

DOE cites superior safety record at WVDP

By NATALIE CONDOR-SMITH
Journal Correspondent

In a project update at the West Valley Citizen Task Force meeting held Wednesday, Sept. 23, Bryan Bower, Department of Energy director, said that it has been a year since the last reportable accident on site. "About two weeks ago we celebrated one year without a recordable injury and are now approaching 7 million hours with only one lost-time work injury," he said.

Citing safety performance fig-

ures, Bower said that WVDP has gone two years and five months without a lost-time work injury; 1.8 million hours without a lost-time work injury and one year without a recordable injury. Comparing these numbers to 15 other environmental management plants and subcontractors, WVDP ranked first in safety, and, as Bower said, "Bragging about this is OK."

Bower then gave an update on the impact of the Aug. 9 and 10 storm events, which he said had minimal impacts on the WVDP facilities. He said a culvert pipe under the roadway leading to the

Nuclear Regulatory Commission-licensed Disposal Area was plugged and eroded; there was minor erosion on non-paved roadways which have now all been repaired, and a plugged laundry discharge line which may or may not have been related to the storm. With respect to lakes and dams, high water levels occurred with some surface erosion and brush has been cleared and grass cut on the face of the dams to facilitate weekly dam and spillway inspections. "We're looking at how we can shift some money around to repair the spillways," he said.

Bower also said the railroad repair at the Fox Valley Road landslide area is nearing completion and that drainage enhancements will be added to improve bank stability. Track is due to be installed in the next few weeks. Apparently a large amount of gravel was washed down stream but large boulders stayed where they were.

Other project updates cited by Bower were accomplished in the main plant, including isolating and decontaminating acid vessels which required a 200 ton crane to bring them out of the building. "It's a pretty impressive operation to watch," noted Bower. Once removed, the vessels were packed for off-site shipment and disposal.

Other work in the main plant included what Bower described as significant asbestos removal which has now been completed. "Just about everything done in the '60s, we are trying to undo," he said. "We also have to deal with a lot of hazardous waste."

It is anticipated that all the work in the Acid Recovery Cell in the main plant will be completed mid-October.

Bower said that since June, there are 54 newly hired employees at the plant including site operators, supervisors, professional staff and janitors, all hired under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.

Finally, Bower noted that the Revised Draft Environment Impact Statement public comment period closed on Sept. 8, with a revised anticipated date for the final statement in Feb. 2010. The revised anticipated date for Record of Decision will be March 2010. The next regular meeting of the Citizen Task Force will be at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, Oct. 28, at the Ashford Office Complex in Ashford Hollow.

Springville Journal, Thursday, October 22, 2009



Resident criticizes Ashford supervisor

Notes from the Ashford town meeting on October 14

There are proponents and detractors of wind energy conversion systems (WECS) and in the town of Ashford Wednesday evening, October 14, the council members heard from resident Susan Munson who lambasted Supervisor Gerwitz for comments he made to the Journal in its September 17 issue.

“Supervisor Gerwitz’ remark referring to the proposed wind energy conversion systems project as the ‘big windmill park’ as reported in the Springville Journal, September 17, 2009 edition drew my ire,” she said. “The big windmill park indeed.”

Munson went on to say that there are no comparisons between WECS and windmills and that nowhere in the town’s proposed local wind law are windmills mentioned. She described WECS as large scale, slightly under 400 feet in height, that have been demonstrated to be intrusive, disruptive and destructive to health and property values.

As for Gerwitz’ description of a “big windmill park,” Munson said that the WECS are on private property leased by Horizon Wind Energy which could not be portrayed as a park that provides amenities to the public such as children’s playground equipment or walking trails. She mentioned that when she visited the Bliss/Eagle area project, ‘No Trespassing’ signs were placed on the access roads leading to each turbine. In other words, Munson chided Gerwitz for misleading terminology in using words such as windmill rather than turbine and saying park which implies public amenities instead of industrial use.

Munson then went on to refer to another comment Gerwitz made which was reported in the Journal on July 9 that he thought the 1,000 foot positioning of turbines from residences as “appropriate,” and that “I don’t think they make a whole lot of noise.”

“Statements such as these show a predisposition and prejudice to pass the flawed pro-wind law and a blatant attempt to desensitize the public to the importance of the issues,” said Munson. “It does not appear that Supervisor Gerwitz concerned himself with any of the numerous reports/studies provided to the Board from various, researched reports.”

Munson distributed a packet of footnoted documents and reports that she thought had previously been provided to the Board and requested that they be entered into the minutes. She noted that the documents show there are serious concerns when allowing large scale industrial wind turbines near homes.

“Your cavalier attitude to refuse to accept factual rebuttal is detrimental to public health, safety and the retention of property values in this community,” said Munson. She then urged the Board members to look at the negative repercussions of the project and not attempt to sell out a subset of the community to fuel the Town’s bottom line.

“Thank you very much,” said Gerwitz, “I appreciate the input.”

In other business:

- The town’s Budget Officer Bill King presented the tentative budget for 2010 which was approved by the Board and thus became the preliminary town budget.

In summary, King said the total amount to be raised by taxes is \$228,689 compared to \$218,349 for last year, a 4.7 percent increase. There is no increase in the general fund or the West Valley and Ashford Hollow Light Districts, but there is in the highway department. “The interesting numbers are that the total exempt property in the town of Ashford is \$517,480,286 which leaves \$76,200,157 of taxable entities for us to tax,” he said. “That’s what we face in the town of Ashford. We are by far the highest tax exempt

township in the state of New York.”

The Board discussed a proposed 30 percent increase in employee health insurance premiums by Blue Cross/Blue Shield. “This insurance game is highway robbery,” said King, noting that other options are being explored for this coverage.

Gerwitz thanked King for his work and long hours on preparing the budget. “I think you did a fantastic job as usual, Bill,” he said.

A public hearing on the budget will be held at 7.30 p.m. on Wednesday, Nov. 11 at the Community Center in West Valley following which will be the regular meeting of the town of Ashford.

- Following a request by the town that the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) investigate the possibility of any properties at the Western New York Nuclear Service Center site being put back on the Town’s tax rolls, Paul Bembia, program director of NYSERDA, said a warehouse and approximately 375 acres of land have been identified following an evaluation. However, an application has first to be made to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and if approved, it will be released from license. Bembia has asked for some time at the town’s next working session on Oct. 27 to discuss and give an update on the matter.

- The fire chief has advised that the fire siren on the Community Center is not working and has asked the town of Ashford to repair it. However, it has yet to be decided whose responsibility it is to make the siren operable again.

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NY, feds agree to costs in cleaning up nuke site

Associated Press - October 27, 2009 7:55 PM ET

ALBANY, N.Y. (AP) - Gov. David Paterson says the federal government is agreeing to pay for 90 percent of the clean up of the Western New York Nuclear Service Center known as the West Valley Site, ending a decade-long dispute.

Under the agreement New York will pay 10 percent of the cost of cleaning up the Cattaraugus County site.

So far the cost to the state and federal governments is more than \$2.4 billion in cleanup costs for the high-level waste site. New York has paid more than \$270 million.

The 3,300-acre site 30 miles south of Buffalo housed the nation's first commercial nuclear reprocessing facility from 1966 to 1972.

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[printer friendly format](#)**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
October 27, 2009****GOVERNOR PATERSON ANNOUNCES AGREEMENT ON FINANCIAL
RESPONSIBILITIES FOR CLEANUP OF THE WESTERN NEW YORK
NUCLEAR SERVICE CENTER**

Governor David A. Paterson today announced that New York State and the federal government have reached an agreement resolving financial responsibility for the cleanup of radioactive waste at the Western New York Nuclear Service Center, also known as West Valley Site, in Cattaraugus County. The resolution ends a decade-long dispute over the allocation of cleanup costs between the state and federal governments.

"This resolution is a significant milestone in our ongoing work to decontaminate the West Valley Site and ensure the area's long-term environmental health and safety," Governor Paterson said. "With this agreement, our state and federal governments may proceed with a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities."

The agreement filed today, known as a Consent Decree, resolves a lawsuit filed in 2006 by New York State against the federal government, clarifies the federal government's responsibilities under a 1980 federal law, and divides costs between the two governments for other facilities at the site. The State Attorney General's Office and the federal government have signed the consent decree, along with the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority, which owns title to the land on behalf of New York State. Following a 30-day public comment period, the State will review the comments and ask the Court to approve the Consent Decree if this is appropriate in light of the comments received.

The agreement does not prescribe specific remediation actions, nor does it affect cleanup alternatives that are currently the subject of a draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the site.

Under a law passed by Congress in 1980, the U.S. Department of Energy is responsible for certain aspects of the cleanup and disposal of nuclear contamination on approximately 200 acres of the West Valley site. As directed by that law, New York State is responsible for 10 percent of the costs of the cleanup directed by Congress, with the federal government paying 90 percent. New York is the only state that contributes to the cleanup of a high-level radioactive waste site. To date, the federal and state governments have incurred more than \$2.4 billion in cleanup costs, with New York paying more than \$270 million.

In the agreement issued today, specific allocations vary by the facility, with the federal government continuing to pay 90 percent of the costs for many of the cleanup activities. Both the State and Federal Governments have, however, agreed to different percentages of the cleanup costs for some important facilities, such as the site disposal areas and the radioactive groundwater plume

The West Valley site is located approximately 30 miles south of Buffalo. It was once home to the nation's first and only privately-operated, commercial nuclear fuel reprocessing facility. The facility was located at the Western New York Nuclear Service Center, a 3,300-acre parcel currently owned by NYSERDA on behalf of New York State. The reprocessing operation separated reusable uranium and plutonium from spent fuel, which came from both commercial and federal defense-related reactors. The facility shut down in 1972 and never re-opened.

A copy of the Consent Decree is available at: <http://www.ny.gov/governor/press/pdf/>

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Business First of Buffalo, 10-28-2009

NYS, feds reach deal on West Valley

Gov. David Paterson said an accord has been struck to pay for cleanup at the West Valley site in Cattaraugus County, ending a long dispute between new York state and the federal government.

The agreement, or consent decree, calls for the federal government to pay for 90 percent of the cleanup, with the state covering the remaining 10 percent. The announcement also closes a three-year old law suit in the matter and clarifies responsibilities on both sides.

Officials say the cost to the state and federal governments is above \$2.4 billion with New York having paid more than \$270 million.

The site, also known as the **West Valley Nuclear Service Center**, is 30 miles south of Buffalo. The nation's first commercial nuclear reprocessing facility operated there from 1966 to 1972 but has not reopened.

NY, feds agree to costs in cleaning up nuke site

By [Eddie DAnna](#)

October 28, 2009, 4:35AM

ALBANY, N.Y. -- Gov. David Paterson announced Tuesday that the federal government is agreeing to pay for 90 percent of the clean up of the Western New York Nuclear Service Center known as the West Valley Site, ending a decade-long dispute.

Under the agreement New York will pay 10 percent of the cost of cleaning up the Cattaraugus County site.

So far the cost to the state and federal governments is more than \$2.4 billion in cleanup costs for the high-level waste site. New York has paid more than \$270 million.

The 3,300-acre site 30 miles south of Buffalo housed the nation's first commercial nuclear reprocessing facility from 1966 to 1972.

"This resolution is a significant milestone in our ongoing work to decontaminate the West Valley Site and ensure the area's long-term environmental health and safety," Paterson said. "With this agreement, our state and federal governments may proceed with a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities."

The agreement filed Tuesday ends a 2006 lawsuit filed by the state under former Gov. George Pataki against the federal government. A court still needs to provide final approval of the agreement, following a 30-day comment period.

The agreement doesn't cite specific ways the site is to be cleaned up, a major issue for activists in the area.

A report funded by the New York Legislature estimated the cost of complete excavation at \$9.9 billion, and put the expense of maintaining the site over the next 1,000 years at \$13 billion to \$27 billion -- more if waste leaks.

LOCAL NEWS

WEST VALLEY

U.S. and state settle on cleanup cost at nuclear site

By JERRY ZREMSKI

NEWS WASHINGTON BUREAU CHIEF

WASHINGTON — The federal government and the state have settled a decades-old dispute over how to split the cost of the cleanup of the West Valley Demonstration Project, a massive task that could cost as much as \$9 billion.

The deal, filed in federal court in Buffalo on Tuesday, sets percentages that the federal government and the state will pay for particular elements of the cleanup of the Cattaraugus County nuclear site.

Because the scope of the cleanup has not yet been determined, it's impossible to predict how much either government will pay, said Bryan Bower, the U.S. Department of Energy's director of the West Valley project.

Under the deal, the federal government will pay 90 percent of the cost of the cleanup of the high-level nuclear waste tanks at West Valley, with the state paying 10 percent, Bower said. The same percentages will apply to the cleanup of the original processing building at the site.

Meanwhile, the state and federal governments will evenly split the cleanup cost of much of the ground water contamination stemming from the site, along with the cleanup cost of the federally licensed disposal area. The state will pay 70 percent of the cost of the cleanup of the state-licensed disposal area, with the federal government picking up the rest.

Exactly what all that means won't be known until the spring, when a final environmental impact statement and cleanup decision will be released. The overall cost of the cleanup could

be as low as \$1 billion or as high as \$9 billion, depending on how much waste is removed from the site.

Nevertheless, both Bower and Gov. David A. Paterson expressed relief that an agreement had finally been reached.

"After nearly 30 years of struggling with this issue, we are happy to see that all parties were able to put their differences aside and work toward a solution that is best for both the federal and state taxpayer," Bower said. "With the cost responsibility issues behind us, we can move forward, hand in hand, with the ongoing cleanup of the site."

Meanwhile, Paterson said: "This resolution is a significant milestone in our ongoing work to decontaminate the West Valley site and ensure the area's long-term environmental health and safety. With this agree-

ment, our state and federal governments may proceed with a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities."

Some \$2.4 billion already has been spent on the cleanup, with the federal government paying most of it and the state paying about \$270 million.

West Valley was the site of the nation's only privately operated commercial nuclear fuel reprocessing facility. The operation separated reusable uranium and plutonium from spent fuel, which came from both commercial and federal nuclear reactors.

The facility shut down in 1972, and the state and federal governments have been arguing about the liability for its cleanup since then.

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WKBW - TV - Buffalo, New York, 10-28-2009

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NYS, feds reach deal on West Valley

Originally printed at <http://www.wkbw.com/news/business/bizfirst/66877852.html>

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- The Gov Monitor - <http://thegovmonitor.com> -

New York Highlights Agreement For Cleanup Of Nuclear Service Center

Posted By [admin](#) On October 28, 2009 @ 10:10 am In [Energy & Environment](#), [Governance](#), [United States](#) | [No Comments](#)

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The West Valley site is located approximately 30 miles south of Buffalo. It was once home to the nation's first and only privately-operated, commercial nuclear fuel reprocessing facility. The facility was located at the Western New York Nuclear Service Center, a 3,300-acre parcel currently owned by NYSERDA on behalf of New York State. The reprocessing operation separated reusable uranium and plutonium from spent fuel, which came from both commercial and federal defense-related reactors. The facility shut down in 1972 and never re-opened.

A copy of the Consent Decree is available at: <http://www.ny.gov/governor/press/pdf/NoticeofLodgingFinal102709.pdf> [1].

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WNED-AM 970 NEWS, 10-28-2009



State, Feds Agree on West Valley Cleanup Costs

BUFFALO (wned) - The federal government has agreed to pick up a majority of the costs related to the nuclear waste cleanup at the West Valley Demonstration Project.

Responsibility of the \$9 billion cleanup has been a source of dispute between New York State and the federal government since the facility closed in 1972.

The deal was filed in federal court in Buffalo Tuesday and calls for federal funding to cover 90 percent of the cost of cleaning up high level nuclear waste storage tanks. The state will pay for a larger share of cleaning ground water contamination around the facility.

The state has already spent \$270 million on the project over the last three decades. In all, \$2.4 billion has been spent on clearing nuclear waste from West Valley.

WIVB CHANNEL 4, Buffalo

Agreement in nuclear site clean up

Fed and State to pay for clean up

Updated: Wednesday, 28 Oct 2009, 1:00 PM EDT

Published : Wednesday, 28 Oct 2009, 1:00 PM EDT

WEST VALLEY, N.Y. (WIVB) - It looks like Uncle Sam will foot most of the bill to clean up the West Valley nuclear site.

According to Governor Paterson, the federal government has agreed to pay 90 percent of the estimated \$9.1 billion cleanup, while the state will fund the rest.

The agreement would settle a 2006 lawsuit filed against the feds under former Governor Pataki.