

Demolition of Radioactive Buildings at West Valley

The Department of Energy plans to demolish the main radioactive building (slightly right of center with the tall stack) at the West Valley Nuclear Waste Site in 2017. It will be done without a tent or covering and there is no plan to monitor air emissions offsite in real time to determine whether, where and how much radioactivity is dispersed. It is also important to note that there is a huge amount of radioactivity under the building that will not be removed this year...and it is reportedly the source of the radioactive strontium plume that is migrating into the water on and off site.



Buildings at West Valley Nuclear Waste Site housed particularly hazardous operations--the reprocessing and solidifying of some of the most highly radioactive materials from atomic power and weapons. These buildings, to some extent, served as containment – preventing the release of toxic and highly radioactive materials to be dispersed into the environment. These buildings- the walls, floors, pipes and ground beneath got very contaminated and much effort has been undertaken to clean the rooms. Some rooms were so radioactive they could not be entered by humans. In order to prevent dispersal of radiation to the environment—air, soil and water, demolishing the buildings must be done very carefully. Demolition raises the potential for loss of containment, release and spread of radioactivity and exposure of workers and the public.

Under the Clean Air Act, local and state governments can set stricter than federal standards for radioactive air emissions. But so far neither US Environmental Protection Agency nor NYS Departments of Environmental Conservation (DEC) or Health (DOH) have demanded real time air monitoring and public reporting before, during and after the demolition of radioactive buildings in likely downwind communities.

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 4 times per year and reported the next year. Air plumes that don't hit the filters won't ever be known and those that do will be averaged over 3 months and reported a year later.

If this concerns you, ask your local officials and county health departments about this.

DOE and NYSERDA should notify and involve the public on plans for the demolition with:

1. **Real Time Environmental Air Monitoring and reporting before, during and after demolition— on and off site and further away in communities and farms.**
2. Detailed plans in advance with the opportunity for feedback from the public and local officials...Plans to include specific steps including health and safety requirements for worker and environmental protection and identifying the weather conditions under which demolition can be undertaken.
3. Clarification of what agency or agencies have approved the permits for this activity. What are the Limiting conditions?
4. Specifics about the circumstances required for demolition at the site including
 - >weather conditions for work to take place especially any limits on wind,
 - >occupational safety requirements and personal protective equipment,
 - >real time monitoring of dust and radioactivity at work site,
 - >video recording of demolition activity,
 - >isolation of the work areas using tents, weather shields or ventilation units with HEPA filters
 - >qualifications and responsibilities of the on-site Health & Safety Supervisors
 - >availability of equipment to contain demolition debris at end of work day or when change in weather occurs (prior to packing and shipment)
 - >clarification of situations would require Stop Work Orders
 - >communication with local government, emergency response officials and NYS Departments of Environmental Conservation and Health regarding demolition activity?

.....
ACTION:

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 waste site building demolitions.

Let them know if you want real time radioactive air monitoring and reporting before, during and after the radioactive building demolitions at West Valley...and, in the longer run, if you want full clean up below ground at the site too.

.....

Wed., February 22nd 6:30-8 PM is the West Valley Quarterly Public Meeting (DOE- NYSERDA-run). There will be a **Presentation on the Demolition Activities** upcoming this year by the contractor, CHBWV. Join Us there or Call in to the *Quarterly Public Meeting* at the **Ashford Office Complex 9030 Rte. 219, West Valley, N.Y.**
Teleconference Number: **1 (866) 203-7023** Participant Code: **638.279.2328**
Meeting materials: <http://www.wv.doe.gov> (usually after not during or before the meeting, but sometimes)

Contacts for more information on West Valley Nuclear Waste Site:

Agnes Williams, Indigenous Women's Initiative, nyawehtskanoh@gmail.com
Barbara Warren, Citizens' Environmental Coalition, warrenba@msn.com
Diane D'Arrigo, Nuclear Information and Resource Service, dianed@nirs.org
Joanne Hameister, Coalition on West Valley Nuclear Wastes, jhameister@roadrunner.com

Photo credit: building on left Jim Day/WXXI/Innovation Trail; site overview government reports