

Groups call for more precautions to be taken for West Valley demolition



By Barbara O'Brien, News Staff Reporter

Demolition is to start this month on the Main Plant Process Building at the **West Valley Demonstration Project**.

More than two dozen local and national organizations are urging the governor and state leaders to call for more safety measures during the demolition of the largest radioactive building at the **West Valley Demonstration Project**. Deconstruction of the Main Plant Process Building (MPPB) is to start this month and will take nearly three years. The groups want the building enclosed during demolition and real-time, publicly reported off-site monitoring before, during and after demolition. They also want a permanent, publicly accessible, online library with all West Valley documents, including assumptions used for cleanup decisions and estimated releases. "The West Valley Reprocessing Building should be enclosed prior to demolition to prevent the release of radioactive particulate matter and we need real time publicly reported air monitoring," Charley Bowman of Western New York Drilling Defense said in a statement. For months, some have called for the building – which is 130 feet wide, 270 feet long – to be enclosed. Instead, workers will spray water on the areas of the building being razed. The water will be collected, treated on site and released, if possible. Otherwise, it will be shipped off site. The company performing the demolition, CH2M HILL BWXT West Valley, is prepared to provide real-time monitoring in the immediate vicinity of the building, according to company spokesman Joseph T. Pillittere. That will provide early warning of a potential change in conditions. The company has continuous air monitors and fixed air samplers placed slightly

farther away from the deconstruction site to monitor potential migration of contamination. It also has highly sensitive ambient air samplers around the site at the closest public access, which is about one mile from the deconstruction area. Pillittere said the approach incorporates best practices and lessons learned from **West Valley Demonstration Project** and other Department of Energy work. “An extensive modelling and real-time monitoring system has been established to help ensure that any potential radiological exposure from deconstruction activities is kept well below regulatory levels,” Pillittere said. “The safety of the workforce, community, and surrounding environment remain WVDP’s top priority, and all precautions have been taken to ensure MPPB deconstruction activities align with this ever-important priority.” Among the 25 groups signing the letter to the state leaders are the Coalition on West Valley Nuclear Wastes, Nuclear Information and Resource Service, Niagara Group and Atlantic Chapter of the Sierra Club, Citizens Environmental Coalition, League of Women Voters Buffalo/Niagara and Indigenous Women’s Initiative.