

**West Valley
Citizen
Task
Force**

May 28, 2003

RE: Request for Co-Sponsorship House Bill
576 West Valley Demonstration Project,
Ashford (T), New York

The Honorable Louise Slaughter
2469 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

465 Main Street
Suite 105
Buffalo, NY 14203

Dear Congresswoman Slaughter:

As you should be aware, Congress passed the West Valley Demonstration Project Act (WVDPA) in 1980 which started a cooperative effort between the Federal and New York State governments to develop and implement a process to solidify high level nuclear waste and decommission the Western New York Nuclear Service Center in the Town of Ashford, Cattaraugus County. The site is located in New York's 29th Congressional District but has a broad impact on the economy of all of Western New York and serious implications for the long term health and safety of the region.

A major milestone was reached at the Project last year when vitrification operations were successfully concluded. Now all efforts are being refocused on the decontamination and decommissioning of the facilities, on completing the necessary Environmental Impact Statements to help identify a preferred alternative for the final disposition of all remaining radioactive waste stored or buried onsite, and ultimately who will be responsible for the long term monitoring and maintenance of the site. Determining which government, Federal or State, will assume this responsibility has been the subject of strained negotiations over the last several years and is viewed as the most pressing issue affecting continued progress and the future of the site (reference U.S. General Accounting Office report GAO – 01- 314). Enclosed find a brief history of the Project and a chronology of the failed negotiation efforts between the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) and the NYS Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA).

The West Valley Citizen Task Force (CTF) was formed in 1997 to give local government representatives and special interest groups a means for providing input in the development of future management plans and decisions concerning the site. Because of the inability of DOE and NYSERDA to reach agreement, members of the CTF traveled to Washington, DC in February 2002 to ask our Congressional delegation for direct assistance in resolving this critical issue. Recent developments in this bipartisan effort include Congressman Houghton's introduction of House Bill 576, Senator Schumer's introduction of Senate Bill 619, and the inclusion of Amendment No. 12 to the Energy Policy Act of 2003 just passed by the House of Representatives.

The purpose of this letter is to inform the rest of the New York Congressional Delegation of the importance of this legislation to New York State as a whole, and specifically to ask you to sign on as a co-sponsor of H.R. 576 as presently proposed by Mr. Houghton, Mr. Reynolds, and Mr. Quinn.



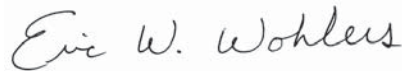
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We would be happy to provide you with any additional information that you might need or find useful in researching this issue in greater detail. Please feel free to have your staff direct any such requests to Mr. John Chamberlain, Communications Advisor, at the West Valley Demonstration Project office at (716) 942-4610. We would also appreciate receiving an acknowledgment from you in regards to this request and your possible support. Thank you in advance for your time and consideration in this matter.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Eric W. Wohlers".

Eric W. Wohlers
on behalf of the
West Valley Citizen Task Force

Enclosure: West Valley Citizen Task Force Fact Sheet

cc: U.S. Representative. Houghton
U.S. Representative Reynolds
U.S. Representative Quinn
U.S. Senator Schumer
U.S. Senator Clinton
A.C. Williams, DOE
P.L. Piciulo, NYSERDA
CTF Mailing List