SAVE RADLEY LAKES

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THRUPP LAKE (RADLEY) ASH DISPOSAL AND SUTTON COURTENAY LANDFILL SITE

Summary

The Sutton Courtenay Landfill Site, just north of Didcot Power Station, has the capacity to serve as an alternative to Thrupp Lake for the disposal of PFA.

PFA is already disposed of at Sutton Courtenay, where it is used for capping on municipal waste.

It has recently been discovered that there is 4.6M cubic metres more landfill capacity at Sutton Courtenay than previously thought. This generates a demand for an extra 390,000 tonnes of PFA to use as capping. This is not far short of the 500,000 tonnes that RWE npower says must be sent to Radley.

Repeated statements, to the effect that only Radley can provide a 24/7 disposal facility, are untrue. 24/7 operation can be achieved by depositing ash onto the on-site stockpile and moving it (e.g. to SCLS) later.

The need of the operators of Sutton Courtenay (WRG Ltd) for PFA is now as great as, or greater than, that of RWE npower for PFA disposal space. The two companies should work together to find a mutually acceptable solution which will meets their needs and which will also protect the environment.

RWE npower is proposing to dump 500,000 tonnes of PFA from Didcot Power Station in Thrupp Lake at Radley**.** The Lake is part of a County Wildlife Site. RWE npower argues that there is no alternative way of disposing of this ash.

Sutton Courtenay Landfill Site (SCLS) is a very large municipal waste disposal facility (operated by WRG Ltd) situated just to the north of Didcot Power Station.

PFA from Didcot is used at SCLS for engineering purposes, capping and daily cover of deposits of municipal waste. In recent years, around 50,000 tonnes per annum (TPA) of Didcot PFA has been sent to SCLS. In 2006, this rose to about 100,000 tonnes. The additional 50,000 tonnes seems likely to be PFA which would have been sent to Radley, had there not been various delays to that scheme.

It has recently been discovered that the amount of 'void' (landfill space) at SCLS had been underestimated by some 4.6M cubic metres. There is now around 8M cubic metres of void remaining at Sutton Courtenay. The existing planning permission for landfilling at SCLS expires at the end of 2012. In December 2006, WRG Ltd applied

to Oxfordshire County Council to extend the planning permission until the end of 2021. This is, quite simply, because there is so much space at SCLS that it cannot be filled up quickly enough.

Save Radley Lakes (SRL) argues that this additional space at SCLS (the additional space is some *nine times* larger than the volume of Thrupp Lake) could and should provide an alternative solution for the disposal of Didcot PFA which would otherwise have to be sent to Thrupp Lake.

RWE npower's response has been that SCLS is not suitable because it does not provide a '24/7' disposal capability. This is untrue. Neil Richardson confirmed to Oxfordshire County Council (6 July 2006) that "it is in principle possible to deposit conditioned ash from the ash silo to the on-site stockpile 24 hours a day". The ash can then be taken from the stockpile and moved elsewhere at a later time. We therefore consider the repeated statements to the effect that only Radley can offer a '24/7' disposal capability to be untrue.

It is also said that it would take 1 ½ years to create a new cell for PFA at Sutton Courtenay. The source and basis of this assertion is not clear. It is not known whether it might be possible to create some space for PFA much more quickly than that. Even if this statement is true, it raises two points. First, if RWE npower had started planning for such an alternative when the level of opposition at Radley first became clear (in August 2005), the cell could be nearly ready by now. Second, the average amount of ash due to be disposed of at Radley is about 55,000 TPA. It might only be necessary to store temporarily about 82,500 tonnes of PFA (55,000 TPA x 1 ½ years) while a new cell was built. For comparison, the on-site stockpile at Didcot contained 315,000 tonnes at the start of 2006.

The real reason for RWE npower's reluctance to use Sutton Courtenay may lie in a statement by Neil Richardson (6 July) to Oxfordshire County Council: that the overall cost to Didcot Power Station of disposal at SCLS "would be about twice the cost if disposal in [Thrupp Lake] on a per tonne basis".

However, it is not clear that RWE npower has considered the implications for PFA disposal of the newly discovered void at SCLS. The additional 4.6M cubic metres of municipal waste to be deposited at SCLS will require something like an additional 390,000 tonnes of PFA for capping. <u>This is a previously unidentified need.</u> Furthermore, some 300,000 tonnes of this need will fall after 2015, the date by which Didcot Power Station is due to have closed and stopped producing PFA. If PFA is not available, other material will have to be brought in by road. There is a strong case for stockpiling PFA at or near Sutton Courtenay, so that it can be used for capping later. This would both avoid the need to fill Thrupp Lake and reduce future need for lorry transport.

In short, WRG's need for PFA, given the increased landfill void, may now be as great, or even greater, than RWE npower's need for disposal space. The contract between WRG and RWE npower for disposal of PFA at SCLS is due to be renegotiated shortly. The two companies should work together to find a solution which both meets their respective needs and protects the environment.

Save Radley Lakes

January 2007