

Green MEP says ditch nuclear jobs in favour of green jobs as costs and dangers of storing defunct nuclear submarines soar



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The South West's Green MEP, Molly Scott Cato, has said it is time for Devonport to 'move beyond the nuclear age' and transfer hundreds of nuclear submarine and weapons related jobs into jobs supporting the green economy, particularly renewable energy technologies.

The call comes following revelations that Devonport in Plymouth and Rosyth in Fife are storing decommissioned nuclear submarines at a cost to the tax payer of £500m [1]. The Ministry of Defence has been storing the submarines for dismantling, but the disposal has been beset by lengthy delays and spiralling costs.

Two and a half years ago, Dr Scott Cato produced a report which outlining how Devonport could sever its links with nuclear defence but maintain employment by transferring investment into sustainable jobs, making use of the skills and resources available at the base [2].

Molly Scott Cato said:

"The National Audit Office (NAO) has confirmed the dangers and huge costs associated with decommissioning our obsolete nuclear submarines. Nine of the defunct vessels still contain radioactive nuclear fuel.

"It is time to move beyond the nuclear age, end the terrible risks associated with it and stop saddling the UK tax payer with huge costs.

"There are arguments about the UK's nuclear weapons system supporting thousands of high-quality jobs in the UK, including at Devonport in Plymouth. But there needn't be job losses if we ditch our nuclear submarines and defence system. We can sustain thousands of high-quality and skilled jobs – as well as creating many new ones – if we switch those jobs from nuclear defence to green and socially useful work.

"Our climate emergency demands urgent action. The workforce at our nuclear bases have skills that are transferable into working with renewable energy technologies, and by doing so contribute to tackling climate change. How much better it would be for Devonport to help create a safe and sustainable future than continue down the nuclear path."

Notes

[1]<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-47792539>

[2]<https://mollymep.org.uk/2016/11/16/devonport/>

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