



# West Valley Citizen Task Force

April 26, 2002

Spencer Abraham  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Energy  
1000 Independence Ave, SW  
Washington, DC 20585

RE: Higher Level of Attention

Dear Secretary Abraham:

The West Valley Citizen Task Force (CTF) for the West Valley Demonstration Project, (WVDP) located in the Town of Ashford, New York, sent six of its members to Washington, DC on February 13<sup>th</sup> of this year. The reason we were willing to give up our time, and travel a great distance, was to meet with you and the Western New York Congressional delegation. We hoped to convey our concerns with the stalled negotiations between the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) and the New York State Energy Research Development Authority (NYSERDA) regarding the future DOE responsibilities at the West Valley site. In addition, we wanted to ensure the continuance of adequate cleanup funds in light of threats of funding cuts if an agreement could not be worked out this year between the two agencies.

We were very disappointed with the level of attention that DOE gave to this important meeting. DOE chose to send James Fiore, a person at a Deputy Assistant Secretary level. That decision causes us to question DOE's commitment to the negotiations and completion of the WVDP. We met in the Capitol with Senators Schumer and Clinton, and Representatives Houghton, Quinn, and Reynolds. We had assembled our top people regarding the issues including representatives from the Town of Ashford, Cattaraugus County, Erie County, the West Valley Coalition on Nuclear Wastes, and the Volunteer Fire Service. Among the State representatives from NYSERDA were President William Flynn, West Valley Program Director Paul Piciulo, and Counsel Hal Brodie.

Thus far, many aspects of the cleanup at West Valley appear to be successful. The millions of dollars that have been spent on this project have developed innovative technology and expertise that are now being used on larger projects, saving the country billions of dollars. The success at West Valley was accomplished by people working together. During the first 20 years, a sound vitrification policy, use of local merchants and personnel, a positive financial impact on the surrounding communities, and numerous charitable gifts prompted the local area to actively cooperate in the cleanup efforts. As the Project transitions into the decontamination and decommissioning phase, perhaps the most difficult challenges lie ahead of us.



The future actions of DOE in the successful completion of the WVDP must not be made a minor item in your overall radioactive waste cleanup efforts throughout the United States. We urge the DOE to demonstrate a continuing policy of openness and commitment to cooperation. We would also expect to see DOE exhibit a higher level of attention at future meetings with the CTF and Congressional representatives.

We have a long way to go. Let's not stop working together.

Sincerely,

William T. King  
Town of Ashford Supervisor  
On behalf of the West Valley Citizen Task Force

cc: U.S. Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton  
U.S. Senator Charles Schumer  
U.S. Representative Amory Houghton  
U.S. Representative Thomas Reynolds  
U.S. Representative Jack Quinn  
U.S. Representative John LaFalce  
U.S. Representative Louise Slaughter  
NYS Senator Patricia McGee  
NYS Assemblyman Dan Burling  
NYS Assemblywoman Catharine Young  
NYS Governor George Pataki  
NRC Chairman Richard Meserve  
NYSERDA President William Flynn  
Alice Williams, DOE  
Ralph Holland, DOE  
Paul Piciulo, NYSERDA  
Larry Camper, NRC  
CTF Mailing List