

West Valley Funding Cut by 25 Percent

Of the Dept. of Energy's major cleanup sites with work ongoing, the West Valley Demonstration Project took one of the largest hits in the Administration's FY08 request. Under the budget proposal, West Valley would see its funding drop by one-quarter, from \$73 million included in the White House's FY07 request to \$54 million. According to DOE budget documents, the proposed cut reflects reduced costs for the preparation of "the Environmental Impact Statement for Long-Term Stewardship," as well as the completed demolition of the 01/14 Building and reduced shipments of some low-level waste materials. DOE is in the midst of seeking a new contractor to carry out the interim cleanup of the upstate New York site, set to run until mid-FY2011 (*WC Monitor*, Vol. 18 No. 2). Notably, in the Request for Proposals issued last year, DOE told industry to anticipate a yearly funding profile of roughly \$80 million from FY08-FY2010.

Emphasizing that ongoing work to dispose of low-level and mixed low-level waste off-site and to demolish excess facilities, Rispoli explained the motivation for the proposed cut, in part, to the current lack of an end-state for West Valley. "Once we know what the end state is, then we believe we can move out more smartly to direct our attention to those areas that we perhaps still cannot do because we don't know the end-state of the site."

FISCAL YEAR 2008 U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT BUDGET TRACKER (Values in Millions)							
	FY 2007 APPROPS	FY 2007 PRES. APPROPS	FY 2008 BUDGET REQUEST (Estimate)	FY 2008 HOUSE AUTH.	FY 2008 SENATE AUTH.	FY 2008 HOUSE APPROPS	FY 2008 SENATE APPROPS
Defense Environmental Cleanup	8,316.05		8,363.91				
Non-Defense Environmental Cleanup	349.09		180.94				
Warren Enclosure D&D Fund	196.80		97.51				
Subtotal, Environmental Management	7,222.94		8,118.35				
Warren Enclosure D&D Fund Payment Offset	(50.80)		(493.00)				
Use Prior Year Balances and Other Adjustments							
TOTAL, ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT	8,500.00		8,665.35				
BREAKDOWN BY SITE							
Cleanup Sites							
Alabaster	15.04		0.00				
Columbia	35.83						
Fernald	348.84						
Manhattan	170.99		10.31				
Norby Park Environmental Technology Site	514.71						
Total, Cleanup Sites	1,079.10		43.88				
Off-Site							
Cellular	220.32		219.74				
Waste	538.10		609.43				
Out Ridge	600.29		404.89				
Portsmouth/Paducah Project Office	402.60		381.23				
Savannah	418.53		487.42				
River Protection	444.33		983.44				
Savannah River Site	1,270.97		1,200.09				
MNSA Sites	299.93		273.04				
Headquarters	82.08		55.15				
West Valley Demonstration Project	76.33		54.40				
All Other Sites	86.72		80.64				
Program Director	341.39		303.76				
Logistics and Security	281.18		273.38				
D&D Fund Deposit	446.48		403.00				
Total, Off-Site	6,421.90		7,671.47				
Total, Environmental Management	8,500.00		8,665.35				

* Congress did not pass FY07 Energy and Water Appropriations. Work is ongoing on a plan to continue operations that would use FY07 funding for all FY08 sites.

LOCAL NEWS

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Kuhl vows to fight West Valley funding cuts

By JERRY ZREMSKI

NEWS WASHINGTON BUREAU CHIEF

WASHINGTON — Job cuts and a cleanup slowdown would be likely at the West Valley Demonstration Project starting in October if President Bush gets his way and funding for the nuclear site is cut by \$22 million.

The contractor that operates the site said Wednesday that the proposed funding cut could have a major impact on the facility. Meanwhile, Rep. John R. "Randy" Kuhl Jr., R-Hammondsport, said he would fight to restore the funding Bush wants to cut.

"I'm extremely disappointed at the president's proposed cut to the West Valley budget," Kuhl said. "This project needs more money to accelerate cleanup, not less."

Under the federal budget proposal Bush released Monday, West Valley would receive \$54.4 million from the Department of Energy in the fiscal year beginning Oct. 1, down from \$76.33 million in 2006.

Current-year funding has not been finalized because Congress never finished its budget work for the year, but so far, funding for the year has been coming in at 2006 levels.

That level of funding has sustained 312 employees at the Washington Group's West Valley Nuclear Services Co., which has a contract to manage the Cattaraugus County site through June 30. An additional 113 employees work for the federal and state governments as well as subcontractors at the site.

"Although it's difficult to predict what impact a future budget may

have, it's clear that a \$22 million funding cut would most likely impact on the cleanup progress at the project, as well as the job level currently in place," said Terry Dunford, communications administrator for West Valley Nuclear Services Co.

The potential funding crunch comes at an awkward time for the project. The federal government's management contract for the site is currently up for bid, and the U.S. Department of Energy expects to choose between the Washington Group and two other bidders by May 1.

Meanwhile, New York State sued the U.S. Department of Energy in December, arguing that the federal government is not following the 1980 law that calls for the decontamination of the former nuclear fuel reprocessing site 30 miles south of Buffalo.

Under that law, the federal and state governments worked together to solidify 600,000 gallons of radioactive waste into glass logs. But since then, the two governments have been arguing over who is responsible for the rest of the cleanup.

Bush previously has suggested massive budget cuts at West Valley, only to find Congress unwilling to agree. And Kuhl said he hopes that happens again.

"I, along with the rest of the New York congressional delegation, will fight to keep as much of the funding available as we continue to work on a legislative fix to the short- and long-term issues that are hindering cleanup at the site," Kuhl said.

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WV clean-up could face massive budget cut

By BRIAN ACKLEY
Journal Editor

Numbers buried deep in President George Bush's 2008 budget proposal may not bode well for getting out nuclear wastes buried deep within the ground in West Valley.

According to a published report in the latest edition of Weapons Monitor Complex, an industry trade publication which follows clean-up operations at a number of nuclear sites across the country, funding for the West Valley Demonstration Project could be slashed by 25 percent under the President's proposal.

Presently, West Valley receives approximately \$75 million in federal funds for clean-up efforts there, but the 2008 plan would reduce that to just \$54 million.

According to the report, representatives from the U.S. Department of Energy said the large cutback is because there is no firm plan in place which addresses an end-state at the site.

The lack of progress on long-term solutions at the site, including adoption of a approved long-term Environmental Impact Statement over long-term stewardship of the site, prompted New York State to sue the federal government several months ago.

"Once we know what the end state is, then we believe we can move out more smartly to direct our attention tho those areas that we perhaps still cannot do because we don't know the end state of the site," said James Rispoli, Assistant Energy Secretary for Environmental Management, according to the report"

The request seems to contradict DOE's own information regarding clean-up efforts there, however, as the federal agency continues to review information regarding a new four-year clean-up contract there.

They DOE quietly extended the current contract of Washington Group International through June. Their contract was due to expire at the end of 2006, and is the only clean-up contractor the site has ever known.

However, the DOE last year sent out requests for new bids, and three different firms submitted proposals. In its request at that time, the DOE told interested parties, "to anticipate a yearly funding profile of roughly \$80 million," over the next three fiscal years, Weapons Complex Monitor's report stated.

Demolition of on-site buildings and reduced shipments of some low-level waste materials were also cited as reasons for the decreased amount, the report added.

The DOE had originally hoped to award a new clean-up contract by November last fall. However, the publication said that because one of the bids was unusually lower than the other two, the federal agency decided to go back to each bidder and request additional information and a new proposal. That is why Washington Group International's contract has been extended.

Officials have in the past noted that funding requests are the subject to negotiation and discussion, and are not often what comes through in an initial budget proposal.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2007

Kuhl disappointed by Bush's proposed cuts for West Valley funding

By RICK MILLER
OLEAN TIMES HERALD

President Bush's proposed 2008 budget cuts federal spending for the West Valley Demonstration Project by 25 percent.

Rep. John R. "Randy" Kuhl Jr., R-Hammondsport, said today, "I'm extremely disappointed at the President's proposed cut to the West Valley budget. This project needs more money to accelerate cleanup, not less."

He said he and "the rest of the New York congressional delegation, will fight to keep as much of the funding available as we continue to work on a legislative fix to the short and long-term issues that are hindering clean up at the site."

The New York State Energy Research and Development Authority is suing the federal

Department of Energy over the pace and extent of the federal clean-up of the former nuclear reprocessing plant in the town of Ashford. The federal government picks up 90 percent of the clean-up costs at the West Valley Demonstration Project, with the state paying the remaining 10 percent.

In a telephone interview with reporters from across the 29th Congressional District this morning, Rep. Kuhl said the president's proposed West Valley cuts could help spur action on a joint House-Senate bill that will be filed soon for a federal take-over of the project.

Rep. Kuhl said he and New York Sen. Charles Schumer are preparing to introduce the bill in the next few weeks. The bill is nearly identical to the bill Rep. Kuhl and Sens. Schumer and Hillary Clinton introduced last year.

Wellsville DAILY REPORTER

Print this story

Kuhl looks for help for West Valley cleanup

Print Page

By KATHRYN ROSS/Daily Reporter

Congressman John R. "Randy" Kuhl, R-29th, is still looking for the "open government" promised by the Democrats who won control of the House in November.

"I believe fairness and justice is the American way and I believe openness is very important in government. The American public should be able to know what's going on and they don't if there isn't openness. A promise made is a promise kept and the Democrats have not lived up to their promise," he told reporters in a teleconference Thursday.

Kuhl was referring to recent bills coming before the House that many in the House, both Democrats and Republicans, were unable to preview or offer amendments.

Kuhl said experienced law makers can offer amendments that improve bills.

There is cooperation however between the senators and representative of the New York contingent, Kuhl said, concerning the clean up of the nuclear power plant West Valley in Cattaraugus County, "From my perspective I was talking with Senator Charles E. Schumer's office this morning (Thursday) about co-sponsoring a joint bill concerning West Valley."

He said he also has talked to Senator Hillary Clinton's office asking for her support. At this time, Kuhl said he also has reached out to New York's new Governor Elliot Spitzer for input from that office on the matter. He is currently waiting for a response.

Kuhl said he believes the federal government should take over responsibility and the full cost for the clean up of the site, which has been leaking nuclear waste since the mid-1970s.

In the next several weeks Kuhl said there will be bills coming up that congressman will have the opportunity to amend. Among those bills will be the farm bill.

"At first blush," Kuhl said, "It looks like it's approaching issues that need to be approached, issues that were brought up in hearings across the country." he said. "Those issues include subsidies, and other safety net programs for farmers including the milk price supports."

Kuhl said the Democrats have moved the House to a four-day week and he is setting up his schedule accordingly. He expects to begin his first round of town hall meetings in March in New Hudson. Those meetings, he said, will end in September.

In the past the congressman has said the town hall meetings give him insight into matters in which his constituents are interested.

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THE EVENING The Tribune

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Proposed federal budget cuts have Kuhl's attention

[Print Page](#)

By ROB MONTANA - STAFF WRITER

While U.S. Rep. John "Randy" Kuhl, R-29, was pleased with some aspects of President George W. Bush's federal budget proposal, it was the cuts he was most interested in.

One of the proposed cuts concerning Kuhl the most involves West Valley - a 167-acre Department of Energy operated portion of a 3,300-acre site owned by the New York State Energy Research & Development Authority. In 1980, Congress passed a law authorizing the DOE to use the site to demonstrate a method for solidifying 600,000 gallons of high-level liquid waste, and requiring it to decontaminate and decommission the facilities used for that.

"There was a 25-percent cut in funding for that program," Kuhl said. "It's a disappointment to me and the people in our district, and I'm going to try to resurrect that."

While Kuhl said he was concerned about the health care cuts, he said it has been nothing new.

"Last year the president's budget had proposals that had similar kinds of cuts," he said. "We were able to restore most of those."

Kuhl said he is still going through the details of the budget, but will stand up for health care facilities in his district.

"There is a group of us (U.S. representatives) in the Northeast that fear the elimination of many of our acute care facilities," he said. "I haven't gotten into definitiveness, but what I'm hearing from hospitals has us, initially, very concerned."

That the budget will not be approved as is, Kuhl said, is a given, but how much will be restored in the final version remains to be seen.

"The question is how do you contain the cost of entitlement programs?" he said. "I can't say we can restore all of it, because of the growth in entitlements."

Kuhl said the overall budget has an increase of approximately 3.1 percent, while Medicaid funding will decrease from 7.3 percent to 7.1 percent. Medicare, he said, would drop from 5.7 percent to 5.3 percent.

"The proposed cuts are not high, it's just the impact that will be felt," Kuhl said. "If it's going to impact hospitals like St. James (Mercy Hospital in Hornell) or Strong (Memorial Hospital in Rochester) in ways that are going to put them out of business, that's something we can't let happen."

According to information from Healthcare Association of New York State, St. James would

see a loss of \$1.602 million during the next five years if the cuts take effect. Other area hospitals also would see losses, including Noyes Memorial Hospital in Dansville (\$1.385 million), Jones Memorial Hospital in Wellsville (\$899,000) and Ira Davenport Hospital in Bath (\$791,000). Strong would lose \$61.18 million during that same span.

Kuhl also said cuts to the Community Development Block Grant program are about \$1.2 million, and the Lower Income Heating Energy Assistance Program funding also was reduced. He also was troubled by a 54-percent cut to funding for local first responders for protective gear.

"That doesn't bode well for keeping our volunteers outfitted with up-to-date gear," Kuhl said.

Among the parts of the budget Kuhl like were a \$550 increase in Pell Grants for college students, as well as the president's desire to balance the budget.

"That's something I fully subscribe to," he said. "The plan is an attempt to try to curtail spending in five years in an attempt to balance the budget."

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WEAPONS COMPLEX

Waste Management ♦ Clean Up

Volume 18 No. 7

February 12, 2007

NEW YORK OFFICIALS LASH OUT AT PROPOSED WEST VALLEY FUNDING CUT

New York state officials reacted with outrage last week at the Department of Energy's plans to cut cleanup funding for the West Valley Demonstration Project in FY 2008. West Valley took one of the hardest hits in DOE's proposed FY08 budget, released last week, with cleanup funding cut by 25 percent—from \$73 million included in the Administration's FY07 request to \$54 million in FY08 (*WC Monitor*, Vol. 8 No. 6). Overall, funding for the DOE Office of Environmental Management would decrease slightly under the Administration's FY08 budget request, from the approximately \$5.8 billion included in the FY07 request to \$5.65 billion. "Unfortunately, this is one more way for DOE to show its lack of commitment to the full cleanup of the West Valley site," said Paul Piciulo, director of the West Valley site management program at the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority. Saying the proposed cut came as a "surprise," Piciulo added: "We've been pushing for DOE to develop a logical plan for completing decontamination and decommissioning work. The lack of any plan and this budget cut seems to reflect their intent to do very little D&D work. This is unacceptable."

News of the proposed funding cut was also met with criticism from Rep. Randy Kuhl (R-N.Y.), who represents the district housing the West Valley site and who is preparing legislation seeking to force DOE to take a greater role in its cleanup. "I'm extremely disappointed at the President's proposed cut," Kuhl said in a Feb. 7 press release. "This project needs more money to accelerate cleanup, not less. It would be very challenging for West Valley to sustain a 25 percent cut in their operating budget."

Lack of End State Complicates Picture

In budget documents, DOE explained the proposed cut as resulting from reduced costs to prepare a planned longterm stewardship Environmental Impact Statement; the completion of some building demolition work and a reduction in some waste shipments. In an interview last week with *WC Monitor*, Assistant Energy Secretary for Environmental Management James Rispoli said that the proposed cut was also due, in part, to a lack of a defined end-state for the site. "Once we know what the end state is, then we believe we can move out more smartly to direct our attention to those areas that we perhaps still cannot do because we don't know the end-state of the site," he said. In response, though, Piciulo said: "First of all, an end-state is not needed to do work this year, next year, or even out four years. Secondly, we've been pushing DOE to sit down with us to hash out a preferred alternative ... for the site, but DOE senior management has consistently refused."

Notably, the proposed funding cut comes as DOE is seeking a new contractor to replace incumbent West Valley Nuclear Services Company, to carry out the "interim completion" phase of the site cleanup. In the Request for Proposal for the new contract issued last year, the Energy Dept. told industry officials to anticipate an annual funding profile of approximately \$80 million from FY08-FY2010. The proposed cut also comes amid strained relations between DOE and New York state, centering on delays in awarding the new cleanup contract, the Department's reluctance to consider a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency proposal to excavate four emptied underground high-level waste tanks; and DOE's opposition to addressing a strontium-90 groundwater contamination plume (*WC Monitor*, Vol. 17 No. 46). Piciulo said that a "logical plan" was needed to move forward on the West Valley cleanup, criticizing DOE for instead work to demolish non-contaminated or mildly contaminated buildings at the site. "The plan needs to consider what kinds of resources and facilities are needed and when they are needed," he said. "We believe that DOE should be focused on addressing the high risks first. ... That is not what is being done at West Valley." ■

Tennessee Independent Media Center, February 13, 2007

Oak Ridge: Public Hearing on Nuclear Waste
by **Chris Lugo**

13 Feb 2007 Public hearings on the Global Nuclear Energy Partnership (GNEP) are being held in two locations in the Southeast. The plan would potentially bring nuclear waste from nuclear reactors all over the world to the southeastern U.S. for processing and long-term storage, exposing thousands of people to serious environmental and health risks. The Department of Energy's Oak Ridge National Lab site in Tennessee, their Savannah River Site in South Carolina near Augusta, Georgia, and EnergySolution's "Barnwell" nuclear waste dump in Barnwell County, South Carolina (adjacent to the Savannah River Site) are all proposed as potential sites for the new GNEP reprocessing facility and an experimental nuclear reactor that would use plutonium fuel. The Oak Ridge Hearing was held on Tuesday, February 13th from 6pm to 9:30pm at the Oak Ridge DoubleTree Hotel. The public was invited to attend and submit comments. More on this as soon as we get a story. Reprocessing is the separation of uranium and plutonium from irradiated (used) nuclear fuel. It is the most polluting part of the nuclear fuel cycle. Reprocessing is expensive. DOE's near term cost estimates (next 5 yrs) are \$3-6 billion. The National Academy of Sciences estimates it could easily be more than \$100 billion. This money would be better spent on cleanup of existing radioactive pollution.

Reprocessing is severely polluting. The only private U.S. commercial reprocessing facility was in West Valley, New York and is now an environmental disaster, with radioactive waste threatening groundwater and the Great Lakes watershed—\$5.2 billion estimate for cleanup. Oak Ridge, Barnwell and SRS are already highly polluted and have immense problems dealing with the waste they already have.

Additionally, this process is proliferation-prone. Reprocessing cannot prevent theft by terrorists—it would make it easier for terrorists to obtain the material needed to make a nuclear bomb and would seriously undermine nuclear non-proliferation efforts by encouraging other countries to begin reprocessing programs that would produce weapons-grade plutonium.

The Bush administration's controversial Global Nuclear Energy Partnership (GNEP) would resume U.S. commercial reprocessing - the extraction of weapon-usable plutonium from spent fuel from nuclear reactors - for the first time in over 30 years.

The DOE is required to conduct a Programmatic Environmental Impact Assessment of the GNEP proposal. The hearing is part of this process, providing the public with an opportunity to present comments or concerns, ask questions and raise a range of issues including the overall purpose and need for the GNEP program, the risks of nuclear terrorism, potential environmental risks/implications and economic costs.

the public hearings were held:

TENNESSEE
Tuesday, February 13, 2007

6:00 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.
DoubleTree Hotel (Salons A and B)
215 South Illinois Avenue
Oak Ridge, Tennessee 37830

SOUTH CAROLINA
Thursday, February 15, 2007
6:00 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.
North Augusta Community Center
495 Brookside Avenue
North Augusta, South Carolina 29841

If you didn't attend, you can submit written comments by April 4, 2007 to:

Mr. Timothy A. Frazier, GNEP PEIS Document Manager
Office of Nuclear Energy, U.S. Department of Energy
1000 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20585-0119
By phone: 866-645-7803; Fax: 866-645-7807; or e-mail at GNEP-PEIS@.... Please mark your
letters, faxes or emails "GNEP PEIS Comments."

OLEAN TIMES HERALD

02/15/2007

Cattaraugus County lawmakers make their support for Bertrand Chaffee Hospital official

By RICK MILLER, Olean Times Herald

LITTLE VALLEY — Cattaraugus County lawmakers Wednesday approved a resolution urging the continued operation of Bertrand Chaffee Hospital in Springville.

Earlier this month, the hospital, which serves residents of northern Cattaraugus and southern Erie and Wyoming counties, filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection.

The hospital, which employs 270, also faces a reduction of its medical and surgical beds under recommendations of the state Commission on Health Care Facilities in the 20th Century.

The resolution, sponsored by County Legislator James Ellis, R-Otto, encourages the hospital's board of directors in efforts to overcome the financial challenges it faces and continue to provide quality health care to northern Cattaraugus County residents.

All county legislators joined as co-sponsors of the resolution.

Afterward, Mr. Ellis said he had benefited from the hospital's location in Springville last year when he was rushed there by ambulance after doubling over in pain. In an emergency surgery, doctors removed his appendix, which was about to burst.

"If I had to go to Buffalo in this weather, or out to Dunkirk, I'd have been one sick puppy," Mr. Ellis said. "We have to keep that hospital open."

The closest hospital, Tri-County Hospital in Gowanda, is slated to lose its medical/surgical beds under the recommendations of the Commission on Health Care Facilities in the 20th Century, Mr. Ellis noted.

"I think we're going to put in a resolution to keep that hospital open too," said Mr. Ellis, who has spoken about it with County Legislature Chairman Crystal Abers, R-South Dayton, who represents the Gowanda area.

In another resolution submitted for immediate consideration Wednesday, Legislator Charles Couture, R-West Valley, asks the federal government to reconsider a proposed 25 percent cut in funding for cleanup at the West Valley Demonstration Project in the town of Ashford.

Copies of the resolution were to be sent to state lawmakers representing the area as well as Gov. Eliot Spitzer. President Bush's proposed 2008 budget calls for cutting funding from the current \$76.3 million to \$54.4 million.

All legislators asked to join as cosponsors of this resolution as well.

"The federal government must continue to provide adequate funding levels to continue the cleanup project as thoroughly and expeditiously as possible," Mr. Couture said.

Copies of the resolution are being sent to New York senators, Rep. John R. "Randy" Kuhl Jr., R-Hammondsport, and state lawmakers from the area.

Letters

WVDP threatened by budget cuts

Editor:

As the owner of the Western New York Nuclear Service Center, we are greatly dismayed that, once again, the federal government is threatening further budget cuts at the West Valley Demonstration Project. As pointed out in your Feb. 8, 2007 article, "West Valley Could Face Massive Budget Cuts," the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) is blaming the proposed cutback on the lack of a firm plan for the end-state at the site. The truth is that a great deal of cleanup work could be getting done now which would make the end-state at the site much easier to deal with.

There is currently a radioactive groundwater plume that is contaminating more and more soil along its path. There is a radioactive waste disposal area that needs to be covered to keep it from filling up with water. Several highly-contaminated buildings require decontamination, and a couple of corroding underground tanks with high-level radioactive waste residue must be cleaned out. For DOE to propose cutting the budget knowing these facilities require remediation is, in our view, inappropriate.

We disagree with Mr. Rispoli's comments that the lack of an end-state justifies these cuts. First of all, an end-state is not needed to do work this year, next year, or even out four years. We've been pushing DOE to sit down with our organization to hash out a preferred alternative (end-state) for the site, but DOE Senior Management has consistently refused. We wrote to DOE asking for their reaction to (and support of) an end-state proposal by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. They gave us neither a reaction nor support. Their lack of interest in developing an end-state plan, coupled with this proposed budget cut, clearly reflects their lack of commitment to future cleanup work at the site.

What is most disheartening is that the local community is depending on DOE to complete their job and do the right thing. DOE, however, seems more intent on running away from their cleanup commitments than on listening to the community.

Peter R. Smith, President
New York State Energy
Research and Development
Authority

EDITORIALS

Fully fund West Valley

Proposed budgetary cutback is a risk for cleanup project and the environment

President Bush wrongly has decided to cut funding to the West Valley Demonstration Project starting in October. Loss of funds for one of the few sizable federal investments in Western New York would result in massive job cuts and severely hamper cleanup of the nuclear waste site.

Rep. John R. "Randy" Kuhl Jr. of Hammondsport has appropriately begun the congressional rallying cry to reverse this misguided decision.

Bush's federal budget proposal has the project receiving \$54.4 million from the Department of Energy in the fiscal year beginning Oct. 1, which is less than the \$76.33 million in 2006.

The Department of Energy also should remain focused on addressing the high risks first. For instance, there is a highly radioactive, 40-year-old process building that needs to be decontaminated and taken down but instead the department is focusing on removing non-radioactive or mildly radioactive buildings.

A logical plan is needed that addresses decontamination and dismantling of the process building, removal of radioactive liquids in the High Level Waste tanks, stopping the continuing spread of radioactive ground water and avoiding the potential spread of contamination from a radioactive waste

disposal area maintained on the site. The plan needs to delineate what kinds of resources and facilities are needed and when they are needed.

The West Valley site is still a hazard. There is a radioactive ground water plume that is contaminating more and more soil along its path, a radioactive waste disposal area that the Department of Energy needs to cover to keep it from filling up with water, highly-contaminated buildings that require decontamination and a couple of corroding under-

To propose cutting the budget, knowing that these facilities require remediation, is irresponsible.

ground tanks with high-level radioactive waste residue. For the Department of Energy to propose cutting the budget, knowing that these facilities require remediation, is irresponsible.

Despite the efforts of long-time champion Rep. Thomas M. Reynolds, R-Clarence, West Valley had already experienced a budget reduction from \$100 million a few years ago to \$90 million and then to \$76 million. Now to propose cutting \$19 million more is another way for the Department of Energy to show a lack of commitment to cleaning up the site. The proposed budget reduction is not the way to manage this environmental hazard and it's definitely not the right decision for Western New York.

MONITOR

WEAPONS COMPLEX

Waste Management • Clean Up

Volume 11 No. 8

February 28, 2007

CUT IN WEST VALLEY'S FY08 REQUEST COULD BRING WORK TO A HALT

The Department of Energy's proposed cut in cleanup funding for the West Valley Demonstration Project in Fiscal Year 2008 could result in most work at the site coming to a halt, according to an internal presentation by site contractor West Valley Nuclear Services Company obtained by *WC Monitor* last week. In its FY08 budget request, the Energy Dept. called for a 25 percent cut in cleanup funding for West Valley—from \$73.4 million as called for in the Administration's FY07 request to \$54 million. According to WVNSCO, the proposed cut would result in field work being reduced by 75 percent, with the site "reduced to maintenance only." In addition, about 30 percent of WVNSCO's staff—100 out of approximately 300 personnel—would have to be laid off, the Feb. 22 presentation says. The contractor also warns that the proposed cut "deteriorates recent progress made toward resolving major differences between federal and state officials" over moving forward with the cleanup of the site.

If the proposal stands, according to WVNSCO, only \$2 million to \$7 million would be available for FY08 work scope, with the remainder of the \$54 million to go toward base operations and labor, pension and medical benefit costs. DOE's proposed cut has been met with heavy criticism from both New York state regulatory officials, as well as members of the state's Congressional delegation (*WC Monitor*, Vol. 18 No. 7). Such criticism continued last week when New York state officials heard word of the likely impacts of the proposed funding cut. "Dollars is cleanup. You start taking away dollars, you're going to slow down cleanup," said Paul Piciulo, director of the West Valley Site Management Program at the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority. "This is not a right way to run a cleanup."

DOE, though, has defended the funding reduction as resulting from the completion of some site facility demolition work and a reduction in some off-site waste shipments, as well as reduced costs for preparing a long-term stewardship Environmental Impact Statement. In addition, the Energy Dept. has said that the proposed cut was also due to the lack of a finalized end-state for the upstate New York site (*WC Monitor*, Vol. 18 No. 6). DOE spokeswoman Megan Barnett said last week that the Department's budget request for the West Valley project "demonstrates our commitment to continue cleanup progress under the West Valley Demonstration Act." She added: "We are working through the Core Team process and have spent over \$2 billion to clean up the site, which was owned, operated, and managed by the state of New York and its private contractor when the wastes there, that are being cleaned up, were created. To date the Department has solidified over 600,000 gallons of high-level waste into 275 canisters and shipped over 800,000 cubic feet of lowlevel waste in accordance with our cleanup responsibilities."