

## Draft EIS for Phase 2 cleanup at West Valley set for 2025

By Rick Miller  
*County Reporter*

WEST VALLEY — A Draft Environmental Impact Statement for Phase 2 of the cleanup at the **West Valley Demonstration Project** is expected to be published in 2025.

There will be a six-month public comment period after the DEIS is published, members of the West Valley Citizens Task Force learned earlier this week during the **West Valley Demonstration Project**'s quarterly meeting.

A Final Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision would be issued after the Department of Energy and **New York State Energy Research and Development Authority** answered all the questions posed during the public comment period.

The range of cleanup the DEIS will address include leaving underground facilities like tanks with radioactive residue and low-level radioactive material disposed of in the State Disposal Area and the National Disposal Area, removing everything from the site or a hybrid of the two.

DOE and **NYSERDA** officials are also talking about the possibility of selective removal of radioactive material and the use of engineered barriers to divert water from facilities on the site.

More than \$3 billion have been spent so far in Phase 1 of the cleanup — removing buildings from the site. Complete removal of material from the site could increase the cost to \$10 billion or more. The site has streams flowing through it and near the base of the plateau containing the landfills. Those streams enter Cattaraugus Creek, which empties into Lake Erie.

Demolition or deconstruction of the Main Plant Process Building where the reprocessing of spent nuclear fuel to recover uranium and plutonium took place from 1966 to 1972, started in September. It is expected to take 30 months before the five-story facility is leveled to the ground.

Plans for a dedicated website for the cleanup project's Probabilistic Performance Assessment (PPA) of the future impact of erosion at the site in the town of Ashford was another news item from the quarterly meeting.

The PPA website will be available to the public.

Phase 1 will end with the Main Plant Process Building being brought to ground level. Phase 1B will involve removing the below-ground portion of the facility to expose the source of a leak of strontium 90 that has been coming from beneath the foundation for decades.

A permeable treatment wall was built to intercept the underground strontium prong. It consisted of a material similar to kitty litter that let contaminated water through but holds the radioactive elements in the material.

There are 16 continuously running sampling sites within a mile of the Main Plant Process Building to detect any radioactivity escaping the site during the demolition. Those ambient air sampling site results will be available on the cleanup contractor's website — [CHBWV.com](http://CHBWV.com).

There are real-time air sampling monitors closer to the demolition work which can trigger a work stoppage if a spike in radioactivity is detected.

The dust from the demolition is reduced with unique misters with a compound added to bind to particles. The resulting water is collected and treated before it is released into a lagoon. Water that cannot be treated onsite due to high levels of radioactive material will be shipped offsite for treatment.

Most of the rubble from the Main Plant Process Building is being placed in intermodal containers and will be removed by train. Contaminated material will be stored onsite until it can be removed from the site.

More than 98% of the radioactive contamination in the Main Plant Process Building has been removed over the past 25 years.

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## Cattaraugus Food Pantry director still concerned over shortages



*Photo submitted*

FeedMore WNY delivered a partial order of food on Nov. 21 at the Cattaraugus Food Pantry.

**By Rick Miller**  
*County Reporter*

CATTARAUGUS — Last month, Dr. Elizabeth O’Neil, director of the Cattaraugus Food Bank, expressed concern that FeedMore WNY wasn’t filling the food bank’s orders, leaving shelves bare.

She wondered whether there would be enough for families that depend on the Mill Street food bank for their Thanksgiving meals.

FeedMore WNY didn’t send a Thanksgiving shipment but allowed O’Neil to drive to their Chautauqua County warehouse where she picked up some turkeys and not much else. The warehouse was pretty bare, she said.

The FeedMore WNY truck did come with a small load on Nov.21 that only included some of the orders made by the Cattaraugus Food Pantry.

“I still had to buy meat and produce for Thanksgiving,” O’Neil said on Nov.21.

After she went public last month with the problems, Cattaraugus-Little Valley Central School and some churches stepped up with food drives and contributions. Also, several individuals have given cash or checks for \$50 to \$100, which has also helped.

Donations from the **West Valley Demonstration Project** workers also helped with their annual food donations to area food pantries, including Cattaraugus, O’Neil said.

“I was crying when **West Valley** showed up with a truck,” she said. “We got some good canned goods including cranberry sauce and gravy.”

For Thanksgiving, O’Neil said, “We served 82 families in one day, but we had to limit things. People were very understanding and grateful.”

O’Neil said FeedMore WNY has limited what it can send out to food banks, and many of the Cattaraugus Food Pantry’s orders go unfilled. “We can’t get what we need,” she said.

One good thing since going public with her concerns is that FeedMore WNY has said they will not charge for food delivered in November and December, O’Neil said.

With rising food prices and 160 people to help with their food bills, O’Neil said she keeps thinking things will get better and that supply chain issues will be resolved.

A FeedMore WNY spokesman last month blamed a new computer system for the glitches in deliveries to area food banks.

O’Neil said she’d received the same information about the limited food deliveries, “but this has been going on since July. If they have food, why aren’t they filling our orders?”

It has also impacted food pantries in West Valley, Little Valley and Great Valley, which the Cattaraugus Food Pantry also assists, O’Neil said.

“They shorted us all of our cereal, mixed vegetables, no meat again, no apple sauce, no granola bars, oatmeal and (they) lowered our pizza kits,” O’Neil said. “No explanation as to why. Either get me the money for food or get me the food.”

O’Neil, who is also director of Saving Grace Outreach in Cattaraugus, said she’s been “robbing Peter to pay Paul” when it comes to making up shortages at the food pantry.

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