

UK nuclear waste should be buried in underground bunkers – committee UPDATE

It all depends what you mean by 'deep' ... it sounds like the same conclusion.

AFX

July 31, 2006

Britain's existing 470,000 cubic metres of nuclear waste should be buried in deep underground bunkers, a government-appointed committee said.

However, the Committee on Radioactive Waste Management (CORWM) warned that a 'robust programme' of interim safety measures must be put in place in the 'decades' it will take to find and approve the location of repositories. This included 'reviewing and ensuring security, particularly against terrorist attacks', the committee said. CORWM's final report said 'geological disposal' was the 'best available approach for the long-term management of all the material categorised as waste.'

The amount of waste is calculated on existing stocks and projections from what will be taken out of nuclear plants as they are decommissioned in the next 20 years. CORWM said it did not have a view on building new nuclear power plants, but said the interim measures needed to factor in additional waste from any that are constructed.

The government earlier this month said it was now in favour of new nuclear build to meet concerns over security of energy supply and cutting greenhouse gas emissions. CORWM was set up by the government in 2003 to try to find a solution to the waste storage problem -- something the industry has been unable to do.

Britain's nuclear waste is stored in surface tanks around the UK.

Committee chairman Gordon MacKerron said the 'UK has been creating radioactive waste for 50 years without any clear idea of what to do with it'. 'We are confident that our recommendations provide the way forward. It will, however, take a long time to put in place all the component parts so now its time to get on with the job,' he said.

Environmental campaign group Friends of the Earth (FoE) said it remained opposed to deep geological disposal 'as it has yet to be shown that leaking waste will not contaminate the environment'. 'The governments failure to find a long-term solution to Britains nuclear waste problem remains an important reason not to create more waste by building more nuclear reactors,' FoE campaign [paid activist](#) Roger Higman said. 'This is little more of a solution to the problem of nuclear waste than we've had for the last 30 years,' he added. 'There is no site and it could be 100 years before any facility is approved and built even if a safe site could be found. Urgent action therefore is needed to ensure Britains waste mountain is stored safely in the interim while the longer-term issues are investigated.'