



Radioactive waste to travel through Pahrump

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By Daria Sokolova
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Low-level radioactive waste will soon travel through Pahrump as part of the shipping campaign to the Nevada National Security Site, officials said.

Nye County will receive low-level waste from the West Valley Demonstration Plant in New York state.

The waste will be mostly made up of building debris consisting primarily of concrete rubble with some steel. In addition, shipments will include minor components of soil, piping, lightweight building debris and miscellaneous materials, officials said.

The West Valley Demonstration Project is a nuclear waste remediation plant.

The waste will be permanently buried in engineered disposal cells at the Area 5 Radioactive Waste Management Complex at the Nevada National Security Site. The projected volume is 390,000 cubic feet, and the shipments are estimated to be transported in 450 intermodals at up to 900 cubic feet each.

Kelly Snyder, public affairs specialist for the DOE at the Nevada site office, said that all of the department's packaging and transportation activities must comply with U.S. Department of Transportation and DOE safety requirements.

"In FY 2016, 1,110 shipments of waste were safely transported to the NNSS [Nevada National Security Site] for disposal with no DOT-recordable packaging or transportation accidents," Snyder said in an email.

The U.S. Department of Energy's records show that the Area 5 Radioactive Waste Management Complex received 579,799 cubic feet of waste in the third quarter of 2017.

West Valley Demonstration Project

The Department of Energy is currently conducting phase 1 decommissioning activities, including waste processing and shipping, asbestos removal, and planning for the removal of the highly contaminated Main Plant Process Building of the West Valley Demonstration Project, according to the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority, a public benefit corporation that works on advancing energy solutions.

As part of the removing of the main process building, officials are relocating 275 high-level radioactive waste glass canisters to a new dry-cask interim storage facility that has been constructed on site.



As of January 2016, 20 canisters have been relocated to the interim storage pad. Relocation of the remaining canisters was expected to be completed by January 2017.

More than 98 percent of the liquid high-level waste was removed from the underground waste storage tanks and solidified into 19,000 drums of cemented low-level waste and 275 high-level waste glass canisters, after the solidification of the high-level waste was completed in 2002, according to the New York group's website.

The 19,000 drums of cemented low-level waste were successfully shipped to the Nevada National Security Site for disposal, while the high-level waste glass canisters in stainless-steel containers are stored in a shielded cell in the former reprocessing plant.

Waste transportation

Snyder said that shipments to the Nevada National Security Site have to comply with the DOE's regulations.

"The waste will be packaged and shipped in compliance with all applicable DOT regulations. Prior to shipment, radiological surveys will be completed to ensure the waste from West Valley meets applicable DOT radiological conveyance limits," Snyder said.

The campaign is scheduled to begin approximately in early October and is expected to be completed in early summer 2018.

The waste will be transported via train to Parker, Arizona and will then be trucked to the Nevada National Security Site via California Highway 62, Interstate 40, Nevada Highway 164, Interstate 15, and Nevada Highway 160.

The shipments will go through Needles, Searchlight, Primm, Blue Diamond and Pahrump.

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Special to the Pahrump Valley Times. The low-level radioactive waste from the Nevada National Security Site will be permanently buried in engineered disposal cells at the Area 5 Radioactive Waste Management Complex at the Nevada National Security Site. The projected volume is 390,000 cubic feet, and the shipments are estimated to be transported in 450 intermodals at up to 900 cubic feet each.



Special to the Pahrump Valley Times Low-level radioactive waste will soon travel through Pahrump as part of the shipping campaign to the Nevada National Security Site from West Valley Demonstration Project in New York state, officials said. The waste will be permanently buried in engineered disposal cells at the Area 5 Radioactive Waste Management Complex at the Nevada National Security Site.

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Special to the Pahrump Valley Times in this photo are the disposal activities at the Area 5 Radioactive Waste Management Complex at the Nevada National Security Site.