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Senate votes ordinance

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WASHINGTON — In a boost for the effort to decontaminate and clean up the former Lake Ontario Ordnance Works in Lewiston, N.Y., the Senate has voted to allocate the full amount requested by the Reagan administration for remedial work at the site.

But, because the House of Representatives has already voted to cut the federal program which provides the funding, a House-Senate conference committee will have to decide just how

much money will be allotted to clean up the site in the current fiscal year.

The conference committee is expected to reach a decision within the next several weeks, congressional sources say.

At issue is the "decontamination and decommissioning" portion of the U.S. Energy Department's 1982 budget.

The Reagan administration had originally asked for \$10.2 million for that program, of which \$3.2 million was allocated for work at the old ordnance plant on Pletcher Road, where about

cleanup funding

20,000 tons of radioactive residues from the World War II Manhattan Project are stored.

The total cost of cleaning up the site has been estimated at \$27 million. It would take several years.

The full Senate, in acting on the omnibus energy and water appropriations bill for 1982, late last week voted to provide the full \$10.2 million — reversing an earlier decision by the Senate Appropriations Committee to slash the Reagan administration's request to

\$5.2 million for decommissioning and decontamination.

The push for full funding was led by Sen. John Tower, R-Texas, chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, who will be a leading member of the House-Senate conference.

"We're encouraged by the Tower amendment," said an aide to Rep. John LaFalce, D-N.Y., who represents the area that includes the former ordnance works.

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around in — ditches" at the site and not be adversely affected by radiation.

Subcommittee chairman Samuel Stratton, D-N.Y., concurred, declaring that the radioactivity at the Lewiston storage depot "was a very low-level kind of thing, that you could get more radiation if you went skiing at Aspen, Colo."

LaFalce, in a letter to Rep. Stratton at the time, protested that "while it may be true that coming into contact with these residues for a short time would not cause a threat to anyone's health — the residues are nevertheless considered hazardous materials because of their radioactive nature and require special precautions when they are handled or stored."

"The hazard at the site is real. Most troubling is the fact that it has existed in its current form for

over 20 years," LaFalce said.

Nevertheless, Stratton remains opposed to toring the cuts his committee made in program, and is expected to fight any such move. House-Senate conference committee.

Congressional sources say Stratton believes current federal clean standards for radioactive sites such as the one at Lewiston are stringent, and that questions spending million to decontaminate and decommission former ordnance works.

The Energy Department recently employed the Bechtel Co., a known consulting firm, for work at the Lewiston site.

Employees of the Bechtel Co. now are running a management program for the former ordnance works that had been drawn up by National Lead of Ohio Inc.

Site

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The aide, Martin Marchowsky, said he believes prospects are "good" that the House-Senate conference will agree to keep the program at the \$10.2 million level, thereby guaranteeing \$3.2 million for the ordnance works clean-up in the current fiscal year.

He said LaFalce is actively lobbying for favorable action among House members who will sit on

the conference committee.

The remaining hurdle involves an April decision by a key House Armed Services subcommittee to cut the program to \$4 million for the entire country, jeopardizing the allocation for the Lewiston site. The cuts were later upheld by the full House.

The decision came after a top federal official told the subcommittee that a person "could roll