

PRESBYTERY OF WESTERN NEW YORK

2450 MAIN STREET • BUFFALO, NEW YORK 14214-2191 • (716) 835-8056

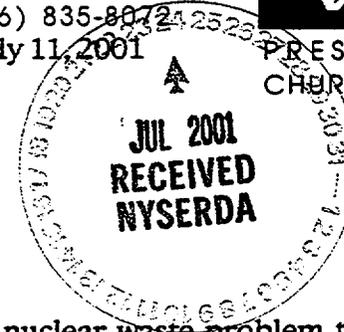
FAX (716) 835-8072

July 11, 2001



PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH (U.S.A.)

George W. Bush
The White House
Washington, DC 20500



Dear Mr. President:

In the United States there are few examples of a nuclear waste problem that is actually going to be solved. However, there is one such site that is achieving a positive solution. It is here in Western New York, at West Valley.

The nuclear waste problem that is at West Valley is the result of poor decision-making, thirty years ago, when an attempt to reprocess nuclear fuels was botched. Federal funding has ensured that the most dangerous wastes that are there are being cleaned up; the problem now is to continue that cleanup, to ensure that the remaining hazardous material is disposed of properly.

The West Valley Demonstration Project (WVDP) is successful primarily because it has effectively included local residents who represent the whole community in the decision-making process, in a group called the Citizens Task Force. Over the last several years, working with the DOE, the NRC, the EPA, and various NYS agencies, the Citizen Task Force (CTF) at West Valley has been able to significantly shape the way that the West Valley cleanup is being designed and done.

I am the environmental justice coordinator for the Presbytery of Western New York. In that capacity, I have served as an occasional observer of the CTF at work. I am pleased to report that the cooperative nature of CTF meetings at the WVDP with governmental representatives serves as a model for effective citizen involvement in the workings of government at all levels.

News reports indicate that your administration has cut funding for the WVDP cleanup by about 20% in fiscal year 2002. Such a move undercuts the positive working relationship between the people of the area and the Federal government, which needs to be understood as acting in good faith to fulfill the mandate which requires its presence in West Valley.

I urge you to restore full funding of the West Valley project cleanup efforts, as a way to show your respect for the persistent and good-faith efforts of the people in the West Valley area. Your support for this project will ensure that these people in upstate NY will regard the Federal government as an ally in the cleanup of nuclear waste, not an adversary. Your support for full funding of this effort will indicate that you are genuinely supportive of local control and local direction of Federal funding, here in Western New York State.

Sincerely,

Gladys Gifford,
environmental justice coordinator