



Office for Nuclear Regulation

13 January 2022

Redgrave Court
Merton Road
Bootle
Merseyside
L20 7HS

richard.outram@manchester.gov.uk

Contact@onr.gov.uk

Unique ref: 2022/1104

Dear Councillor Blackburn

HPGE202112069 – Taishan Unit 1

Thank you for your letter, dated 13 December 2021, outlining the NFLA's concerns regarding Taishan Unit 1 fuel operating experience and potential implications for the reactors under construction at Hinkley Point C (HPC). I am aware that your letter addresses both the Government and the Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR) and understand that you have received a reply from the Rt Hon Greg Hands MP.

I am happy to update you on ONR's latest regulatory position which I hope will offer reassurance.

The last update provided to us by the Chinese regulator was in November 2021, at that time Taishan Unit 1 remained shut-down with inspection of the fuel and the analysis of the emerging findings ongoing. We cannot speculate on the impact of the fuel issues for the reactors at HPC until sufficient evidence is gathered and analysed, and the root causes identified and shared with us. We remain in contact with Chinese and French regulators and will engage with them further as soon as the investigation is sufficiently progressed to provide meaningful information on the fuel issues.

As the nuclear safety regulator, we will ensure that any learning that emerges from Taishan Unit 1 is properly considered and addressed by the licensee of HPC, including the need for any modifications where this is shown to be necessary.

As with all nuclear sites in the UK, we will require a robust safety case to be produced that demonstrates the continued safety of the reactors at HPC and we will not permit operation of the reactors unless we are satisfied that it will be done safely. Indeed, my inspectors will only allow fuel to be delivered to site and loaded into the reactor if it is demonstrated to their satisfaction that the fuel issues and emerging learning from Taishan have been adequately understood and addressed.

We will ensure that all our stakeholders are kept informed on this issue via our regular stakeholder updates and meetings.

I hope that this response is helpful but please contact us via Contact@onr.gov.uk should you require any further information.

Yours sincerely

Mark Foy
Chief Executive and Chief Nuclear Inspector



**Department for
Business, Energy
& Industrial Strategy**

Councillor David Blackburn,
Chair, Nuclear Free Local Authorities,
C/o NFLA Secretariat,
Level 3, Town Hall Extension,
Manchester, M60 3NY

The Rt Hon Greg Hands MP
Minister of State for Energy, Clean Growth
and Climate Change

**Department for Business, Energy &
Industrial Strategy**
1 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0ET

T +44 (0) 20 7215 5000
E enquiries@beis.gov.uk
W www.gov.uk

Our ref: MCB2021/29930

14 January 2022

Dear David,

Thank you for your letter dated 13 December, regarding the NFLA's concerns around the European Pressurised Reactor (EPR) design related to the fuel issue at Taishan Nuclear Power Plant. I am aware that your letter addresses both the Government and the Office for Nuclear Regulation (the ONR). This is the perspective of the Government on the issues you have raised. I am copying this response to Mark Foy at the ONR.

Firstly, I would like to assure you that nuclear safety is a top priority for the Government and our arrangements are kept under review. The UK has a well-respected regulatory system which reflects international best practice. All operators are answerable to an independent regulator, the ONR. If the ONR judged that a nuclear installation was not safe it would not allow it to be built or to operate.

Site licence holders are required by law to produce safety cases for the different phases in the lifecycle of nuclear facilities including their design, construction, commissioning, operation and decommissioning. The safety cases undergo detailed scrutiny by the ONR's expert inspectors and must be reviewed on a periodic basis, or when any major changes occur. Further information is available in the safety cases pages of the ONR's website.

The Government understands that investigations are still ongoing at Taishan into the root cause of the failed fuel issue. The ONR is actively engaged with other international regulators in China and France and is working with relevant teams to ensure there continues to be a robust safety case before new or continued approval of any build and operation of EPR reactor technology in the UK.

I would like to thank you for raising these important issues. I hope you and the NFLA will find this reply helpful.

Yours ever,

THE RT HON GREG HANDS MP
Minister of State for Energy, Clean Growth and Climate Change