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Advocates urge for nuclear waste removal at West Valley

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WEST VALLEY, N.Y. (WKBW) - The goal for many in Erie and Cattaraugus County is simple, keep the waters of Cattaraugus Creek and Lake Erie clean. They feel the best way to do that, address what's happening at the West Valley Nuclear Waste Facility.

“We want them to exhume all the waste on the site in order to make sure that our water and our drinking water is absolutely clean,” said Lynda Schneekloth of the Western New York Environmental Alliance.

Currently, federal and state officials are weighing their options about what to do with the tons of nuclear waste that has been stored on the site for decades. The options are: better securing the waste that's there, removing the waste, a little bit of both, or do nothing.

People who spoke at a public hearing, Tuesday, want the waste removed.

“Total cleanup is the only answer, anything less than that is not good enough and that's what we're demanding,” said Todd Gates, the President of the Seneca Nation.

The fear is, the land surrounding the waste will one day erode, and spread radiation and waste into the waterways.

“The Buffalo, the Erie County water supply, is at risk from this site. The radioactivity is there now. It's dangerous now. It's going to stay dangerous for literally millions of years,” said Diane D'Arrigo with the Nuclear Information and Resource Service.

State and federal agencies are looking at studies and environmental impact reports. They say they will be considering public opinion submitted at Tuesday's meeting.