

Study of West Valley as waste site is urged

Senator eyes low-level storage

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ALBANY — A state senator is proposing that West Valley be studied as the site of a statewide repository for low-level radioactive waste.

State Sen. James Seward, R-Oneonta, wants to discuss his proposal with Gov. Pataki as part of the state budget negotiations.

Pataki is scheduled to release amendments to his 1995-96 budget proposal by March 2 and some parts of Seward's plan could be among those changes, aides to the governor said.

As a result, protesters are expected outside of the annual Chamber of Commerce dinner in Springville tonight when Pataki will be the featured speaker. Seward said he will not attend the dinner, as had been rumored.

Under Seward's plan, the state Department of Environmental Conservation would select a statewide disposal site following studies of areas "volunteered" by municipali-

ties. No more than three sites would be considered along with West Valley, the only "volunteer community" now before the state.

The New York State Energy Research and Development Authority would conduct these studies to determine whether any of these sites can be used safely for long-term waste storage, Seward is proposing. His plan would also eliminate the state Low-Level Radioactive Waste Siting Commission, an action that would make at least part of Seward's proposal part of the state budget negotiations.

Alex Cukan of Sierra Club said Pataki should honor "the promises that state lawmakers made in 1986 to keep any new wastes from coming to West Valley."

Seward's proposal "is the latest in a series of site remediation problems that keep cropping up and diverting money from the West Valley Demonstration Project's original purpose of waste cleanup," said Raymond Vaughan of the Coalition on West Valley Nuclear Wastes.