

January 26, 2004

# West Valley Citizen Task Force

The Honorable Amo Houghton  
U. S. House of Representatives  
413 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515-3227

Dear Congressman Houghton:

The members of the West Valley Citizen Task Force (CTF) request the privilege of meeting with you and the other members of the Western New York Congressional delegation in Washington D. C. in late February. We would further request your assistance in coordinating this meeting among the CTF and the WNY Congressional delegation.

We would like to discuss with you possible steps which could be taken cooperatively to ensure continued progress in the cleanup of the West Valley site. A delegation of CTF representatives and local government leaders is prepared to travel to meet with you at your convenience. The specific issues we would like to discuss include:

- < The CTF's disagreement with DOE's and NYSERDA's proposals on how the site will be decontaminated and decommissioned and its eventual end state;
- < Resolving the legal issues which have resulted in the impasse between NYSERDA and DOE over the scope of site cleanup, the high-level waste disposal fee, and responsibility for long-term stewardship;
- < Preventing passage of DOE's proposed legislation to change the definition of some HLW to "Waste Incidental to Reprocessing;"
- < Maintaining the WVDP budget at adequate levels; and
- < Preventing or addressing the negative economic impact on the local and regional community when the site work force is reduced to 50 employees or less (which DOE anticipates occurring after 2008; those employees will perform monitoring and maintenance until the high-level waste (HLW) canisters can be shipped to the federal repository).

At our monthly meeting on January 14, 2004, Ms. Moira Champion of U. S. Senator Schumer's office agreed that these issues were ripe for discussion. We feel we have been extremely patient in waiting for resolution of these issues. Meanwhile, negotiations between NYSERDA and DOE remain at an impasse.



We have concluded that swift Congressional intervention is required to resolve these issues either by clarifying the intent of the West Valley Demonstration Project Act or by expanding DOE's role, and by stating Congressional intent to provide the necessary resources. We draw your attention to the conclusions and recommendations contained in the enclosed General Accounting Office report (GAO-01-314) issued in May 2001 regarding the West Valley site, which stated that Congressional involvement would likely be required to resolve these key issues. At the same time any new legislation must avoid weakening the existing mechanisms for site closure.

We cannot overstate the urgency of overcoming this stalemate. Please contact me at (716) 942-6016 to confirm your assistance in coordinating this meeting and the most convenient date.

Respectfully submitted,

William King  
On behalf of the  
West Valley Citizen Task Force

Enclosure: GAO Report, "Nuclear Waste: Agreement among Agencies Responsible for the West Valley Site is Critically Needed," May 2001

cc:

U. S. Senator Hillary Clinton  
U. S. Senator Charles Schumer  
U. S. Representative Jack Quinn  
U. S. Representative Thomas Reynolds  
U. S. Representative Louise Slaughter  
Spencer Abraham, Secretary, U. S. Department of Energy  
Nils J. Diaz, Chairman, U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission  
George Pataki, Governor, New York State  
Patricia McGee, New York State Senator  
Catherine Young, New York State Assemblywoman  
Robert Warther, Ohio Field Office Manager, U. S. Department of Energy  
T. J. Jackson, West Valley Site Project Acting Director, U. S. Department of Energy  
Peter Smith, Acting President, NYSERDA  
Paul Piciulo, West Valley Program Director, NYSERDA  
Russ Mellor, President, West Valley Nuclear Services Company  
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