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February 20, 2002

West Valley
Citizen
Task
Force

The Honorable Amo Houghton
U.S. House of Representatives
1111 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-3231

Dear Representative Houghton:

The West Valley Citizen Task Force (CTF) would like to thank you personally for your participation in the meeting which was held in Washington, D.C. on February 13, 2002. We genuinely hope that the discussion, and the visible frustration at times, gave you a greater understanding of the seriousness of the negotiation impasse that exists between the USDOE and NYSERDA. The CTF would not have requested the unprecedented meeting unless we were certain that your direct involvement is absolutely necessary in resolving the present budgetary, high-level waste fee, and long-term site management issues.

We appreciate that each Congressional office provided a point of contact from its Washington staff that we may now directly share meeting summaries and information with. We would even like to extend a standing invitation to your local district office staff to attend and participate in our meetings. We would also very much like to follow-up on Senator Schumer's suggestion that bi-weekly conference calls be scheduled not only to open and maintain a dialog, but hopefully to enhance progress on resolving critical West Valley Demonstration Project issues. We also have video teleconferencing equipment at our meeting facility that could be used for members of the WNY Congressional Delegation to directly participate in our meetings when there are appropriate opportunities to do so.

CTF members who attended the meeting report that all parties involved agreed that present budget levels must be maintained so as not to delay progress on important short-term decontamination initiatives and also to ensure the continued health and safety of the WNY region. The CTF has identified this as the #1 site priority and we appreciate your continued support in this critical effort.

We find it encouraging that you have agreed to facilitate a meeting between Governor Pataki and Secretary of Energy Abraham for perhaps one last attempt at forging a State/Federal agreement in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) via voluntary negotiations. But we would like to reemphasize that should this effort fail to produce any tangible results within a suggested four month timeframe (i.e., June 30, 2002), we believe other alternatives would need to be promptly explored to clearly define what the respective State and Federal roles and responsibilities will be following Project completion. A next step may be some form of arbitration, since previous attempts at mediation also failed. Ultimately of course, there is the very real possibility that it will take an amendment to the West Valley Demonstration Project Act to clarify the differing legal interpretations which seem to be the root cause of the negotiation impasse. Everyone realizes that proposing such a Bill and educating the full Congress concerning West Valley issues would be a laborious and time-consuming effort, but perhaps we need to begin preparing ourselves for the realization that there just may be no other way.

NYSERDA



Again, please accept our gratitude for the courtesies extended to the CTF members who traveled to Washington. We would also like to offer any and all assistance that our members might be able to provide you in your future efforts on our behalf, and as you become engaged in the many complicated site-specific issues and challenges that lie ahead. We look forward to working with your office more in the very near future.

Very truly yours,

Eric W. Wohlers

Eric Wohlers
On behalf of the
West Valley Citizen Task Force

Distribution: U. S. Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton
U. S. Senator Charles Schumer
U. S. Representative Amory Houghton
U. S. Representative Jack Quinn
U.S. Representastive Thomas Reynolds

cc: U.S. Representative Louise Slaughter
U.S. Representative John LaFalce
Spencer Abraham, Secretary, U. S. Department of Energy
Robert Gordon Card, Under Secretary for Energy, U.S. Department of Energy
Jessie Hill Roberson, Assistant Secretary for Environmental Management,
U.S. Department of Energy
James Fiore, Deputy Assistant Secretary, U.S. Department of Energy
Richard Meserve, Chairman, U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
George Pataki, Governor, New York State
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Dan Burling, New York State Assemblyman
Catherine Young, New York State Assemblywoman
Susan Brechbill, Ohio Field Office Manager, U. S. Department of Energy
Alice Williams, Department of Energy West Valley Site Project Director
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Paul Piciulo, NYSERDA- West Valley Program Director
James Little, President, West Valley Nuclear Services Company
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