

Permit for East Northants landfill to accept low level radioactive waste

The Environment Agency has granted Augean South Ltd a permit to dispose of low level radioactive waste at East Northants Resource Management Facility, near Peterborough.

The decision follows a rigorous assessment of the company's application, extensive consultation with the local community and approval from the European Commission.

The permit allows Augean to treat and landfill waste such as building rubble and soil from dismantled nuclear sites. The permit also puts restrictions on the amount of waste the site accepts to ensure levels remain well below natural background levels.

The company also needed planning permission, which was granted earlier today by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government.

Environment Agency Environment Manager Simon Mitchell said: "It is the Environment Agency's job to ensure that any waste that is sent to landfill is disposed of in a way which protects people and the environment."

"I want to assure the local community that we have approved this permit because we are satisfied that our high environmental standards have been met. We will ensure that Augean carries out regular checks and monitoring to confirm that the terms of their permit are being adhered to and the results will be published on our public register."

The decision to send very low level waste to landfill puts into practice Government policy introduced in 2007 to provide a more flexible framework for the disposal of certain categories of waste.

The East Northants landfill site has been designed and engineered to meet stringent standards and is closely monitored by the Environment Agency to ensure it complies with the conditions of its operating permits.

Further information on the Environment Agency's role in managing nuclear waste can be found: <http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/business/sectors/37649.aspx>

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Notes for editors

During its operational life the waste disposed of at ENRMF would give a dose of radiation less than the average for anyone living in the UK, especially people living in Cornwall where the granite rock increases the radiation in the area.

In March 2007, the former Government issued its Policy for the Long Term Management of Solid Low Level Radioactive Waste in the United Kingdom. This provided the framework to give permission for the disposal of certain categories of low level radioactive waste at landfill as long as it is safe and environmentally acceptable.

The Environment Agency is the leading organisation for protecting and improving the environment in England and Wales. We are responsible for making sure that air, land and water are looked after by today's society, so that tomorrow's generations inherit a cleaner, healthier world.