

## **2.9 Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire of the Minister for Transport and Technical Services regarding composting in close proximity to the fuel storage containers and facilities at La Collette:**

Given the recent lessons of the Buncefield Oil Fires, has a review been undertaken with the emergency services on the practice of composting in close proximity to the fuel storage containers and facilities at La Collette?

### **Deputy G.W.J. de Faye (The Minister for Transport and Technical Services):**

Sir, I think it is first important to understand that the Buncefield Oil Storage Depot is of a massive order of magnitude and difference. It is much vaster than the oil storage facilities that we have in St. Helier down at La Collette. Despite the reports, it is difficult at this stage to see what the lessons to be learned from Buncefield precisely are. It appears that the containment system broke down, causing a form of leak and it is still to be determined which of a number of possible sources of ignition were the cause of the fire. There is no particular review being undertaken in respect of the relationship between the oil storage facility at La Collette and the composting site, other than the reviews that are already in process as a matter of standard procedure and anything that the Emergency Planning Officer may decide to do when the full meaning of what happened at Buncefield has become clear. However, I would like to assure the Deputy and Members, as well as the public, that although heat is produced in the process of composting, it is not of anywhere near sufficient heat to cause either combustion or ignition. Indeed, the composting process works largely by the composting rows being kept damp. As such, there is no danger either of the composting causing a fire or, likewise, fire having any serious effect on the composting operation.

### **2.9.1 Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:**

I am pleased with some of the answer, in effect, that the Chief Minister has given me this morning and also the fact that the Minister answering this question has outlined that there seems to be a joint approach to this. May I just put it to the Minister that it might be of consideration to his department and himself that the evidence from the Buncefield oil fires has determined that the leaking fuel travelled across the topography of the land until it met the ignition point, which is yet to be determined. Because of the fact that the fuel tanks at La Collette could follow a topographical journey towards an ignition source, perhaps being the composting site, that it might be of benefit - whether or not the Minister would agree with me - for the Fire Department to correlate the risk with his department.

### **Deputy G.W.J. De Faye:**

It is the nature of any leaking fuel that is heavier than air to follow the topography of the surrounding land. That is a well-known fact. I reiterate once again. There is absolutely zero risk of the composting operation being the source of any ignition and I see at this stage no need for any special investigation.

### **2.9.2 Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:**

Does that mean the Minister is saying he will not undertake to ask the Fire Department whether or not there is a risk and he is giving us his personal view or the department's personal view that there is no risk?

**Deputy G.W.J. De Faye:**

The oil storage area is matter for the Harbours Department.

### **2.9.3 The Deputy of St. Peter:**

Is the Minister aware that the actual site itself is a COMAH (Control of Major Accident Hazards), which is a Control of Major Accident Hazard site and it is at a top-tier level because of the nature of the storage there, not just fuel but also LPG (Liquid Petroleum Gas)? Further, was he aware that at Buncefield, initially, when it was designed, it was a green field site, kept well clear from any industry? Because of the pressures on land bordering Hemel Hempstead, industry came close to the actual site and, as a result, great damage was caused.

**Deputy G.W.J. de Faye:**

Yes, I am aware of that, Sir.

### **2.9.3 Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:**

The Minister responded to my last question - whether or not he would call in the Fire Department to ascertain whether or not there is a risk - by saying that the fuel tanks are the responsibility of the Harbours Department. They certainly may be, but what I am asking is whether or not the Minister will undertake to ask his department to contact the Fire Department to establish whether or not, in conjunction with the Chief Minister's Office, there is a risk from the composting site, which is his department's responsibility?

**Deputy G.W.J. de Faye:**

Despite the fact there is absolutely no risk from the composting operation, I am happy to undertake, on behalf of the Deputy - who is perfectly capable of doing it himself - to contact the Fire Department and see if there is indeed a risk.