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Center for Health, Environment & Justice*
Coalition on West Valley Nuclear Wastes* Community Concerned about NL*
Nuclear Information and Resource Service* Sierra Club, Niagara Group

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**New York Groups call for Cleaning up Radioactive Waste &
Contamination FIRST--**

**Say "No More Rad Waste, No New Nukes, No Reprocessing &
No more \$\$\$ for Nuclear Industry**

Fund Cleanup First!"

This is the message from New Yorkers on Radioactive Waste Day 2010 in solidarity with others threatened with nuclear waste across the country and around the world. Internationally Radioactive Waste Day September 29th is a reminder of nuclear waste problems around the world. The date was chosen to commemorate the 53rd anniversary of the explosion of high level radioactive reprocessing waste in the Ural Mountains in Russia. Over 200 people died and dozens of villages were permanently evacuated.

In New York, which has more radioactive legacy sites than any other state in the nation, we are struggling to contain, isolate and clean up radioactive waste from decades of nuclear power and weapons.

Chief among these is the West Valley nuclear site in Western NY, which drains toward the Great Lakes. West Valley is where government and industry experimented with nuclear reprocessing, the extracting of plutonium from intensely radioactive nuclear power and weapons reactors, leaving a terrible legacy of nuclear waste. Reprocessing lasted six troubled years from the 60s to

70s, causing very high exposures, fires, routine and accidental offsite releases, and leaking waste buried in unlined holes and trenches. The waste is dangerous now and will be for millions of years to come. "Erosion threatens to wash dangerous radioactivity into the Great Lakes contaminating the drinking water for millions of people in the Greater Buffalo area," said Diane D'Arrigo of Nuclear Information and Resource Service.

Activists have worked for decades to get the site cleaned up, but funds are very limited. According to Joanne Hameister, of the Coalition on West Valley Nuclear Wastes, "The US Department of Energy (DOE) recently made a commitment to complete the first phase of cleanup in 10 years, but immediately told us that was contingent on a budget of \$75 million every year for 10 years. Then they told us that funds had to be diverted to Brookhaven. In 2012, when the work actually begins, the budget is estimated to be only \$60 million, so that 10 year promise and commitment has vanished already."

Barbara Warren, Executive Director of Citizens' Environmental Coalition adds, "The Achilles heel of the nuclear industry is the radioactive waste they generate and despite 50 years of promises that the waste problem would be easy to solve, today there is still no scientific or technical solution for this waste. West Valley is a monument to the failure of nuclear waste reprocessing." Anne Rabe, Campaign Coordinator for the Center for Health, Environment & Justice, adds, "The federal Department of Energy must prevent the contamination of Lake Erie and public water supplies by exhuming the dangerous radioactive waste at the West Valley site. Other sites around the country need similar actions."

Bob Ciesielski, representing the Niagara Chapter of the Sierra Club states, "The recent round of testimony concerning the cleanup of West Valley extended for over a year with testimony, resolutions passed by dozens of local governments and organizations, and hundreds of letters and comments - all requesting an immediate cleanup of West Valley. WNY received a promise for a partial cleanup from the Department of Energy, which has already been broken. So we sit and wait for the strontium-90 to appear in our drinking water. And the federal government wants to provide public subsidies for plants that will just create more nuclear waste."

Nuclear power can no longer operate independently in a free market, because it is so expensive that Wall Street has no interest in investing in nuclear. The industry is seeking billions of dollars in handouts from Congress and the President. "As much as \$50 Billion of taxpayer money could soon be building new reactors, including one in Oswego, NY," according to Tim Judson, President of the Citizens Awareness Network. "If actually built, that plant would likely cost well over \$12 billion, but create less than 400 permanent jobs, all the while generating thousands of tons of high-level nuclear waste for which the federal government has no solution. Investing that amount of money could instead create thousands of good-paying, safe green jobs in renewable energy here, and go a lot further toward rebuilding our economy and solving global warming."

