

OLEAN TIMES HERALD

West Valley Demonstration Project reauthorization bill to go to full House for vote

- By RICK MILLER, Olean Times Herald

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U.S. Rep. Tom Reed, R-Corning

The reauthorization of the West Valley Demonstration Project has been approved by the House Energy and Commerce Committee.

The West Valley Demonstration Project Act was originally approved in 1980.

U.S. Rep. Tom Reed, R-Corning, said Tuesday the full House would now take up the bipartisan West Valley nuclear cleanup measure.

The reauthorization bill calls for \$75 million in annual funding, a \$10 million boost from the \$65 million annual base funding in recent years for the cleanup of the site of the nation's first commercial spent nuclear fuel reprocessing plant.

The U.S. Department of Energy and New York State Energy Research and Development Authority have spent about \$2 billion on the cleanup to date. The extent of the cleanup will determine the eventual cost, which could easily triple.

Reed, speaking on a conference call with reporters from across the 23rd Congressional District, said he was "very optimistic" the bipartisan bill would pass the House.

While the reauthorization bill sets a "foundation" of up to \$75 million for annual cleanup funding going forward, Reed said annual appropriation battles can still be expected.

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"This legislation will authorize \$75 million per year through 2026 to continue the cleanup at West Valley and will provide a disposal path for all waste on the site," Reed said. "I care about the complete and total cleanup of sites our nuclear sites — including West Valley."

Reed thanked the Energy and Commerce committee members "for their help in moving the ball forward."

Reed has worked with the West Valley Citizen Task Force to raise awareness of the need for consistent funding to clean up the West Valley site.

ON ANOTHER TOPIC, Reed said he recently spoke to U.S. Navy Sec. Richard V. Spencer regarding his bill to require the Navy to consider the national security implications of removing equipment used to make pumps and compressors for a variety of ships by Siemens, which plans to move production lines from its Dresser-Rand plant in Wellsville.

Siemens announced in February plans to sell part of the business to Curtis-Wright and move other production to other Siemens plants. It will mean the loss of about 250 skilled union manufacturing jobs when fully implemented in 2020.

The Reed bill is moving through the House, which "bodes well for us from a House perspective." It calls to a study on the impact on national security of the relocation.

"If there is any type of realignment, I want to make sure national security concerns are addressed as a first and top priority," Reed told reporters.

"I want to put as much pressure on Siemens so they know where we stand on this transfer to Curtin-Wright," Reed added.

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