

## Reed sees progress in federal cleanup at New York nuclear waste site



U.S. Rep. Tom Reed (R-NY) is keeping tabs on the continued federal cleanup in his home state at the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) West Valley Demonstration Project, a nuclear remediation waste site about 40 miles south of Buffalo.

“We care about protecting the people that live in and around West Valley and we must continue working to make the area safer,” said Rep. Reed during an April 3 tour of the site.

As the only commercial nuclear reprocessing facility in the United States, the plant from 1966 to 1972 generated more than 660,000 tons of high-level radioactive waste while reprocessing more than 700 tons of spent nuclear fuel, according to the DOE. Under the West Valley Demonstration Project Act of 1980, the DOE has been tasked with solidifying high-level waste (HLW) at the commercial nuclear reprocessing plant, disposing of the resulting waste, and eventually must decommission the facility.

The DOE selected CH2M HILL BWXT West Valley, LLC (CHBWV) to conduct Phase I Decommissioning activities at the project site under an 8.6-year, \$461.4 million contract that began in August 2011. Since CHBWV took control of the site, the contractor has led cleanup and facility demolition activities and says it is actively engaged in removing radioactive waste, contaminated equipment and obsolete structures from the 200-acre site.

When Rep. Reed last visited the West Valley Demonstration Project in July 2016, according to his staff, CHBWV had moved 50 canisters of HLW to an onsite storage pad. By February 2017, all 278 canisters of HLW – generated during the solidification process from 1996 to 2002 – had been placed on the storage pad, according to the congressman’s staff.

Additionally, 93 percent of the legacy waste generated during commercial reprocessing operations has been shipped off site for disposal; demolition of the Vitrification Facility that began in September 2017 is 55 percent completed; and deactivation of the Main Plant Process Building that has been underway since 2011 is 84 percent finished, Rep. Reed’s staff said in a statement.

Rep. Reed, who remains concerned with finding a safe repository for the waste and in protecting waterways from any potential future contamination, continues to support the site’s cleanup efforts. He recently helped obtain \$75 million in funding for the project as part of the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2018, H.R. 1625, which the president on March 23 signed into law to fund the federal government. The targeted funds are almost \$9 million more than fiscal year 2017 funds.

“I am glad to see the project will receive \$75 million for 2018,” said Rep. Reed. “These resources will continue to help further cleanup of this toxic site.”