



**SAVE  
RADLEY LAKES**

[www.saveradleylakes.org.uk](http://www.saveradleylakes.org.uk)

email: [info@saveradleylakes.org.uk](mailto:info@saveradleylakes.org.uk)

## **Press Release 23 April 2007**

### **RWE NPOWER – THEY TOOK OUR LEGAL RIGHT TO PROTEST, NOW THEY ARE ATTACKING OUR DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS TOO**

The heavy hand of RWE npower hangs over Downing Street.

RWE npower, who have recently been criticised for their heavy-handed suppression of peaceful protest at Thrupp Lake in Oxfordshire, have extended the same heavy hand towards Downing Street, and a fledgling democratic process.

Save Radley Lakes has been told, by the manager of Didcot A Power Station, to alter the wording on a Downing Street website e-petition, set up by a local supporter of the campaign, despite the petition being approved by the Number 10 web team and already signed by over 1100 sympathisers.

The petition objects to the filling of Thrupp Lake with ‘toxic ash slurry’, a description npower refutes.

A Save Radley Lakes spokesman said “Whilst we did not draft the petition, we believe that the description of the slurry as “toxic” is altogether defensible, both technically and by what people commonly mean by the term.”

“The dumping of the ash slurry will destroy a beautiful Oxfordshire Lake and kill everything in it. In the light of this, to call it ‘toxic’ is understandable and even perhaps understatement. But the petition is not about the ash, it is about what is being done with it, why and by whom. It is about the wilful destruction of the British countryside by commercially driven entities that seem incapable of understanding the wrongness of their actions.”

According to the Downing Street website “the purpose of the e-petition service is to enable as many people as possible to make their views known”. Save Radley Lakes supporters have been doing just that and have no intention of altering the petition wording. It remains to be seen whether RWE npower will carry out their threat and try to impose their will on those at Number 10 behind the scenes. If they do, it will provide an interesting test of the democratic principles of government, and whether the will of the people, the ordinary people who just wish to retain some beautiful countryside around them, comes before the interests of big commercial corporations.

**For further information** contact: Marjorie White on 01235 216428 or 01235 530174, or visit [www.saveradleylakes.org.uk](http://www.saveradleylakes.org.uk) or the news pages at [www.radleyvillage.org.uk](http://www.radleyvillage.org.uk) .

## **Notes for Editors**

The e-petition website address is: <http://petitions.pm.gov.uk/SaveRadleyLakes/>

The complete text of the e-petition reads:

“We the undersigned petition the Prime Minister to Stop foreign-owned utility companies from ruining the British countryside.

German RWE Npower plans to turn picturesque Radley Lakes in Oxfordshire into a fenced-off wasteland by replacing the water in this local beauty spot with toxic ash slurry from nearby Didcot Power Station. If this goes ahead unchecked, it will set a dangerous precedent for further destruction of local environments.”

PFA is officially classified, in the UK, as non-hazardous waste.

But PFA is sent to Radley is mixed with water and pumped as a slurry. A small proportion of the PFA is soluble in water, and this is sufficient to pollute the water used to make the slurry. The untreated leachate typically has a high pH, which is dangerous to fish, and it is contaminated with a wide range of “dangerous substances” many at levels likely to be well in excess of environmental quality standards as set down in the Water Regulations. The degree of toxicity to humans may be debatable, but the undiluted leachate is undoubtedly toxic to a wide range of wildlife. If PFA slurry were inert and harmless, there would presumably be no need for the requirement that it must be deposited in clay-lined lagoons to prevent leaching into aquifers.

When PFA is stored above ground in semi-dry mounds, it would take hundreds, if not thousands, of years to expose the PFA to the same amount of water through natural rainfall. Pollution from water leaching from such a mound is therefore unlikely to pose a significant problem.