

# **Spectrum News – Buffalo**

## **DOE AND NYSERDA TAKING PUBLIC COMMENT ON WEST VALLEY CLEAN-UP**

By Alex Haight | March 21, 2018

BUFFALO, N.Y. — Neighbors of the Western New York Nuclear Service Center want to make sure their community is safe from nuclear contamination, both now and in the future.

But one of the containment options they prefer might increase of nuclear waste leaking into the soil at the site, a 3,338-acre site in West Valley. Nuclear fuel was reprocessed there from 1966 until 1972.

The federal Department of Energy was ordered by Congress to solidify the liquid high-level radioactive waste and transport it to a federal depository for permanent disposal.

Tuesday night, the federal Department of Energy and New York State Energy Research and Development Authority held a presentation at ECC to discuss actions they've taken over the last eight years at the site, including the decontamination, demolition and off-site disposal of several highly contaminated facilities.

The final public meeting is scheduled for Wednesday night at the Seneca Nation of Indians Cattaraugus Council Chambers in Irving starting at 6 p.m.

They are now taking public comment on the direction of Phase 2 of the plan.

A group of environmental activists held a press conference before the hearing, calling for an option which includes the removal of contaminated soil, sediment and groundwater.

"What we have to do at West Valley is clean up all of the nuclear waste, dig it up, secure it onsite so it does not end up in the Great Lakes, and in our children," said Barbara Warren of Citizens' Environmental Coalition.

The DOE and NYSERDA also presented a close-in-place alternative, which is a process where contaminants are left and fenced off.

Diane D'Arrigo of the Nuclear Information and Resource Service says she worries this is an option being considered because it's less expensive.

She says until all of the contaminants are excavated, the land will continue to erode and leak even more.

"It's already leaking radioactive Strontium-90, which is a bone seeker that causes leukemia and bone cancer, and there's no safe level."

The DOE and NYSERDA are also considering alternatives that would be a mix of the two options.

Comments can be submitted through April 23.

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