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Thursday, January 18, 2024

## West Valley Demonstration Project Clean-Up Continues



Dept. of Energy and NYSDERDA Preparing for Phase 1B Through Bidding Process, American DND to Host Meet & Greet, January 24.

It's been a hot minute since you've heard anything about the **West Valley Demonstration Project (WVDP)**. What was once the nation's sole commercial nuclear fuel reprocessing plant has been working on dismantling the facility and cleaning up the area. It's a huge project with a lot of moving parts that many in the community are intrigued to learn more about. With so much information and rumors swirling around, how exactly does the average person process it all?

### LET'S START AT THE BEGINNING

The **WVDP** is a 150-acre area owned by the New York State Energy Research & Development Authority (NYSDERDA) that was commissioned and licensed to be a commercial nuclear reprocessing plant, which between the years of 1966-1972, processed 640 metric tons of nuclear waste. Then in 1980, Congress passed the **WVDP Act**, an act which required the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) to begin removing the waste and transporting it to a federal repository for disposal.

This means they need to solidify any liquid waste, develop containers that will be suitable to hold it during transfer and get it over to the federal facility for disposal as soon as possible, all while decommissioning the tanks and buildings at the **West Valley project site**. This is a task that they began working on back in 2002. In 2010, the DOE and NYSDERDA published a joint Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), addressing the phases of

# ellicottvilleNOW

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decontamination. The DOE has been performing the decommissioning and cleanup work in phases ([www.wv.doe.gov](http://www.wv.doe.gov)).

Phase 1A is currently ongoing and progressing nicely and is expected to end sometime in 2025, or possibly 2026. The current “Prime” Contractor is CH2MHill, BWXT, West Valley, LLC. (CHBWV). Their website, which also contains additional information about the project, is [www.chbwv.com](http://www.chbwv.com).

## THE NEXT PHASE

Phase 1B is next and the DOE and NYSERDA are working on selecting a new Prime Contractor for this next phase through an unrestricted, nationwide competitive bidding process. The formal RFP Solicitation was just published by the DOE on Thursday, January 11, 2024. The full text and RFP solicitation documents can be found at [www.emcbc.doe.gov/seb/wvdppphase1B](http://www.emcbc.doe.gov/seb/wvdppphase1B). Phase 1B work includes below-grade soil remediation and disposition of remaining facilities, and is estimated by the DOE to be approximately 10 years of work with budget allocations between \$1B to \$3B. Bids are due on February 26, 2024, and the DOE anticipates making an award/selection sometime within the next year or so.

After Phase 1B, they will move onto Phase 2. Phase 2 is to address the four underground waste tanks, the two on-site waste disposal areas, the non-source area of a groundwater plume and several other minor facilities.

## PUBLIC INFORMATION

If you are interested in more details on the project, the DOE does have a very strong outreach program. They conduct quarterly public meetings and participate in eight monthly meetings with the West Valley Citizen Task Force (CTF) on an annual basis. During Phase 1A, all three groups came together for updates on the progress of the project, which will continue throughout the next stages of planning and work performance. In 2022, the site held an in-person informational session for the Town of Ashford residents to discuss the upcoming demolition of the Main Processing Plant. Anyone can attend these Community Outreach monthly meetings which are held at the Ashford Office Complex at 9030 Route 219 in Ashford NY. The future meeting schedules, past meeting minutes, and presentations can be found at [www.westvalleyctf.org](http://www.westvalleyctf.org).

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS SO FAR

The Project began demolition of the Main Plant Processing Building (MPPB), which is the last remaining “major” facility at the site. Completed demolition of the Vitrification building and the Load In/Load Out Facility, completed the permeable treatment wall soil and structure removal project, re-instated rail operation, and safely containerized and stored radioactive waste in concrete casks awaiting shipment to a federal repository.

## LOOKING AHEAD LONG-TERM

The above grade demolition of the MPPB (Phase 1A) should be complete by 2025 and the next prime Contract for Phase 1B will be awarded by the DOE for the underground work. DOE and NYSERDA intend to make an integrated path forward for the Phase 2 decommissioning activities as work is performed for Phase 1B over the next 10 years. Farther ahead, by approximately 2030, the DOE expects to complete the decommissioning of the below-grade portions of the Main Processing Plant and the Vitrification Facility. If a disposal option for the rest of

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the waste is available, by the end of 2033 the DOE could complete the processing, packaging, shipment, and disposal of the remaining waste facilities.

After that time, any remaining clean-up will focus on the removal of what they call “orphan” waste, which is waste that currently does not have a pathway for disposal. Optimistically, full clean-up activities at the **WVDP** should be completed by 2043.

If you're like me, you're still sitting here after all that scratching your head. That was a lot of information and there are still a lot of questions - What does employment look like as work is completed and there is nothing else to do? How is the area around the plant being affected? What are the plans for the area/property after clean-up is completed? Only time will tell, and it's best to follow the websites listed above and stay tuned for additional updates as they are provided from time to time by the US-DOE and their Prime Contractors.

In the meantime, there's a LOT of work to do and one local company which has been working at the site since 2011 is trying to make sure other local WNY businesses and contractors can help with the cleanup. American Demolition & Nuclear Decommissioning, Inc. (American DND) is sponsoring an introductory meet and greet at the West Valley Fire Department Banquet Hall, (9085 Route 240, West Valley, NY) on Wednesday afternoon, January 24th from 2:00-6:00pm. Representatives from American DND will be available to talk about the next bidding Phase 1B of the project as well as to talk about opportunities for those interested in becoming a part of future work. Be sure to attend the event to learn more about this massively important project.

And if you want to view the full strategic vision plan, visit [www.energy.gov/em/west-valley-demonstration-project-wvdp](http://www.energy.gov/em/west-valley-demonstration-project-wvdp).



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