

Budget deal includes West Valley funds

May 4, 2017

U.S. Sens. Charles Schumer and Kirsten Gillibrand, D-N.Y., announced Tuesday the congressional budget deal includes additional funding for continued cleanup at the West Valley Demonstration Project.

An additional \$7.2 million in Federal Year 2017 will bring funding to \$66.4 million, the senators said in a prepared statement.

“This \$7.2 million increase in federal investment will keep the clean up on track in West Valley,” Schumer said. “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. While the project is still shortchanged, this multi-million dollar increase is a positive step in the right direction.”

“Increased funding will ensure that the cleanup at West Valley does not fall behind schedule,” said Gillibrand. “It is critical for the health and safety of Western New Yorkers that the site is cleaned up and radioactive material is removed without delay.”

The plant was operated from 1966 to 1972 by Nuclear Fuel Services. It was shut down in 1972 after regulations at the time required plant modifications.

Cleanup of the former Ashford plant began with the passage of the West Valley Demonstration Project Act in 1980.

Since then, contractors have safely solidified 600,000 gallons of highly radioactive liquid waste into 275 glass logs, performed other site cleanup projects and demolished more than a dozen buildings that were no longer used. Hundreds of thousands of tons of debris, including low-level legacy waste, have been removed to special disposal sites.

The cost so far is more than \$2 billion for the federal government and hundreds of millions of state dollars. The extent of the cleanup is still being studied and debated.

The senators agreed that the cleanup has been underfunded and that much more needs to be done to clean up the former nuclear reprocessing site.

Schumer and Gillibrand said the increased funding brings the West Valley Demonstration Project cleanup closer to the \$75 million annual appropriation the Department of Energy estimated would be needed.

Cleanup funds have varied over the past several years. They totaled \$59.2 million in Federal Year 2016.