

# The Post-Journal

## Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement To Assess Potential Effects Of Local Nuclear Project

03-11-2018 - The U.S. Department of Energy and the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority are preparing a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for Decommissioning and/or Long-Term Stewardship at the West Valley Demonstration Project and Western New York Nuclear Service Center.

In 1962, Nuclear Fuel Services Inc. entered into agreements with the Atomic Energy Commission and New York state to construct the first commercial reprocessing plant of nuclear fuel in the United States. NFS, a private company, built and operated the fuel reprocessing plant and burial grounds, processing 640 metric tons of spent nuclear fuel at the Western New York Nuclear Service Center from 1966 to 1972 under an Atomic Energy Commission license. The plant shut down in 1972 for modifications and never resumed operations. The West Valley Site includes the Department of Energy's West Valley Demonstration Project, the WNYNSC, and the state-licensed disposal area. NYSERDA holds title to the entire WNYNSC on behalf of the state of New York. Under a cooperative agreement, the Department of Energy controls, but does not own, the area to conduct the West Valley Demonstration Project.

In 2010, the Department of Energy and NYSERDA published a Final Environmental Impact Statement, DOE Record of Decision and NYSERDA Findings Statement for the West Valley Site. This resulted in selection of the Phased Decision-making Alternative and Phase 1 decommissioning, including facility disposition and soil remediation. The Phased Decision-making Alternative deferred decisions (known as Phase 2 decisions) on several facilities for 10 years (the expected time frame required to complete Phase 1 decommissioning activities) while DOE and NYSERDA complete certain scientific studies (Phase 1 Studies), gather additional information, and perform additional analyses to foster inter-agency consensus and inform the decisions.

The organizations intend to jointly prepare a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement to inform Phase 2 decision-making for the facilities remaining after completion of Phase 1 activities. The remaining facilities include the Waste Tank Farm, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission-Licensed Disposal Area, State-Licensed Disposal Area, Construction and Demolition Debris Landfill, non-source area of the North Plateau Groundwater Plume, Cesium Prong, balance of the WNYNSC property, and contaminated stream sediments.

The SEIS will further the purposes of the National Environmental Policy Act by incorporating the new information produced by the Phase 1 Studies, other scientific studies being performed at the West Valley Site, and a probabilistic performance assessment as part of the evaluation of the potential environmental

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impacts of the Phase 2 alternatives. At this time, DOE and NYSERDA are considering the following potential alternatives and have not yet selected a preferred alternative:

- No Action
- Sitewide Close-in-Place
- Sitewide Removal
- Hybrid(s) (partial in-place closure and partial removal)

The Phase 2 alternatives will be informed by comments received during the scoping period, the Phase 1 and other scientific studies being performed at the West Valley Site, and the results of a long-term probabilistic performance assessment.

A Notice of Intent and Draft Scope, which details more specifically the background and plans for the SEIS, was published in the Federal Register and notice about the availability of the Notice of Intent and Draft Scope was published in the New York State Environmental Notice Bulletin on Feb. 21 marking the start of the public scoping period, which continues until April 23. The Department of Energy and NYSERDA are encouraging the public to comment on the proposed scope of the SEIS and will accept comments through April 23. Comments received after April 23 will be considered to the extent practicable. Public scoping meetings to encourage public involvement and receive comments on the scope of the SEIS will be held as follows.

- West Valley Volunteer Hose Co., Inc., Firemen's Memorial Hall & Training, 9091 Rt. 240, West Valley, March 19, from 6-9:30 p.m.
- Erie County Community College City Campus, Minnie Gillette Auditorium, in the Post Office Building at 121 Ellicott Street, Buffalo, March 20, from 6-9:30 p.m.
- Cattaraugus Council Chambers, 12837 Route 438, Irving, March 21, from 6-9:30 p.m.

Registration begins at 6 p.m., followed by an informal poster session with presentations starting at 7 p.m. Recording of public comments will follow the presentations.

A project website ([SEISWestValleySite.com](http://SEISWestValleySite.com)) is under development that will include details on submitting comments and the Notice of Intent and Draft Scope, as well as other SEIS-related documents as they become available.