



THE WEST VALLEY  
CITIZEN TASK FORCE

February 6, 2017

Susan M. Cange, Acting Assistant Secretary for Environmental Management  
United States Department of Energy, Office of Environmental Management  
1000 Independence Avenue  
Washington, DC 20585

**RE:** Fiscal Year 2018 Budget for West Valley Demonstration Project

Dear Ms. Cange,

The West Valley Citizen Task Force appreciates DOE's longstanding support for the West Valley Demonstration Project. As we approach budgeting for FY 2018, we ask that you recognize the cost savings that can be achieved by raising the site budget above its current (FY 2017) funding level of about \$63 million. The West Valley Demonstration Project's partially completed decommissioning and cleanup work has *competing needs* for different avenues of work, each of which can cut project costs when completed – but current funding is not high enough to pursue two of the top cost-cutting measures at once. To avoid such unnecessary expense, we strongly recommend that the site budget for FY 2018 be increased to \$70 million. Details are provided below.

In the Record of Decision issued by the US DOE in 2010, the WVDP project timeline was based upon an anticipated funding level of \$75 million annually. Allocations of funding below that level jeopardize that timeline, and associated work completion, upon which the Record of Decision was based. Funding at the \$75 million level, if restored, would allow for timely completion of the facility deactivation and attention to infrastructure needs. Recent funding, including FY17, has been unduly limited and has not kept pace with critical onsite infrastructure that is either in need of repair or scheduled for deactivation/demolition/removal. Such work includes preparation for demolition/removal of the Main Plant Process Building and the associated Vitrification (“Vit”) Facility, deactivation/removal of contaminated lagoons, and repair/maintenance of the rail spur.

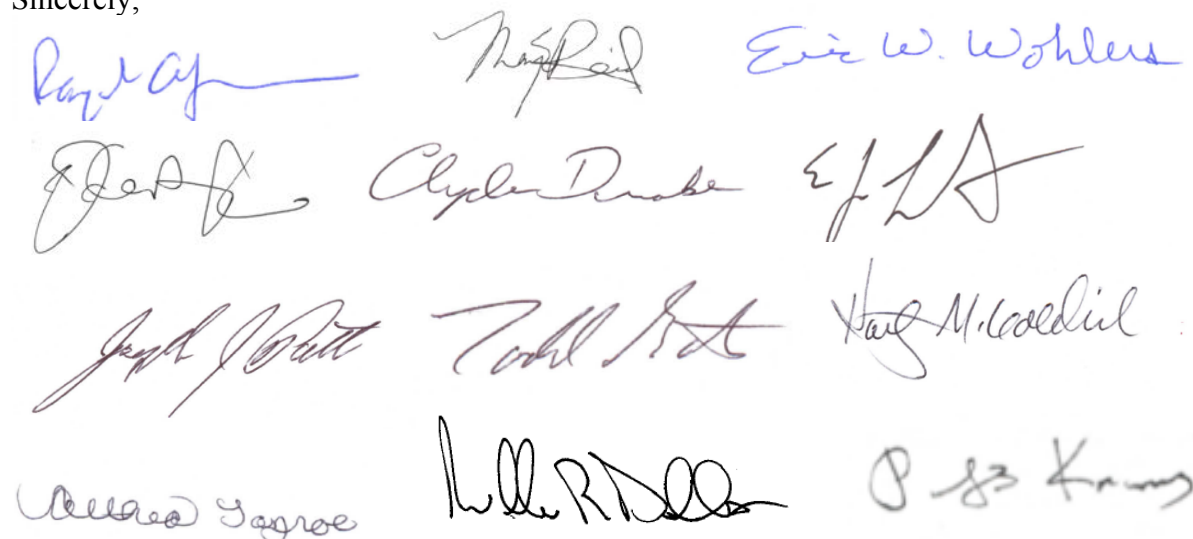
Repair of the rail spur and preparation for building demolition can be identified as two competing ways to cut costs. Repairing the rail line would reduce future shipping costs, including the cost for offsite transportation of demolition debris from the Vit Facility and Main Plant Building. Demolition and removal of these massive buildings, when completed, will cut millions of dollars from the project's annual infrastructure-maintenance costs. Preparing these buildings for demolition/removal thus remains a high priority but, at current funding levels, does not leave enough money to restore the rail spur that would cut the costs of removing the debris. This is a prime example of delays that can add to the overall project cost if not adequately

funded. Delays may also require work which would not be necessary if work proceeds in a timely fashion. Adequate funding should also provide for stability of the workforce, which is beneficial both to the local economy and to the continuity and efficiency of the project.

As noted, the Record of Decision issued in 2010 was based upon an anticipated funding level of \$75 million annually. Funding at this level would be preferred, but we recognize that such an increase would be difficult. Thus, we request that the FY 2018 funding be restored to an intermediate level of \$70 million which would substantially resolve the current dilemma of cost-cutting measures being postponed.

We appreciate your ongoing support and know that you recognize the results and value of the ongoing work at the West Valley Demonstration Project. Given the excellent progress at completing work in a safe and efficient manner at the Project, and given the breadth of agreement and support from stakeholders on the path forward, we urge both DOE and Congress to provide funding at a level that maintains the momentum and achieves timely cleanup.

Sincerely,

A collection of handwritten signatures in blue and black ink, arranged in four rows of three. The signatures are: Row 1: Ray Jay, Neil, Eric W. Wohlers; Row 2: Jeff, Clyde Drake, E. J. A.; Row 3: Jack, Tom, Hal M. Caldwell; Row 4: Andrea Zagro, Bill Reed, P. J. King.

The West Valley Citizen Task Force

Copy:

Bryan Bower, Director, DOE West Valley Demonstration Project  
Paul Bembia, Director, NYSERDA West Valley Site Management Program  
Congressman Tom Reed  
Congressman Chris Collins  
Congressman Brian Higgins  
Senator Charles Schumer  
Senator Kirsten Gillibrand