

Mitrano Wants To Spend More To Clean Up West Valley Plant



New York State Energy Research and Development Authority

New York Tracy Mitrano, Democratic nominee for the New York 23rd Congressional District, shared details Tuesday of how she would tackle the issue of the Western New York Nuclear Service Center cleanup of low-level radioactive waste at West Valley in Cattaraugus County.

Mitrano asserted that the \$75 million per year that is provided by a recently passed reauthorization bill from the House Energy and Commerce Committee is “*too little, too late*” and that closer to \$6 to \$10 billion ultimately needs to be spent to ensure effective cleanup.

Rep. Tom Reed, R-Corning, sponsored the bill that will provide \$75 million per year for the next eight years. Mitrano said that the insufficient funding from the bill represents another reason she thinks Reed has “*abandoned people.*”

“*He is simply not doing enough to clean up this site,*” Mitrano said.

Reed’s spokesman did not immediately return a call for comment.

Mitrano is concerned about the potentially cancer-causing nature of the radiation and the pollution caused by radioactive and chemical waste. Citing danger to nearby waterways, Mitrano is worried about contamination of Cattaraugus Creek and Lake Erie. She mentioned studies suggest pollution

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from the plant has reached as far as Lake Ontario, but pollution there could be traced to another source.

“The cleanup is gravely behind schedule and even the first phase is years from completion, in large part because appropriate funding has never been secured and an aggressive timeline with milestones has never been set,” Mitrano said.

The purpose of the Nuclear Service Center is to house and process low-level radioactive waste, remnants of years of spent nuclear fuel. The site was once the only private commercial facility for reprocessing and disposing radioactive waste. When Nuclear Fuel Services Inc. left the facility in 1975, a need for cleanup began as *“multiple buildings, lagoons, disposal areas, contaminated soil, 600,000 gallons of high-level radioactive waste and a still-migrating plume of radioactive groundwater”* remained according to New York State’s Department of Environmental Conservation.

See tomorrow’s edition of The Post-Journal for complete coverage.