Adirondack Mountain Club * Alliance for a Green Economy
Cattaraugus-Chautauqua for Clean Water * Citizens Campaign for the Environment
Citizens’ Environmental Coalition * Clean Air Coalition of WNY
Coalition on West Valley Nuclear Wastes * Community Concerned About NL Industries
Concerned Citizens of Allegany County * Concerned Citizens of Cattaraugus County
Defend Ohi’yo’ * Environmental Advocates EANY * WNY Peace Center
Green Education and Legal Fund * Highlands at Pittsford
Hudson River Sloop Clearwater * Indigenous Women's Initiative
Interfaith Climate Justice Community of WNY
League of Women Voters Buffalo/ Niagara * Nuclear Information & Resource Service
New York Public Interest Research Group NYPIRG * Sierra Club
United Neighbors Concerned About GE Dewey Loeffel Dump
Western New York Environmental Alliance * Western NY Drilling Defense

July 13, 2022
Governor Kathleen C. Hochul https://www.governor.ny.gov/content/governor-contact-form
Assembly Speaker Carl E. Heastie Speaker@nyassembly.gov
Assembly Majority Leader Peoples-Stokes PeopleC@nyassembly.gov
Minority Leader – William A. Barclay BarclaW@nyassembly.gov
Committee on Energy Chair – Michael Cusick CusickM@nyassembly.gov
Committee on Environmental Conservation Chair – Steve Englebright EngleS@nyassembly.gov
Legislative Commission on Toxic Substances and Hazardous Wastes Chair – Judy Griffin griffinj@nyassembly.gov
Senator Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins scousins@nysenate.gov
Senate Environmental Conservation Committee Chair Todd Kaminsky kaminsky@nysenate.gov
Senate Minority Leader – Robert G. Ortt ortt@nysenate.gov
Senator George Borrello borrello@nysenate.gov
Assemblyman Joseph M. Giglio GiglioJ@nyassembly.gov

Dear Governor Hochul and New York State legislative leaders:

We need your immediate assistance to ensure that more radioactive contamination is not spread across the state from the West Valley nuclear site in Western NY during open-air demolition of the severely contaminated, high-level nuclear waste reprocessing building. Sometime this year this facility is slated to be demolished without enclosure or offsite monitoring. We note the building is only 20 miles from Gov. Hochul’s home in Hamburg NY.
We urgently need an **enclosure during demolition, offsite real-time, publicly-reported monitoring before, during and after demolition** and a permanent, searchable, publicly accessible, on-line library with all documentation on the West Valley site, including assumptions made for final cleanup decisions. Finally, a clear directive and adequate funding are needed for NY State agencies to assert state authority for the best public protection at the many nuclear sites in NYS especially West Valley to prevent dispersal of radioactive materials during demolition of the Main Plant Process Building and future actions at the site.

The US Department of Energy (DOE) is responsible for cleaning up a major portion of the site and NYS has permanent ownership and liability. DOE has removed some radioactivity but long-lasting contamination including plutonium remains. DOE refuses to cover and enclose the building during demolition because it is not in a highly populated area, but there are dairy and other farms nearby and growing communities. Importantly, the radioactivity could spread far not only locally but throughout Western NY, across the whole state and even into neighboring states and Canada. There is no safe radiation level and this was one of the most intensely radioactive buildings in the country. DOE plans to do open air demolition without real-time offsite monitoring or reporting.

Enclosures have been used during cleanups in NYS and across the country. A building enclosure was used at the Separations Process Research Unit or SPRU site in Niskayuna, NY- but only after a radioactive air release ignited citizen concern and EPA required it. The Army Corps of Engineers used enclosures when it remediated the uranium facility in Colonie, NY. The EPA’s Superfund Program has regularly used enclosures when remediating Superfund waste sites.

We urge that Governor Hochul and the NYS Legislature to:

1) Require an Enclosure over the demolition of the West Valley nuclear waste site Main Plant Process Building (MPPB) and future excavations.

2) Require real-time monitoring of radioactive air and water off-site in real-time with easily accessible public on-line reporting.

3) Require a publicly accessible, searchable electronic library with all reports, data, assumptions and expert elicitations considered and used for decisions on cleanup and final site disposition.

4) Provide essential resources for state agencies to assert and implement state authority to achieve the best possible economic, health and environmental protection at the nuclear sites in NYS especially West Valley. This includes independent state agency review, monitoring and oversight of all demolition and cleanup activities.

We look forward to hearing from you as soon as possible.

Sincerely,
Nuclear Information and Resource Service
Diane D’Arrigo
Takoma Park, MD
dianed@nirs.org
301-270-6477 x 3

Coalition on West Valley Nuclear Wastes
Joanne Hameister
Springville, NY

New York Public Interest Research Group
Anne Rabe
Albany, NY
arabe@nypirg.org

Environmental Advocates NY
Robert Hayes
Albany, NY

Alliance for a Green Economy
Andra Leimanis
Syracuse, NY

Interfaith Climate Justice Community of WNY
Roger Cook
Buffalo, NY

Defend Ohi’yo’
Barbara Dyskant
Salamanca, NY

Concerned Citizens of Cattaraugus County
Rob Mrowka
Allegany, NY

Green Education and Legal Fund
Mark Dunlea
Poestenkill, NY

Western NY Drilling Defense
Charley Bowman
Buffalo, NY
candabowman@protonmail.com
716-908-8227

Citizens Environmental Coalition
Barbara Warren
Cuddebackville, NY
warrenba@msn.com

Clean Air Coalition of Western New York
Chris Murawski
Buffalo, NY

Citizens Campaign for the Environment
Brian Smith
Buffalo, NY

Adirondack Mountain Club
Lynn Kenney
Buffalo, NY

Community Concerned About NL Industries
Claudia Ramundo
Colonie, NY

Highlands at Pittsford
Laurie Ford
Pittsford, NY

Cattaraugus-Chautauqua for Clean Water
Glenn Wahl
Jamestown, NY

Sierra Club
Niagara Group and Atlantic Chapter
Sara Schultz
Kathryn Bartholomew
Albany, NY
niagarasierra@gmail.com

League of Women Voters Buffalo/Niagara
Lori Robinson
Buffalo, NY

Western New York Environmental Alliance
John Whitney
Buffalo, NY

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Agnes Williams
Buffalo, NY

Concerned Citizens of Allegany County
Deborah Bigelow
Angelica, NY

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Manna Jo Greene
Beacon, NY

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Dewey Loeffel Dump
Kelly Travers Main
Nassau, NY

Environmental Justice Taskforce of the WNY Peace Center
Buffalo, NY