

January 29, 2000

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U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington DC 20555-0001

Decommissioning Criteria for the West Valley Demonstration Project (M-32) and
West Valley Site; Draft Policy Statement (Federal Register, Dec. 3, 1999)

Dear Mr. Parrott:

I am a citizen who has long been concerned about Lake Erie and the measures needed to protect the Lake Erie watershed and prevent future contamination, including radioactivity. Cleaning up the West Valley site is very important because decisions and actions here will set a precedent for future decontamination and decommissioning. Specific comments:

1. The only dose criterion should be 25 millirem/year plus ALARA considerations from all sources for the entire site.
2. Restricted release means depending on institutional controls, such as legal protections and physical barriers, which cannot be assured. These depend on future budgets, expertise, and political will. It is neither realistic nor cost-effective to set aside sufficient resources now to assure that "this site would be rechecked by a responsible government entity no less frequently than every five years, as well as for any necessary control and maintenance." This is for a minimum of 1,000 years!
3. Decommissioning criteria for the NRC-licensed disposal area (NDA) and state-licensed disposal area (SDA): The determination of whether the License Termination Rule criteria are met by the NDA and other parts of the West Valley Demonstration Project must include consideration of all residual radioactivity at the site, including residual radioactivity in the SDA, a possible contributor to future contamination off-site, including Lake Erie. Calculations of potential doses must include exposure from the entire site, including both burial grounds.
4. Erosion is occurring at the "low-level" waste burial grounds and must be promptly addressed by effective erosion-control measures so that contamination will not reach Cattaraugus Creek and Lake Erie. Since physical barriers need maintenance and cannot be assured, prompt action will provide time for wastes there to be packaged and transported off-site for safe disposal.
5. High-level wastes left in the tanks must not be reclassified as "incidental waste." The West Valley Demonstration Project Act requires that the high-level wastes left in the tanks must be removed from the site.
6. The State-licensed disposal area, ground water contamination on the north plateau, and the airborne deposition plume (referred to as the Cesium Prong) must be addressed. In addition, RCRA corrective measures must address the hazardous waste component of mixed waste.

Thank you for this opportunity to submit comments.

Sincerely yours,



Edith Chase
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