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Reed visits West Valley site to view results of extra cleanup funds

- By [RICK MILLER Olean Times Herald](#) 1 hr ago



Bryan Bower (left), U.S. Department of Energy director at the West Valley Demonstration Project site speaks with U.S. Rep. Tom Reed, R-Corning, during at site tour Tuesday.
Photo provided

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WEST VALLEY — U.S. Rep. Tom Reed, R-Corning, visited the West Valley Demonstration Project Tuesday, saying it helps justify his support for the nuclear cleanup.

“They wanted to show us the results of what \$75 million a year for seven years looks like,” Reed said after what has become an annual tour.



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"To see firsthand the results of the investments is very helpful for me," the Southern Tier congressman said.

The former vitrification facility that helped convert 600,000 gallons of highly radioactive liquid waste into 275 glass logs is among the facilities that have been removed.

Reed said he also likes to meet with and thank some of the hundreds of site employees.

It was the site of the nation's first and only commercial nuclear reprocessing facility in the northern Cattaraugus County town of Ashford. Nuclear Fuel Services Inc., closed the plant in 1972 for retrofitting, but it never re-opened. It then abandoned the plant. The West Valley Demonstration Project Act of 1980 initiated funding for the site cleanup.

The U.S. Department of Energy, which manages the site, is currently undertaking phase 2 studies for the final cleanup of the site.

The most controversial items will be the removal of underground steel tanks and buried low-level radioactive waste in state and federal landfills adjacent to the WVDP site, as well as the demolition of the Main Process Plant — open air demolition or contained.

The House has pledged to continue to fund the cleanup to the tune of \$75 million a year. The White House has penciled in the same amount in its 2019-2020 budget. "The Energy and Commerce Committee in the Senate is favorable to the bill" as well, Reed said. "We have to get funding to continue each year. The seven-year bill is a very important signal. That's what we need for the Senate."

The funding bill comes up in the Senate in September. With both the House and White House backing the West Valley cleanup funding, "It bodes well for us," Reed said.

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"I'm seeing the physical results of the demolition," Reed said. "This is very helpful for other (DOE) sites like Hanford, Washington. They share equipment. They share best practices."

Reed said his message to the West Valley team led by DOE site director Bryan Bower and CHBWV, the cleanup contractor, was to keep in contact with his office.

"Kudos to the cleanup teams," Reed said after meeting with some of the cleanup workers. "I know it's hard work," he added.

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