

STATES OF JERSEY



IMPORTATION OF WASTE: APPROVAL BY THE STATES ASSEMBLY

Lodged au Greffe on 17th February 2010
by the Environment Scrutiny Panel

STATES GREFFE

PROPOSITION

THE STATES are asked to decide whether they are of opinion –

to agree that the importation of waste into Jersey for treatment in the Island's Energy from Waste plant shall not proceed, and that no discussions or negotiations on this matter shall take place, until the principle of waste importation has been discussed and approved by the States Assembly.

ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY PANEL

REPORT

Recently there has been media coverage of an attempt by a group of Guernsey politicians to postpone the final decision on that Island's plans to build an Energy from Waste Plant. This has been linked with reports from consultants suggesting that discussions should be re-opened concerning the possibility of importing waste from Guernsey for incineration in Jersey's new Energy from Waste Plant at La Collette, when that becomes operational. In local news reports the Assistant Minister for Transport and Technical Services has stated that our new Energy from Waste Plant has spare capacity for the first few years and suggested that it would be technically possible to accept waste from Guernsey. Deputy Le Claire brought his concerns about this matter to the Panel and members agree that it is of sufficient importance to bring this proposition before the Assembly.

The Panel believes that any discussions concerning the importation of waste from Guernsey would be premature and inappropriate at the present time for the following two substantial reasons –

Firstly – It is vital for the protection of our environment that the construction and operation of the new Energy from Waste Plant are very carefully monitored. The Energy from Waste Plant is a major development of a scale and technical complexity that is rare in the Island. The Panel believes that to embark on discussions that might put pressure on the States to accept a future agreement to import quantities of waste from Guernsey for incineration even before our plant has been completed, let alone commissioned and tested to ensure that its performance meets design criteria (including required environmental standards) would be irresponsible.

The Panel is also concerned that consideration of importing waste from Guernsey could fuel public concerns that Jersey may become by default a waste repository for the Channel Islands as a whole, as a consequence of political debate in Guernsey over which we have no control.

Furthermore, it has been suggested that changes to recycling practices and the treatment of waste generally may over time lead to opportunities for the Island to scale back its requirements for incineration, which would obviously bring environmental benefits. This implies that it would be unwise for the Island to enter into any long term commitments to incinerate waste for others.

Secondly – It is understood that the motivation for this comes from a group of politicians who are in fact seeking to overturn an agreed policy of the Guernsey States to pursue the development of Guernsey's own Energy from Waste Plant. As such, involvement on Jersey's part could be construed as interference in due political process in our sister Island.

Any indication of willingness to discuss the matter in Jersey would almost certainly be used in an attempt to influence this major policy decision in Guernsey, which potentially involves huge sums of their public money. In the event that this effort were to be successful it could place Jersey in an extremely difficult position should we subsequently decide that we did not wish to go ahead with any agreement.

The Environment Panel considers that no discussions or negotiations about incinerating waste from other jurisdictions should take place until the principle of waste importation has been discussed and approved by the States Assembly and the technology currently under construction at La Collette has been proven in operation.

Financial and manpower implications

There are no additional financial or manpower implications for the States arising from this proposition.