

Ruby fertiliser dumping at sea ‘environmental terrorism’ charges MP

UK authorities made plans to evacuate 30,000 people from Great Yarmouth when 300 tons of potentially fuel contaminated ammonium nitrate were dumped at sea from a ship dubbed a ‘floating megabomb’

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Aerial view of Port of Great Yarmouth Credit: Environment Agency - UK Open Government Licence

On 16 November the cargoship Ruby dumped 300 tons of fertiliser at sea 10 miles off the coast of Norfolk in the [UK](#) after fears the cargo had become contaminated by fuel.

“Just off the coast of Great Yarmouth, the fertiliser was dumped in its polypropylene double-skinned bags, which was an act of environmental terrorism - almost 300 tonnes of it,” Great Yarmouth MP Robert Lowe posted on social media platform X.

The damaged vessel had been offloading the cargo in the port of Great Yarmouth having previously been expelled from Norwegian waters and spending a over a month anchored of the UK Coast unable to find a port willing to accept the ship and its potentially highly explosive cargo.

At the end of October agreement was reached for the Ruby, managed Serenity Ship Management DMCC, to come into port in Great Yarmouth and offload its cargo.

“There were proposals seriously considered to evacuate Great Yarmouth, my constituency, due to the risk of an explosion caused by ammonium nitrate 'potentially' contaminated with fuel,” Lowe stated.

The Telegraph reported that a confidential UK Department of Transport (DfT) document seen by the newspaper had considered evacuating the town against the possibility of a catastrophic explosion.

The 20,000 tonnes of ammonium nitrate loaded onboard the Ruby were seen capable of killing or injuring 30,000 people and destroying three-quarters of buildings within a three mile radius of a

blast. The Telegraph reported the DfT report considered the “worst case” scenario was a “theoretically low probability”.

Related: [Damaged bulker Ruby headed for UK port](#)

The newspaper reported that DfT “modelling” concluded the chemical would “disperse relatively quickly”, but was “toxic to marine life”.

Reform UK party MP Lowe says he was not told of the evacuation plans and claimed that the authorities only carried out a remote inspection before deciding to dump 300 tonnes of it at sea in the plastic bags the fertiliser was contained in.

“Those bags will float and wrap themselves around propellers. That’s quite apart from the untold damage plastic does to the environment, local marine life and importantly fish,” Lowe wrote.

The Great Yarmouth MP plans to tell parliament about his allegations in an adjournment debate on Thursday. “I am demanding a full and independent inquiry into this mess,” he stated.

The Ruby originally took the hazardous-classed cargo on board at the Russian port of Kandalaksha but after setting sail on August 22, she ran into severe storms and suffered damage to her hull, propeller and rudder in a grounding. She limped into Tromsø in northern [Norway](#) where the damage was assessed in a Port State Control inspection. She then underwent ‘temporary repairs’.

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However, the vessel was subsequently asked to leave the port by Norwegian authorities and sailed slowly south, accompanied by a tug. Requests to dock for repairs in various ports on the southbound voyage were denied and the ship eventually dropped anchor in British waters during the final week of September.