

STATES OF JERSEY



INCINERATOR EMISSIONS DATA: PUBLICATION ON INTERNET

Lodged au Greffe on 6th October 2011
by the Deputy of St. Mary

STATES GREFFE

PROPOSITION

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

to request the Minister for Transport and Technical Services to publish on the internet, in real time (or as near as possible to real time if there are substantial cost issues with the 'real time' option) data for emissions to air and emissions to sea from the new incinerator at La Collette, with the nature of the data that will be published to be selected after properly conducted consultation (with published minutes) and with the consultation to include, at the least, Save our Shoreline and an expert from the United Kingdom Without Incineration Network (UKWIN).

DEPUTY OF ST. MARY

REPORT

There is not much to say. This is a simple issue of making data public, data which arises out of a huge investment paid for by the taxpayer. It is in this very clear sense the public's data.

It is no longer good enough for the public to have to go cap in hand to whichever States department it might be to try and find things out. There is a duty to disclose. Democracy itself is based on free access to information.

I have just been involved with a Scrutiny report into the protection of the marine environment. One of the points which has emerged during that review is the fact that if data is freely available it frees up the time of officers who would otherwise be answering requests for data!

I cannot imagine what possible objection there might be to this proposition. It is simply a step along the road to open and transparent government.

On page AIM/04 of the current States Strategic Plan, (and this is the plan which we are all working to, is it not?) we read –

“AIM: ‘WORKING TOGETHER TO MEET THE NEEDS OF OUR COMMUNITY’

By working openly and inclusively with all sectors of our community we will:

- enable everyone to have the opportunity to achieve their full potential;
- meet our health, housing and education challenges;
- prepare for the ageing society;
- protect the countryside and our environment;
- create a responsive government that provides good and efficient services and sound infrastructure and which embraces a progressive culture of openness, transparency and accountability to the public.”

Financial and manpower statement

The requirement for openness, transparency and accountability to the public is exactly what this proposition is about. It will cost a minuscule sum in comparison to the cost of first constructing the incinerator and secondly running it.

UKWIN have informed me that they are willing to give their expert input for free, and also suggest that by using modern technology (e.g. Skype) there would be no travel or accommodation costs either.

The work of convening and minuting this working group should be managed within the normal operating budget of the incinerator. This issue of what and how to publish data is a question which has to be tackled anyway for the regulator.

Given that the data is already available to the operator and to the regulator, the work involved in publishing directly online should be manageable within the IT capability of the plant, supplemented if necessary by the States central IT function.

What is the States website for, if not for publishing data?