



# THE WEST VALLEY CITIZEN TASK FORCE

January 22, 2014

Mr. David G. Huizenga  
Senior Advisor  
Assistant Secretary for Environmental Management  
EM-1, Forrestal Building  
U.S. Department of Energy  
1000 Independence Avenue, S.W.  
Washington, DC 20585

**RE: West Valley Demonstration Project Fiscal Year 2015 Budget**

Dear Mr. Huizenga,

As the Department of Energy formulates the 2015 Fiscal Year budget submission we want to ensure that the West Valley Demonstration Project (WVDP) receives the funding and attention required to complete the Phase 1 work in a timely manner as specified in the Record of Decision. Work during the last six months of the most recent fiscal year at WVDP clearly demonstrates that funds can be used efficiently to move the work forward and reduce long-term costs.

We will not fully reiterate the points made in our previous letters about funding. The core message in those letters is:

- Short-term funding cuts will increase long-term costs due to unnecessary min-safe costs related to maintenance, operations and security for structures scheduled to be demolished.
- With the vitrification of high-level liquid wastes, funding has decreased because of the lower ranking through the Integrated Priority List Process. Although the site is safer in the short-term, the facilities and waste management areas to be addressed in the Phase 2 decision, such as the high-level waste tanks and burial grounds, continue to pose significant risk to human and environmental health. The longer they are unaddressed the greater the associated risk.
- The government committed and planned for \$75 million per year for Phase 1 clean up. Since that commitment, funding requests have varied from \$50 million to \$60 million. This level of funding could result in delays of up to a decade in the Phase 2 decommissioning work.

The recent lack of stable funding impacts the workforce at the site; rather retaining and expanding the skilled workforce to do more targeted work, workers lost through attrition have not been replaced because of funding uncertainty.

**West Valley Citizen Task Force**  
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The Citizen Task Force understands the fiscal issues the country and DOE face.

In the last fiscal year, WVDP benefited from a confluence of events. The FY '13 President's proposed budget for WVDP was approximately \$50 million – an entirely inadequate amount. The FY '12 funding was supplemented by \$6 million through the Reed-Higgins amendment and this was carried over into FY '13. As an unexpected result of the sequestration process, the baseline budget for FY '13 was the FY '12 budget of approximately \$60 million, rather than approximately \$50 million. The result is that \$9.93 million in supplemental funding became available late last spring. Between May and November of last year the unexpected supplemental funds were used to accelerate work on facility preparation and demolition, to prepare and ship more waste off-site and to purchase equipment and materials. The Citizen Task Force received a presentation on the utilization of these supplemental funds at our most recent meeting. Two clear examples stood out that highlight the point we have been making that spending wisely now saves money in the long-term, namely:

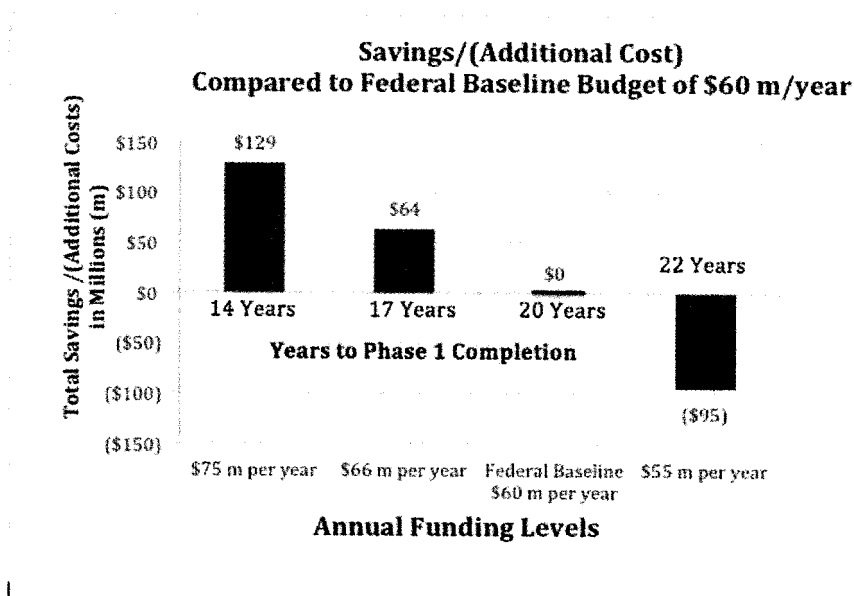
- The replacement and demolition of the Environmental Lab, costing \$800,000, will result in a 15% savings in energy costs annually.
- The site contractor was able to purchase a trackhoe for facility demolition. The equipment cost \$710,000 and will save about \$1 million compared to the planned five-year lease.

Last year in particular WVDP demonstrated that it should be considered a wise investment. It demonstrated that it can use funds to accomplish work that will yield long-term benefits including reduced risk to human and environmental health and reduced costs that will allow the long-term wise use of funds for clean up rather than maintenance and monitoring.

The baseline budget of \$60 million is inadequate. A simple comparison, based on information provided by DOE, clearly demonstrates that funding

at the \$75 million level anticipated in the EIS is the most fiscally prudent and environmentally responsible course of action. **Annual funding at the \$75 million level for Phase 1 will save the taxpayers \$129 million.**

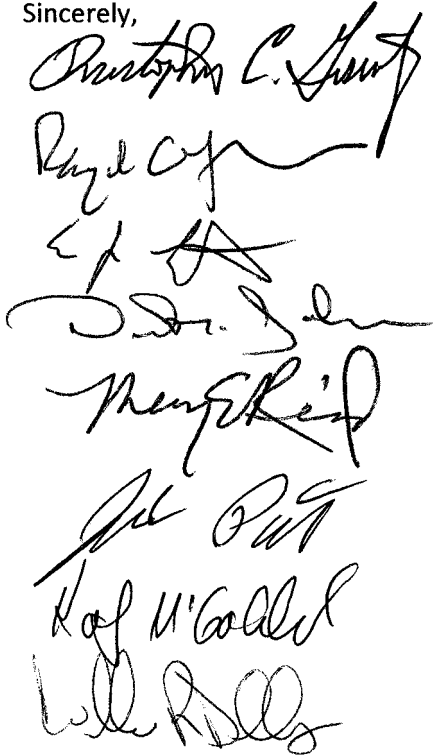
We implore you to provide for adequate funding in the 2015 budget submission and to advocate with Congress to protect funds for FY'14.



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We appreciate your attention to WVDP and once again thank you for meeting with us last spring.

Sincerely,



Members of the West Valley Citizen Task Force

copy:

Honorable Andrew Cuomo, Governor  
Honorable Charles Schumer, U.S. Senate  
Honorable Kirsten Gillibrand, U.S. Senate  
Honorable Tom Reed, NY 23<sup>rd</sup> Congressional District, Olean Office  
Honorable Brian Higgins, NY 26<sup>th</sup> Congressional District, Buffalo Office  
Honorable, Chris Collins, NY 27<sup>th</sup> Congressional District, Lancaster Office  
Honorable Louise M. Slaughter, NY 25<sup>th</sup> Congressional District, Rochester Office  
Honorable Dan Maffei, NY 24<sup>th</sup> Congressional District, Syracuse Office  
Honorable Catharine Young, NY 57<sup>th</sup> Senate District, Olean Office  
Honorable Joseph M. Giglio, NY 148<sup>th</sup> Assembly District, Olean Office  
Bryan Bower, Director, West Valley Demonstration Project, U.S. DOE  
John B. Rhodes, President and CEO, NYSERDA  
Paul Bembia, Director, West Valley Site Management Program, NYSERDA