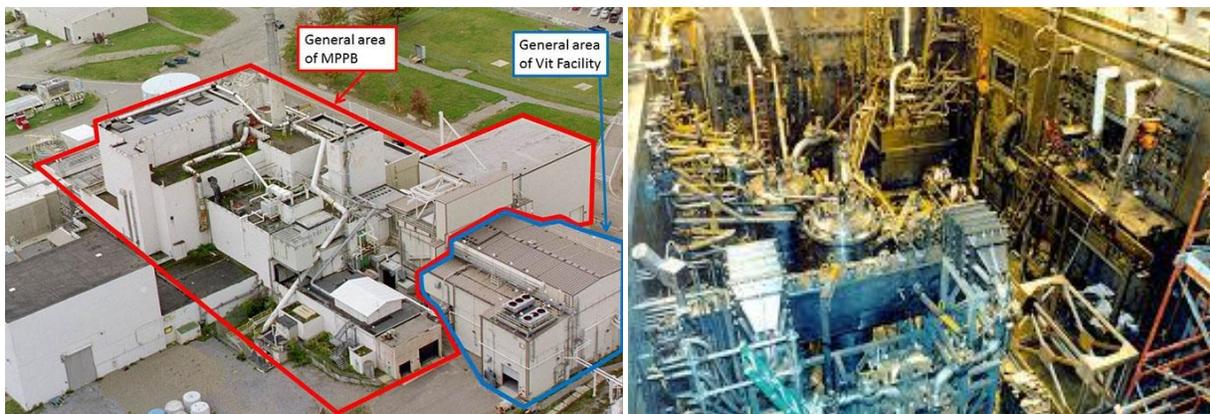


## Demolition of Radioactive Buildings at West Valley Government Refuses to Do Real-Time Monitoring and Reporting

The good news is that visible changes are underway at the West Valley Nuclear Site. The challenging news is that we may never know how much invisible radioactivity is dispersed in our region as a result. The Department of Energy demolished one building at the West Valley in 2013 and, with lessons learned, is demolishing a much hotter radioactive building in 2017--the Vit Facility that housed the vitrification or solidification of high level **liquid** nuclear waste into 275 **solid** radioactive "logs." The super-hot logs are lined up outside on a concrete pad. Next, the most radioactive building, the Main Plant Process Building (MPPB) will be brought down but just to ground level for now. No effort will be made until the 2020s to remove the high level liquid waste that spilled in the 1960s and collected under that building, even though it is believed to be the source of the radioactive strontium plume that is migrating into groundwater and streams that run into Lake Erie and beyond. The demolitions are being done without a tent or covering. There is *no real time* air monitoring of radioactive dust or gasses which could help determine whether, where and how much radioactivity is dispersing throughout the region.



Uniquely hazardous radioactive operations were carried out in the buildings at the West Valley Nuclear Waste Site--reprocessing and solidifying some of the most highly radioactive materials from atomic power and weapons. The walls, floors, pipes and ground beneath got very contaminated. Some rooms were so radioactive they could not be entered by humans. Waste was handled remotely with robotic manipulation through leaded windows. Much laudable effort has been undertaken to clean the rooms before the demolition. In order to minimize dispersal of radiation to the air, soil and water, demolishing the buildings must be done carefully. Amazing preparations have been underway for years. But the demolition could release and spread radioactivity and expose workers and the public. Since some of the radioactivity is dangerous now and will still be dangerous for thousands to millions of years, we want to know what gets out and in what direction it goes, but there will be no tracking or special reporting.

The only offsite monitoring consists of 16 chest-high stations at the compass directions 1 mile from the site with filters that are collected and analyzed several times per year and reported the next year. Air

plumes that don't hit the filters won't ever be identified or measured and those releases that do hit the stations will be averaged over weeks or months and reported a year later.

The Department of Energy has hundreds of monitors from around the country that are not in use that could be deployed at West Valley for better meaningful monitoring during this important phase of the West Valley cleanup. EPA has monitors.

DOE and NYSERDA should be notifying and involving the public on plans for the demolition and provide **Real Time Environmental Air Monitoring and reporting before, during and after demolitions—on and off site and further away in communities, schools and farms, etc.** This could be done now during the Vit Building demolition and certainly for the demolition of the hottest Main Plant building.

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**ACTIONS:**

***Make your voice heard.***

Ask your **local officials and county/tribal/state health departments** how we will know if radioactivity is released into the air from the West Valley nuclear demolitions and to use their authority to provide real time radiation monitoring.

Let them know you want **real time radioactive air monitoring and reporting** before, during and after the radioactive building demolitions at West Valley.

Ask them to provide it themselves or to contact DOE and the U.S. Senators and Representatives with authority over DOE to provide real time monitoring.

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*West Valley Photos are from DOE Office of Environmental Management March 2017*

<https://energy.gov/em/articles/vitrification-facility-now-demolition-ready-west-valley-demonstration-project>

*Real Time monitor photo is from EPA RadNet <http://slideplayer.com/slide/5764467/>*