

Buffalo News, April 9, 2009

Everybody's Column:

We must demand cleanup of West Valley toxic waste

Sometimes people hope that procrastination is the best policy. They seem to think that if they just delay long enough, the problem will somehow go away.

That isn't the situation at West Valley. The dangerous radioactive wastes stored there aren't going to disappear on their own. The longer they stay there, the longer the danger of their spreading off site continues. The sooner they are removed, the safer we will be.

The proposal to phase out the removal over a 30-year period is one that needs to be rejected out of hand. The only good answer is to remove the waste now.

It is the responsibility of the Department of Energy to find a place where it can be decontaminated or safely stored.

After lots of public pressure, a decision was finally made to remove the PCBs from the Hudson River. We need to work just as urgently to make sure that the West Valley site is cleaned up and rendered safe now.

Comments can be sent to Catherine Bowen of the U. S. Department of Energy at catherine.m.bohan@wv.doe.gov and to Paul J. Bembia of the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority at pjb@nyserda.org until June 8. Don't delay even that long to send in your comments. We don't need radioactive waste perhaps entering streams and Lake Erie. We need action now.

Charles Lamb

Youngstown

Springville Journal, April 9, 2009

Citizen Task Force convinced West Valley Demo Project not suitable for storage of radioactive waste

Draft Environmental Impact Statement was released in 2008, public comments end on June 8

According to a recently issued press release, after eleven years of continued education and review on the characteristics of the West Valley Demonstration Project (WVDP) site, the West Valley Citizen Task Force (CTF) is convinced “that the geologic, hydrologic and climate conditions of the site are not suitable for long term, permanent storage or disposal of long-lived radionuclides and that the level of risk from exposure is such that reliance on institutional controls over a prolonged period, hundreds or thousands of years, is not feasible.”



These are the same views that were expressed in the CTF’s ‘Final Report’ issued in 1998, which recommended policies and priorities for the selection of the “Preferred Alternative” option for the decommissioning of the site. The Preferred Alternative was for the cleanup, closure and/or long-term management of the facility. In the draft Environmental Impact Statement released in November 2008, the options for the decommissioning of the site are Sitewide Removal; Sitewide Close in Place; Phased Decisionmaking (up to 30 years); or no action at all.

As it did in its 1998 Final Report, the CTF still says that the “protection of human health and safety and of the environment is paramount, the CTF wants full clean-up of all nuclear waste from the site.” In addition, it states that studies and decisions should be performed that assess and support the eventual goal.

Phase 1 of the Preferred Alternative option would involve various activities taking place over a period of 30 years including removal of the Main Plant Process Building and the source area of the North Plateau groundwater plume; removal of the Vitrification Facility and Remote-Handled Waste Facility; removal of the Water Treatment Plant and the lagoons; continued monitoring and maintenance of the high-level waste tank farm and the two licensed disposal areas; and the performance of studies to assess and support Phase 2 decisions.

Implementation of Phase 2 includes the work necessary to complete the decommissioning or long-term management of the site following the approach determined to be the most appropriate through the additional evaluations. No time frame has been cited for the implementation of Phase 2.

The public is urged to read and comment on the draft Environmental Impact Statement which can be found in full or in summary on the CTF Web site at www.westvalleyctf.org, or a disk or paper copy of this document can be obtained by contacting Cathy Bohan, Department of Energy National Environmental Policy Act Compliance Officer for the WVDP at 942-4159. The deadline for public comment is June 8.

Buffalo News, Tuesday, April 14, 2009

ELLCOTTVILLE: Massa voices optimism for recovery

By Kathy Kellogg

CATTARAUGUS CORRESPONDENT

ELLCOTTVILLE — Rep. Eric J. J. Massa, D-Corning, spent his 99th day in office at a town meeting Monday in the Ellicottville American Legion, dishing out dollops of reality and reassurance to more than 60 area officials and constituents.

“The overarching reality of my experience [as a freshman congressman] has been one of tremendous optimism,” he said, referring to the stimulus package and hope for the economy.

“We will come out of the recession stronger and sooner than our strongest [international] competitors,” he said. “We are doing more now than any of our international competitors are doing.”

Massa repeated his commitment to agriculture but admitted that the House Agriculture Committee can do little to control the minimum milk price.

He was responding to a question from Cathy Andera of Great Valley, who pointed to shrinking milk checks and uninspected imported foods that, she said, soon will force many local farmers out of business.

He said he is working on accelerating milk price support payments and noted that farmers and car dealers share short-term credit problems caused by a frozen banking system.

Donald Nowak of Ashford asked Massa if he would consider an alternative route for the Route 219 expressway to save money on construction and avoid environmental problems.

Massa said he will not let up the pressure to move the project forward, citing safety issues and the need for access to and from the region, but he agreed to consider an alternative route.

Dennis Eshbaugh of Holiday Valley and the Route 219 Association welcomed Massa’s views and said industries desperately need the expressway.

Stating that he knows nuclear power because of his military career — he is a retired Navy commander and the only congressman who has stood watch over a nuclear reactor — Massa promised to help the public make its views known on a second phase of environmental review for cleaning up the West Valley Demonstration Project.

Many in the crowd applauded when Massa repeated his often-stated vow not to vote for any new gun control legislation.

“We have not yet begun to enforce the federal gun legislation that exists. More laws will not solve the tragedies,” he said, referring to the Binghamton massacre.

Massa discusses immigration, 219, West Valley at town hall meeting

By Christopher Michel
Special to the Olean Times Herald

ELLCOTTVILLE — On the eve of his 100th day in office, U.S. Rep. Eric Massa spent time reconnecting with his constituents.

On Monday evening, Rep. Massa, D-Corning, held a town hall-style meeting at the American Legion post in Ellicottville. Although not every seat at the event had someone in it, Rep. Massa and the more than 40 attendees filled the room with ideas, suggestions and dialogue.

Beginning the event, Rep. Massa told attendees how things have changed in Washington.

"I come to you today as a member of Congress with all of 99 days in office. Every day presents a new and significant problem or challenge," he said. "These problems cut across old ideologies. These problems cut across short-term political concerns. The challenges we face today frankly reflect a need for a partnership that did not exist before with different levels of government."

Quickly moving the meeting along, Rep. Massa invited the audience to ask questions or voice concerns to him.

Speaking first, Gladys Clifford, a resident of Buffalo representing the Interfaith Coalition for Immigrant Rights, asked Rep. Massa his stance on the human rights of illegal immigrants.

"Immigration is not the explosive issue it was two years ago," the congressman said. "As the American economic situation has worsened, we have seen a large outflow of immigrants back to their own countries. One place where there is great political consensus is on a transparent, humane, legal work-visa program. I am a strong advocate of controlling our borders. With the technology that exists today, there are ways to check if someone is illegally here or not if a better program for work visas are put in place."

Continuing, Rep. Massa said, "One of the problems is you can't look at someone and say, 'You don't look American, so you must be an illegal immigrant.'"

To augment his point, Rep. Massa spoke two sentences of fluent Spanish — his first language.

Moving forward, the congressman discussed more local issues directly affecting many of the attendees.

After going through a brief history of the controversy surrounding the construction and expansion of Route 219, one concerned citizen asked Rep. Massa if he was "willing to entertain the possibility of implementing a far less costly,



U.S. Rep. Eric Massa, D-Corning, talks during his town hall-style meeting Monday in the American Legion in Ellicottville.

Chris Michel/Olean Times Herald

less damaging, more environmentally sound alternative to update the existing road that does not require Seneca (Nation of Indians) approval."

The citizen suggested efforts be shifted to upgrade the existing Route 219 so it could accommodate increased traffic and improve driving conditions.

"The current road is unacceptable, and I will continue to fight for the completion of it," Rep. Massa said. "I happen to view making transportation from Buffalo down south to the I-86 to be one of the most critical economic and safety issues in Western New York."

"I don't know what the answer is, but I will not sit here for another three years having lost \$84 million in state money and not do anything. I believe there is a mandate for action."

Rep. Massa also commented on the stance officials have in working with the Seneca Nation of Indians to complete work on Route 219.

"I am certainly not qualified to speak for the Seneca Nation. But what I will say is there is discussion at the highest levels between the state, Seneca Nation and myself on that triangle of opportunity to remove barriers to move forward," Massa said.

Ray Vaughn of West Valley, representing the Citizens Task Force, brought up concerns with the progress on the West Valley Demonstration Project and asked Rep. Massa for his thoughts on the best way to move forward.

"A full cleanup of the site is going to take at least another \$2 billion to \$3 billion. What I have to do is to try to figure out what is in the realm of the possible," Rep. Massa said. "I'm going to have to get a lot of input on that. As we embark

on a broad, national energy agenda, one of the challenges we face is the direction we are supposed to go in. My focus right now is to get done what I can get done, and that's why I fought for the \$74 million to proceed with clean-up efforts."

Responding to Rep. Massa's statements, a citizen brought up concerns that, should the Department of Energy wait 30 years to make a decision for the future of cleanup of the West Valley Demonstration, citizens around the site may lose their say in the matter.

Rep. Massa said he would be interested in working with citizen groups to ensure those living near the site would have input in the matter.

Dave Schichtel of Franklinville added to the dialogue his concerns about the federal government's stance on nuclear waste.

"The federal government has a record of changing its mind," Mr. Schichtel said. "And in 30 years, what direction are we going to be in with the federal government when it comes to nuclear waste?"

After nearly two hours, Rep. Massa concluded the meeting with encouraging words for the direction he believes the country is headed.

"The issues that divide us are minuscule compared to the issues that unite us," Rep. Massa said. "My first 99 days in office have been tremendously optimistic. We will come out of this recession. We will come out sooner than we think we will. We will come out stronger than we think will."

The congressman assured attendees he will be visiting every town in his district at least once in the upcoming year.