



2002

# The United Kingdom's radioactive waste management program

## Low-level radioactive waste

The United Kingdom disposes of low-level radioactive waste at a near-surface facility at Drigg in Cumbria. The British Nuclear Fuels (BNFL)-owned site has been in operation for more than 40 years.

## Spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste

Spent nuclear fuel is stored in pools at British reactor sites. Reprocessing facilities store their own high-level radioactive waste.

## Spent nuclear fuel reprocessing

The United Kingdom reprocesses its own spent nuclear fuel and also contracts to reprocess foreign spent nuclear fuel. Reprocessing facilities provide storage for reprocessed wastes for 50 years. High-level radioactive waste from reprocessing is vitrified, or converted into solid form, at a specially designed storage facility at Sellafield.

## Transporting radioactive waste

Shielded casks of various types are used in transporting spent nuclear fuel. Radioactive materials are shipped domestically by truck and rail.

## Deep geologic disposal plans

The United Kingdom's government is undertaking a review of its national policy on radioactive waste management. This involves taking a public consensus approach to the country's policies. As of 1999, it was agreed that the United Kingdom would store its radioactive wastes underground, and that research and development should continue, enhanced by cooperation with other nations. A phased approach to geological disposal is being considered. The date for repository construction is to be decided.

2001

2000

1998



U.S. Department of Energy  
Office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management

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