

OLEAN TIMES HERALD

Catt County to ask for \$75 million a year for West Valley cleanup

Posted: Tuesday, March 18, 2014 11:43 am

By Rick Miller, Olean Times Herald

LITTLE VALLEY — Cattaraugus County lawmakers have introduced a resolution asking the U.S. Department of Energy to commit \$75 million a year to cleanup at the West Valley Demonstration Project.

Cattaraugus County Legislature Chairman Norman Marsh, R-Little Valley, and Vice Chairman James J. Snyder, R-Olean, have prefiled a resolution for action at committee meetings Wednesday to restore and stabilize cleanup funds at the project, located in the town of Ashford, to their recommended level.

The Final Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision for Phase 1 of the Decommissioning of the site called for \$75 million a year over 10 years. If the funds aren't more than the \$60 million allocated this year, it will likely take up to 20 years to complete the Phase 1 cleanup, Mr. Marsh and Mr. Snyder argue.

Extending the decommissioning to 20 years will add \$200 million to the cleanup costs. The West Valley Demonstration Project was created by in 1980 to clean up high-level radioactive liquid waste left from reclaiming plutonium from spent nuclear fuel rods from commercial reactors.

The plant, Nuclear Fuel Services, operated from 1966 until 1972, when it closed after it was unable to meet new environmental regulations.

The high-level liquid wastes have been solidified into 275 glass logs encased in 10-foot high stainless steel containers. They remain in the Main Process Building, but must be moved to other temporary storage to demolish the building. There is no permanent home for the high-level wastes.

The resolution will go to the Finance Committee, of which Mr. Snyder is chairman, at 6:45 p.m. Wednesday.

(Contact reporter Rick Miller at rmiller@oleantimesherald.com)

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March 1, 2014 Edition



Check, Please

Representatives from CH2M HILL B&W West Valley, LLC , the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority and the West Valley Demonstration Project presented a check for \$5,000 to the Bertrand Chaffee Hospital Foundation on Feb. 19. From left: DOE-WVDP Safety and Site Programs Team Lead Christopher Eckert, DOE-WVDP Director Bryan Bower, Bertrand Chaffee Hospital CEO Nils Gunnersen, NYSERDA West Valley Site Management Program Director Paul Bembia, CHBWV President and General Manager Dan Coyne, CHBWV Senior Emergency Management Specialist Marge Baldi and Bertrand Chaffee Hospital Foundation Vice President Mary Kwiatek. *Photo submitted by Kara Kane.*

State, feds to share costs of West Valley Phase 2 cleanup plan

Posted: Saturday, March 1, 2014 6:00 am

By Rick Miller, Special to The Press

WEST VALLEY — The issues the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) and the U.S. Department of Energy had over cleanup at the West Valley Demonstration project several years ago appear to be over.

Paul Bembia, the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority director at West Valley, said Wednesday that NYSERDA and the Department of Energy had agreed to split the cost of the Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) for Phase 2 Decommissioning.

Bembia said current plans call for the selection by DOE and NYSERDA of an Environmental Impact Statement contractor in 2017. A joint DOE/NYSERDA draft EIS would be available for review and comment in 2019. The joint DOE/NYSERDA Phase 2 final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement would be published in 2020 with a DOE Record of Decision and a NYSERDA Findings Statement.

A decision on the decommissioning plan is due in 2020.

The question is how extensive a cleanup will Phase 2 be.

Members of the Coalition on West Valley Nuclear Wastes and the West Valley Citizens Task Force are asking whether the SEIS would recommend the excavation and removal of the tank farm and the state-and Nuclear Regulatory Commission-licensed low-level burial areas instead of long-term monitoring and maintenance of the site. The cost of monitoring and maintenance would still be about \$1 billion, while total cleanup and removal of all wastes would cost about \$8 billion.

Prior to the 2010 Environmental Impact Statement that split the cleanup into two phases, NYSERDA had filed a federal lawsuit against the Department of Energy over its handling of the proposed cleanup.

The SEIS will be ready for public comment in 2019, Bembia said at the Quarterly Public Meeting of the West Valley Demonstration Project on Wednesday.

The cleanup began after passage of the West Valley Demonstration Project Act of 1980, which was sponsored by former Rep. Stan Lundine and the late Sen. Daniel P. Moynihan. The West Valley plant owned by Nuclear Fuel services operated from 1966 to 1972 using an acid process to remove plutonium from spent nuclear fuel rods.

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Posted: Friday, February 28, 2014 12:04 pm

By Rick Miller, Olean Times Herald

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(Contact reporter Rick Miller at rmiller@oleantimesherald.com.)

**West Valley Demonstration Project
Quarterly Public Meeting**

Wednesday, February 26, 6:30 - 8:00 p.m.

Ashford Office Complex

9030 Route 219, West Valley, NY 14171

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) and the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) will hold a public meeting to provide an update on the WVDP project activities and to discuss progress on the Phase 1 Studies. NYSERDA and DOE will provide the public with an opportunity to ask questions and provide comments.

For further information, please contact
Lynette Bennett at
Lynette.Bennett@chbvw.com or (509) 531-5974.

February 1, 2014

West Valley Food Bank appreciates all local support

Sunday February 2, 2014 | By:Kris Aldrow, Cora and Sherwood |
Editor:

At the start of the new year, the West Valley Food Bank would like to say thank you for the generous support from the community throughout 2013.

We were blessed to receive many donations from private individuals. Especially generous donations were made by the West Valley Demonstration Project, the West Valley Volunteer Fire Department, International Connection Cub, Ashford Snowmobile and BP Shagula.

These contributions allow the West Valley Food Bank to continue providing assistance to our community; they made it possible for us to provide more than 5,860 meals to residents in the town of Ashford and the West Valley School District.

We would also like to thank the many volunteers that help to operate the food bank.

Kris Aldrow,
Cora and Sherwood Miller
co-coordinators

Town of Ashford and West Valley school taxes shocking

Sunday January 26, 2014 | By: Arthur Munson |



Editor:

Welcome to the New Year. Last month, we heard the good news about how the West Valley School District was stockpiling money by slowly overtaxing the populace, a little at a time. The strategy was to take it in small amounts and the taxpayer will barely notice it. Shuffle it around and the comptroller will take years to catch on that you are manipulating the rules on reserve levels. Apparently, the town board stood up and took cash before the school district took it for themselves.

Fortunately for the town board, the comptroller makes it relatively easy. All they needed to do was pass a town law to let them ignore the 2 percent tax cap. In West Valley, that's easy, no one will come to the public hearing, and even if they did, who cares, just ignore them. So they did pass the law and now they were free to raise the taxes as much as they saw fit.

I would write the comptroller to complain, but I am certain that, just like with the school board, the best he would do is offer suggestions. Suggestions which, by the way, they have no intention to listen to, if you read the entire letter of response from them to the comptroller. So, like the school board, the town board acts with total lack of regard to the financial situation of its constituency.

Here comes the shock – the town tax increase this year will be 36.5 percent. I had to read it several times, before I could believe it. What about the awe? That's easy, it has been in place for generations. Awe – no one will complain, protest, say a word or even show up to vote.

Stay tuned however. The town board and school have a master plan. Just like in the past, when the nuclear industry came into town and saved us from ourselves, there is another rescuer at our doorsteps. We will surely hand over our souls to the big gas and oil industry and welcome hydrofracking into our back yards. By refusing to pass any town law to stop or limit fracking, they have already staked their position.

Arthur Munson
West Valley

West Valley Cleanup To Lobby For More Funds

Posted: Saturday, January 25, 2014 9:00 am

By Rick Miller, Special to The Press

ASHFORD — Members of the West Valley Citizens Task Force must have breathed a collective sigh of relief when the federal Omnibus Budget Bill that passed earlier this month contained \$64 million for the West Valley Demonstration Project cleanup instead of the \$47 million initially in the House budget plan.

At Wednesday, Jan. 22's monthly meeting of the West Valley Citizens Task Force, members resolved to start sooner in lobbying for the \$75-million-a-year funding the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) recommended in its Record of Decision on a two-phase cleanup over 20-plus years.

"They are starting the budget process for 2016 now in the Department of Energy," said Bryan Bower, DOE director at the West Valley Demonstration Project. "This is the best time to send letters." He said the 2014 budget actually contains \$66 million, \$2 million of which is in defense funding for site security.

Task force members signed letters to more than a dozen public officials involved in the federal budget process pressing for \$75 million in funding on a sustained basis. U.S. Rep. Tom Reed, R-Corning, who has been instrumental in keeping the West Valley cleanup a priority, credited a visit by Task Force members to DOE officials in Washington, D.C., last summer for getting DOE officials to recommend a higher funding level.

"We have to act now to get the DOE to recommend the higher level to the president so we don't have to go to Congress to ask for more money than was in the president's budget," said Paul Bembia, the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority director at the West Valley site.

Christopher Gerwitz, the Ashford town supervisor and a member of the West Valley Citizens Task Force, said he was glad to see the recently passed federal budget contained a higher level of funding than was originally expected.

Another Task Force member, Joseph Patti of West Valley, said he was concerned that the Phase 1 cleanup would be completed before the Phase 2 cleanup was in a position to get started and the labor force would be lost.

Bower said he does not expect there will be that type of a gap.

Raymond Vaughn of Hamburg expressed concern that some of the facilities being demolished in Phase 1 could be used during the cleanup in Phase 2.

Even while demolition, off-site shipment and other aspects of the cleanup continue, studies are underway involving the second phase of the cleanup, which is more than 10 years away. Some wonder: What will be done with several underground liquid waste tanks, which still contain radioactive residue, and will the state and federal low-level radioactive waste disposal areas be exhumed and disposed off-site?

Without a permanent site for 275 10-foot by 2-foot stainless steel cylinders filled with highly radioactive glass, the DOE has decided to place them — five at a time — in storage casks and multi-purpose canister overpacks that will be placed on a large concrete pad that has been constructed on the south plateau. Storage casks are being fabricated on-site. The multi-purpose canister overpacks will be used to store the cylinders for up to 50 years, or as soon as a national repository can be made available.

The canisters will be removed from the Main Process Building beginning in mid-2015, and will probably take place over two or more years, depending on funding levels, Bower said.

Nuclear Cleanup Site In Line For \$64 Million

Posted: Saturday, January 18, 2014 12:15 am

By Rick Miller Olean Times Herald | 0 comments

WEST VALLEY — The West Valley Demonstration Project is in line for \$64 million in federal funding in federal year 2014-15, an increase of \$2 million, according to U.S. Rep. Tom Reed, R-Corning.

Increased funding for the ongoing nuclear cleanup at the site, which is the nation's first commercial spent nuclear fuel reprocessing plant in the Cattaraugus County town of Ashford, is included in the House-passed consolidated appropriations bill.

The West Valley site was competing for a slice of \$231,765,000 contained in the Non-Defense Environmental Cleanup efforts in the House-passed bill, Rep. Reed said.

Rep. Reed and Rep. Brian Higgins of Buffalo cooperated on the West Valley funding.

"We stood strong with the local community for West Valley funding and the cumulative efforts are being recognized with this important funding," Rep. Reed said. "Protecting public safety is one of the most important functions of government and one that provides long-term economic and environmental benefits to the region. The House-passed appropriations bill balances the need to reduce Washington's spending while prioritizing the projects — those like West Valley — that taxpayers will see a clear return on their investment."

House members passed the bipartisan consolidated appropriations bill Wednesday, and the Senate followed suit on Thursday.

Ashford Supervisor Christopher Gerwitz, a member of the West Valley Citizens Task Force which oversees the cleanup by the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) and New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA), was glad to learn of the increased funding level for the West Valley cleanup.

"I'm happy to hear that the West Valley Demonstration Project will receive \$64 million in funding through the omnibus bill," said Mr. Gerwitz. "This level of funding will allow work to go forward this year as planned."

Bryan Bower, director of the West Valley Demonstration Project for the Department of Energy, was unavailable for comment Friday. He is expected to update Citizens Task Force members on the funding situation for the upcoming year when it meets Wednesday at the Ashford Office Complex at 6:30 p.m.

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Kathy McGoldrick, a longtime member of the Citizens Task Force, said the small increase "certainly will help." The Citizens Task Force has been working with Rep. Reed leading up to federal budget time to fund the cleanup at sustainable levels.

Ms. McGoldrick, who indicated she could not speak for the Task Force, said she was personally grateful for Rep. Reed in helping to obtain the funding increase. "Originally, the federal government committed to \$75 million a year for the cleanup in the environmental impact statement. This would allow the project to proceed more quickly and save taxpayers \$100 million over the years. We've had a lot of delays in the Phase 2 decommissioning work."

Ms. McGoldrick said, "We've got to keep pushing this forward every year. We are struggling not to fall behind" in the cleanup.

In gearing up support for West Valley funding, Rep. Reed had multiple meetings with the West Valley Citizen Task Force, and welcomed them to Washington for a meeting at the Department of Energy in 2013. His amendment to restore millions more in funding for West Valley passed the House last summer, ensuring nuclear cleanup continues in full force at the site.

"Our advocacy for West Valley does not stop with this appropriations bill," Rep. Reed said. "We will see this project through to completion and be a vocal advocate for nuclear cleanup. It's good for the safety of the local community, the care of the environment and taxpayers who would otherwise see added costs in future years."

(Contact reporter Rick Miller at rmiller@oleantimesherald.com)

Behind the shipyard's acquisition of S.M. Stoller

By [Hugh Lessig](#), hlessig@dailypress.com

4:58 p.m. EST, January 20, 2014

The first time Newport News Shipbuilding teamed up with S.M. Stoller, the end result fell short of the mark. But the record can be deceiving.

It happened a few years ago when the two companies put together a proposal for the Department of Energy to clean up a site in **West Valley, N.Y.**, that had once reprocessed used nuclear fuel. Stoller had a wealth of experience cleaning up radioactive materials at a variety of sites. Newport News brought its nuclear background that comes from building aircraft carriers and submarines.

"We didn't win that particular proposal," said Pete Diakun, NNS vice president of energy programs. "But we gained a relationship."

Working on that proposal, the two companies saw how their employees complemented each other. Stoller's staff included geologists, chemists, chemical engineers and other specialists who devise ways to clean up old uranium mills, sites with low-level waste and other properties. Newport News, the nation's only builder of nuclear-powered aircraft carriers, has a broad expertise in nuclear engineering, modeling and simulation and other areas.

So about a year ago, the relationship that began in West Valley turned into a full-blown courtship. On Jan. 2, the two firms tied the corporate knot when the shipyard, a division of Huntington Ingalls Industries, acquired Stoller.

The value of the transaction was not disclosed. However, shipyard and Stoller officials say both sides stand to gain.

'Game-changer'

Stoller has been doing business since 1959. Founded in New York by Sydney M. Stoller, it opened an office in Colorado in 1974 and moved the company headquarters there in 1984. It bills itself as a top environmental remediation contractor for the Department of Energy.

"Our strategic plan has always been to grow the business," said Nick Lombardo, company president. While they've been successful, "we have not been able to get large enough to compete with the major players in our arena."

Stoller's staff numbers 650, so teaming up with the shipyard and its 23,000 employees is like David hooking up with a friendly Goliath. Stoller will operate as a wholly-owned subsidiary of HII under the Newport News Shipbuilding division.

"It's a game-changer for us," Lombardo said. "It brings a depth of resources."

Meanwhile, the shipyard sees a chance to expand its energy programs, gaining Stoller's experience in soil and water remediation. And although Stoller is much smaller personnel-wise, it has a large geographic footprint because of its work with the Department of Energy.

"They are positioned at ninety-plus sites within the DOE complex," said Diakun.

The work is there to be had. The Office of Environmental Management within DOE has a decades-long plan to clean up sites that represent the legacy of 50 years of nuclear weapons development and government-sponsored nuclear energy research. With Stoller on the corporate team, Newport News hopes to snag a greater share of that business.

Plus, diversifying tends to make good business sense anyway.

"Newport News Shipbuilding has been trying to take its core competencies and expand them (beyond) the Department of Defense," he said.

Like other defense contractors, the shipyard has watched Congress struggle to find consensus on defense spending. The contracting community has dealt with across-the-board spending cuts imposed by sequestration and the prospect of smaller military budgets in years to come.

"There will be competition for those remaining dollars," Diakun said. "To that extent, we want to take advantage of the fact that we have these capabilities."

Contact Hugh Lessig at 757-247-7812.