

5.15 The Deputy of St. Mary of the Minister for Transport and Technical Services regarding air, sea and surface run-off emissions from the Energy from Waste Plant:

As the incinerator is due to start burning rubbish soon, can the Minister advise what action he proposes to take in order to be open and transparent with regard to emissions from the plant to air, sea and surface run-off?

The Connétable of St. Brelade (Minister for Transport and Technical Services):

The emissions and any exceedance will be continually monitored and regularly reported to the regulator. The discharge of cooling water from the energy-from-waste plant and the 2 surface water run-off discharges from clean areas are regulated through separate discharge permits. The run-off water from the drainage areas within the working areas of the plant will be discharged to foul sewer. In addition to the information that will be supplied to Environmental Protection my department will publish information on the emissions from the plant on the States of Jersey website. I hope this is the sort of transparency the Deputy seeks and I emphasise my willingness to be open about the whole issue.

5.15.1 The Deputy of St. Mary:

I just wanted to know whether the publication of the data of emissions to air and sea will be immediate, because ... well, I will just leave it at that for the time being.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

I think the regulator requires us to give averaged results. I would expect there to be spikes and dips according to the function of the plant. For instance, if one of the streams has been started up or slowed down or closed down for whatever reason, or for maintenance, there will be an effect on these figures. I think it is important for the public to understand what is going on so I would expect that the regulator will demand the type of results which we will have to produce and those will be available on the website.

5.15.2 Deputy J.A. Hilton:

I understand in the past that workers at the Bellozanne plant and residents who live in the immediate area have had their blood tested just to see whether anybody was suffering from any of the effects of the pollutants out of the chimney. Can the Minister confirm whether this practice will commence at the new incinerator site for the workers there and the residents of the area? Can he also confirm whether those results will be made public?

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

No, given that a third of the plant is given over to gas cleaning I do not believe that is our plan at all.

5.15.3 The Connétable of St. Helier:

Could the Minister assure us that the only rubbish that is being burnt will be Jersey rubbish and that he has no immediate plans to import rubbish from elsewhere?

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

At the moment we have no plans, but I will have to say that from a strategic point of view, from a technical point of view and from a commercial point of view it would be extremely attractive. But clearly any decision on that would have to come to this

House. I would also just throw in that the plant in fact was fired-up yesterday at about 11.00 a.m. and at this moment in time is in operation under trials.

5.15.4 Deputy D.J. De Sousa of St. Helier:

I wonder if the Minister can inform the House if these tests will be carried out at different capacities of burning. I believe we have 2 cylinders that can be fired up so will all eventualities be tested instead of being left for after-commissioning?

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Yes, during the commissioning processes both streams will be fired-up. The first was started yesterday, as I said, the second is being fired-up today. It is my department's intention to rigorously test the whole plant before we are in a position to accept it so that when it is accepted by us and the public of Jersey, it will be reliable for the next 25 years.

5.15.5 Senator J.L. Perchard:

Does the Minister share my concern after reading the annual household survey for 2010, on page 26, that 50 per cent of households do not separate tins and cans? Therefore by implication one will assume they will be sending them to the new incinerator for attempted incineration. Is the Minister aware that tins and cans do not burn and will end up in his toxic dumps on the Waterfront, and will he make it his mission during 2011 to forego the attempt to burn tins and cans in his new incinerator?

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

The Senator will be aware that most tins and cans are magnetic and those are taken out of the ash stream and in fact will be disposed of at the metal waste plant at Bellozanne. I would point out, having seen the piles of rubbish down there only yesterday, I think we have a long way to go on urging the public to recycle and it is my department's intention to work hard on that.

5.15.6 Deputy M.R. Higgins:

Just following on from the Deputy of St. Mary's earlier question, the Minister mentioned average figures will be given. Will the Minister give an undertaking to give specific temperatures as well, for example, the burn temperature in the chimney, which is vitally important for making sure that the toxins are totally destroyed and not emitted? Would the Minister also give an undertaking to the House that all historical figures from the Bellozanne chimney will be given over to Jersey Archive so if there are future health concerns those papers will be available for researchers rather than destroyed?

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

In terms of the chimney temperatures all the information which is comprehensively provided by the new technology in the new plant will be available to the regulator. In fact the regulator's waste management licence is available, 31 pages of it, and I am happy to show it to the Deputy. The regulator will stipulate which information he requires and that will be available. With regard to the destroying of old information that certainly would not be my style. I am not quite sure where it ends up but I would imagine at some point it will end up in the archive.

5.15.7 Deputy M. Tadier:

I just wanted to ask the Minister first of all if he acknowledges that a vast amount of the cans that will be dumped will be aluminium and so those that end up in the waste stream will not be magnetic. Aluminium at that temperature I imagine would fuse and essentially turn back to bauxite, which is contrary to what we are trying to achieve. On the whole, bigger picture, does the Minister acknowledge that there is a conflict on the one hand of wanting to reduce waste and increase recycling while, on the other hand, perhaps wanting to be able to fill up his incinerator as quickly as possible so that we can burn this rubbish and get a small amount of energy back from it?

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

To refer to the Deputy's first point, aluminium cans are generally the drinking cans and the ring banks throughout the Island have bins to receive those and we encourage the public to do that. In terms of the recycling target, I have set a target of 36 per cent and I think we are on about 31 per cent at the moment. We have to strive harder to achieve that in order that we do not exceed the capacity of the plant. Any Member who wishes to see the plant with its present bunker hall capacity of a significant amount will realise we do not have that spare amount of capacity and, as I have said before, we have to work on continuing our efforts towards encouraging the public to recycle further.

5.15.8 The Deputy of St. Mary:

The Minister has I think twice talked about information being reported to the regulator. He also talked about figures being averaged to smooth out the spikes and dips. The point of my question is how much reassurance does the public have... and we have heard that he does not intend, and presumably the Minister for Health and Social Services does not intend, to screen the local population or the workers. So, can the Minister assure me, the public and the Members that all complete records will be available to anyone who asks, whether pressure group or individual or States Member; not edited, not averaged, not expurgated, not redacted but complete?

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

I think it would be useful for the Deputy to look at the waste management licence and if he has concerns on that to question either me or the Minister for Planning and Environment further because it is extremely comprehensive and I do not think I can answer satisfactorily in this short period today. But my understanding is that the written management system identifies the risks and with regard to not only the operation, the maintenance, accidents and so on but also has provision for non-conformity and closure. I do recommend that the Deputy does look at that and we can perhaps discuss further should he so wish.

5.15.9 The Deputy of St. Mary:

With respect, the Minister has not answered my question. It is not about the detail of the waste management licence, it is about the data that is continually monitored by that clever control room at the top of the incinerator. All the data is there, the operators have all the data. My question is will that data be available to the public?

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

I think it has to be available through the regulator. The regulator will specify which information he wants, which I am sure will be far in excess of what the public will require. The public have appointed a regulator to oversee the operation and I think he

is the repository of all the right information and will decide what and when we should publish it.