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11th March 2013

Dear Sir

RE: Fukushima Anniversary & new development of nuclear power station at Oldbury

On this day in 2011, the world saw just how ineffective health and safety regulations were in confronting a release of deadly radioactivity.

Ironically, nuclear power was meant to save us from climate change. But it was flooding at Fukushima which caused the cascading disaster which followed. And more flooding is exactly the kind of extreme weather event climate change will bring about.

And yet Hitachi-Horizon want to build a new nuclear power station in an area already only just above sea level, an area that Gloucestershire County Council assesses has a 'High Risk' of flooding. <sup>i</sup>

You want to build it on the banks of a river which already has the second highest tidal range in the world. A site already officially identified by the Government's own watchdog, as liable to erosion and inundation. <sup>ii</sup>

You want to build in an area that historically has been subject to severe flooding, including a Tsunami-like event, in 1607. <sup>iii</sup>

During flooding in 2007 the risk to the River Severn was rated by the Environment Agency as 'Severe'. Flood water penetrated and knocked out the Walham and Castlemead substations close to the Severn at Gloucester, as well as the Mythe Water Treatment works. Like Oldbury, the Gloucester sites are just above sea level. During that flood 320% of the average annual rainfall fell in that short period and all substations had to be shut down. These events are going to

become more likely, more frequent and of greater intensity. How much will Oldbury be able to withstand? Will we be host to the next Fukushima?

You are obliged to consider a 1 in 100,000 year worst-case scenario. But both Fukushima and Chernobyl have occurred within just a 30-year period. And both measured the highest number on the International Nuclear Event Scale (INES).

The chances of winning the national lottery are 1 in 13,983,816.<sup>iv</sup> Considerably less than your 1 in 100,000, and yet almost every week someone wins. Of course, there are no winners in a catastrophic nuclear accident like Fukushima.

While estimates vary, events at Fukushima are likely to have killed hundreds: though some sources predict thousands might ultimately die through radiation-related cancers.

Then there was the emergency evacuation and displacement of some 140,000 people from their homes within a 30km radius of the station at Fukushima. Two years on, some of these families are still unable to return.

Recently representatives of Hitachi-Horizon have written to the local press stating that “safety is, and will always be, our first concern”; but Do you not think the operators of the Fukushima plant the day before that accident would have said exactly the same thing?

On the issue of flooding alone it makes no sense to build a new nuclear power station at Oldbury.

But there is also a host of other reasons. The environmental impact; the lack of a long term safe solution for waste management and storage; the years of incidents and accidents; and the leukaemia clusters linked to low-level radiation.

Together the reasons are compelling, and that is why we are united in our STAND Against Oldbury.

In February this year, following the tragic events at Fukushima 2 years ago, the World Health Organisation issued a report.<sup>v</sup> It stated that there is a 70% greater chance of women in Japan who lived near Fukushima developing thyroid cancer compared to those not near the stricken plant.

This is a day for reflection.

What better way to reflect than to really take stock of the proposed build at Oldbury and reconsider the site. A 'high risk' site widely acknowledged as liable to flooding.

Yours sincerely,

Supporters of 'STAND Against Oldbury'

<sup>i</sup> Item SW/4, pg. 19 Gloucestershire Local Resilience Forum 'Community Risk Register' version 2.6 October 2012.

<sup>ii</sup> Impact of Rising Sea Levels on Coastal Sites with Radioactive Waste Stores 2005 NIREX report for CoRWM.

<sup>iii</sup> Haslett, Simon; Bryant, Edward (2004). "The AD 1607 Coastal Flood in the Bristol Channel and Severn Estuary: Historical Records from Devon and Cornwall (UK)". *Archaeology in the Severn Estuary* (15): 81–89. [ISSN 1354-7089](#)

<sup>iv</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lottery\\_mathematics](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lottery_mathematics)

<sup>v</sup> [http://www.who.int/mediacentre/news/releases/2013/fukushima\\_report\\_20130228/en/index.html](http://www.who.int/mediacentre/news/releases/2013/fukushima_report_20130228/en/index.html)