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*From the President Lord May of Oxford AC Kt PRS*

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Our ref: rq/health

*Dear Liam*

**Proposed creation of a Health Protection Agency**

I am writing to you in connection with the proposal to create a new agency to provide specialist support for health protection and health emergency planning, as set out in the current Department of Health consultation. I welcome your intention to improve capacity for health protection and emergency response but I am concerned by the suggestion that this new agency would take over responsibility for the National Radiological Protection Board (NRPB). I hold the work of the NRPB in high regard and believe that if it is to remain effective it is essential that its Board have direct access to Ministers. It is not clear how NRPB can deliver independent advice if it is part of a combined organisation. In addition, I believe that the focus on health protection will mean that the range of expertise within NRPB will become reduced and that there may develop, inadvertently, tendencies to become focussed on the life sciences rather than physical sciences.

In short, I believe that this arrangement would have a detrimental effect on the ability of the NRPB to deliver independent scientific advice both within the UK and internationally. I am aware that these concerns are widely shared, including by a number of the Fellows of the Royal Society.

Yours



Robert M May

cc Ben Cole, Health Protection Consultation, DoH.  
Prof David King FRS, Chief Scientific Advisor, OST.



President Lord May of Oxford AC PRS  
Executive Secretary Stephen Cox cvo

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