIEW RADLEY LAKES PLANNING APPLICATION

Infuriated by the uncaring and irresponsible attitude of both local and national governments towards the environment, one of the Save Radley Lakes campaigners, Treasurer Lynda Pasquire, decided to appeal to the European Parliament about the way regulations on wildlife protection are being ignored in the UK.

Writing in January 2007, following the decision by Oxfordshire County Council to grant permission to RWE npower, Mrs Pasquire made the following petition:

1. To make the British Government endorse and enforce the Environmental and Wildlife Protection Acts which have been passed by the EU
2. To make RWE npower cease from their destruction of the Radley Lakes with their plans.
3. To revisit the legislation classifying Fuel Ash and to allow the ash to be classified as a by-product when it is being transported off site for recycling, instead of Waste which means it has to have all sorts of Licence Applications and Fees and Approvals.

On receipt of the petition, the European Union Committee on Petitions has written to confirm that enquiries have been made with the result that Mrs Pasquire's petition is admissible in accordance with the Rules of Procedure of the European Parliament.

Following the initial examination of the facts, the Committee has decided to ask the European Commission to conduct a preliminary investigation of the various aspects of the problem and will continue its examination as soon as it is in receipt of the necessary information.

Basil Crowley, Chairman of Save Radley Lakes said "We said we would take the fight all the way to Europe. This is just one route which has been taken amongst others which we are considering."

Caroline Lucas, Euro MP said "any pressure that the Commission can bring to bear on the UK Government or on RWE npower to prevent Thrupp Lake and the local area being blighted in this way would be very welcome"

For further information contact: Marjorie White on 01235 216428 or 01235 530174, or visit www.saveradleylakes.org.uk or the news pages at www.radleyvillage.org.uk .

Notes for Editors

The full text of the petition

The petition to the EU was sent in January 2007 and says:

“I wish to petition the European Parliament about the way in which the British Government and subsequently, Local Government, is ignoring regulations on the protection of wildlife.

A situation exists in Great Britain where the habitat of a species is not protected but the species is. For instance, a Kingfisher is protected, but not the water from which it obtains its food sources. An otter is protected, but unless the otter is present, breeding, the area on which it ranges is not protected.

A bat roost is protected but not the source of the bat's food.

In my village there is a lake which was dug over fifty years ago as a gravel pit, but has subsequently matured into a beautiful lake with a wide variety of species living in the lake and on the margins.

RWE npower, a German Company that owns Didcot Power Station, has bought the lake and the local Authority, Oxfordshire County Council, have granted them permission, even though the permission breaches several guidelines. Oxfordshire County Council sent the planning Application to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, Miss Ruth Kelly, but her Department returned it to Oxford to deal with as they saw fit.

3000 people objected to the proposal, 11,500 people petitioned RWE npower, a copy of which was handed in to Oxfordshire County Council. This was to no avail. npower said they had need to dispose of the ash which their ageing power station produces, which is not suitable for recycling because the ash contains too much carbon (the coal is burnt at a lower temperature to reduce the NOX emissions which fall across N. Europe)

A local Campaign Group, of which I am a member, found a Company in Germany who were able to recycle the ash, a Company in the UK and a Company in Australia, but RWE npower are not interested in entering into these discussions.

The Environment Agency has decreed that waste ash is a “Non Hazardous Waste” but insist on it being contained in bunded lagoons which are an eyesore and attract vandals and other undesirable activity. To recycle the ash requires Waste Management Licences, Waste Transportation Licences and other permissions, so it is not easy to take the product off site to recycle it.

npower say they have no alternative, but there is a huge recently dug gravel pit which has space but it belongs to another Company and because of the premium paid for Waste to Landfill, npower prefer to use an area that they have purchased rather than use a site which is on their doorstep.

My petition to the European Parliament is threefold.

1. To make the British Government endorse and enforce the Environmental and Wildlife Protection Acts which have been passed by the EU
2. To make RWE npower cease from their destruction of the Radley Lakes with their plans.
3. To revisit the legislation classifying Fuel Ash and to allow the ash to be classified as a by-product when it is being transported off site for recycling, instead of Waste which means it has to have all sorts of Licence Applications and Fees and Approvals.”