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AFTER YEARS LONG BATTLE, SCHUMER, GILLIBRAND SECURE +\$75 MILLION IN FED FUNDING FOR WEST VALLEY DEMONSTRATION PROJECT CLEAN UP IN JUST-UNVEILED SPENDING PACKAGE; NEGLECTED PROGRAM HAS POSED HEALTH & ENVIRONMENTAL THREAT

*The **West Valley Reprocessing Plant**—An Operational Nuclear Fuel Reprocessing Facility Between 1966-72—Left Millions Of Gallons Of Radioactive Waste In WNY’s Backyard*

Schumer, Gillibrand Announce 2020 Spending Package Set To Pass Congress Imminently, Includes \$75.2 Million In Federal Funding To Further Clean-Up Out-Of-Use Former Nuclear Site

*Senators: Spending Package Will Provide **West Valley** With Resources Necessary To Keep Cleanup On Track For 2020, But More Work Still Must Be Done*

U.S. Senate Minority Leader Charles E. Schumer and U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand today announced that \$75.2 million in federal funding for the clean-up of the **West Valley Demonstration Project** was included in the just-announced bipartisan omnibus spending package for Fiscal Year 2020, which is set to pass Congress this week. The funding will be used to continue remediating millions of gallons of nuclear waste from the **West Valley Reprocessing Plant**, which presents a massive threat to public health

“After years of neglect, this \$75 million federal investment will fully fund this year's cleanup in **West Valley**. Each year that the **West Valley Demonstration Project** goes underfunded, the amount of time and money it will take to decontaminate and remove the radioactive waste increases. So this



\$75 million is a positive step in the right direction,” said **Senator Schumer**. “I will continue to push my colleagues in Congress to invest in the cleanup effort, and keep funding at this appropriate level in the coming years, to protect Cattaraugus County residents and all New Yorkers, and eventually end this public health and environmental hazard.”

“I’m pleased that the end of year spending bill includes critical funding to help cleanup decades-old nuclear waste in **West Valley**, which continues to pose a major risk to our communities and environment in Western New York,” said **Senator Gillibrand, member of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee**. “This funding will help ensure that the work to cleanup and restore the site continues to move forward on schedule. New Yorkers should be able to live and work without worrying about whether nuclear waste is affecting their health and environment, and I will continue to fight for the full cleanup of the **West Valley Demonstration Project**.”

The senators explained the recently-released federal spending package gives the **West Valley Demonstration Project** \$75.2 million to help clean-up the site. In 2008, the federal Department of Energy (DOE) issued an Environmental Impact Statement that said the site would need millions of dollars in federal support for the most cost-efficient plan. Since then, Schumer and Gillibrand have fought for and secured millions of federal dollars in order to give the **West Valley Demonstration Project** the resources it needs to support this critical cleanup effort. DOE has estimated that, in order to keep cleanup on track, the site needs \$75M each year. However, most years, Congress has shortchanged the cleanup effort. In FY 2016 the West Valley site only received \$59.2 million for cleanup efforts; in 2015, it received \$60 million; in 2014, it received \$66 million; in 2013, it received \$61 million; in 2012, it received \$66 million; and in 2011, it received \$59 million. In FY 2018, the site received \$75 million.

In March 2015, Schumer, during an in-person meeting, urged the former President’s nominee for the Office of Environmental Management at the DOE, Monica Regalbuto, to prioritize the complete cleanup of the **West Valley Demonstration Project** and support full federal funding for the effort. During their meeting, Schumer argued that the short-changing of **West Valley** is out-of-step with other Department of Energy (DOE) cleanup sites, which have seen either sustained or increased funding. Schumer also argued that the underfunding of the cleanup only increases the amount of time the project will take, wasting taxpayer dollars and risking the health of Western New Yorkers.

West Valley spends approximately \$20 million each year on utilities, worker salaries, and other expenses so that decontamination work may continue. The senator’s newly secured funding level will aid the DOE’s ability to adequately fund the **West Valley** cleanup site. Schumer and Gillibrand said it is only through full and swift clean-up that the damage to public health, the watershed, and the surrounding community can be mitigated.

West Valley is the site of the first and, to date, only commercial reprocessing plant in the United States. After beginning operations in 1966 with a theoretical capacity to reprocess 300 metric tons of spent nuclear fuel per year, the facility processed a total of 640 tons of nuclear waste in six years before shutting down in 1972. The **West Valley Demonstration Project Act**, signed into law on October 1, 1980, required the Department of Energy to solidify and dispose of the high-level waste and decommission the facilities used in the process.

The **West Valley Reprocessing Plant** was formerly an operational plant for the reprocessing of used nuclear fuel at **West Valley**, New York. It was operated from 1966-72. During this time period, 600,000 gallons of highly radioactive waste accumulated in an underground waste tank. Today, millions of gallons of radioactive waste remain at the site. The plant was shut down in 1972 after regulations at the time required plant modifications. These new regulations were deemed by plant operators to be economically infeasible.