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## Effort aims to aid radiation victims

By DOUGLAS TURNER  
News Washington Bureau Chief  
7/25/01

WASHINGTON - Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton and Rep. John J. LaFalce on Tuesday asked the Bush administration to set up an outreach office in the Buffalo area for victims of nuclear exposure in Western New York war industries, and their survivors.

The closest one, they said in letters to Energy Secretary Spencer Abraham and Labor Secretary Elaine L. Chao, is in Tennessee.

At the same time, Clinton, D-N.Y., and LaFalce, D-Town of Tonawanda, also asked Abraham and Chao to interpret liberally the laws that determine who should get federal compensation for sickness and death inflicted by work-connected nuclear radiation.

So far, the government is aiding only those who worked in defense-related atomic plants during the time the Department of Energy, or its predecessor agencies, were actively using the sites.

Clinton and LaFalce listed more than 36 sites where workers suffered exposure. Among them were 12 factories in Western New York such as the former Ashland Oil Refinery, Town of Tonawanda; Bliss and Laughlin Steel, Buffalo; the Lake Ontario Ordnance Works, Lewiston; Linde Ceramics, Town of Tonawanda; and Simonds Saw & Steel, Lockport.

Their list also includes the West Valley Demonstration Project, Ashford, which did not perform any defense-related work. An aide in LaFalce's office said the list was provided by the Energy Department.

They also asked the department to increase awareness of the program, and allow eligible workers to have access to needed medical records, often in corporate or government hands, as quickly as possible.

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