

Schumer seeks to Fast Track Cleanup of WNY Radioactive Dumpsites



Tonawanda landfill was disposal site for waste from Manhattan Project in the 1940s

Dave McKinley, WGRZ 6:05 p.m. EST January 5, 2015

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(Photo: WGRZ-Dave McKinley)

CITY OF TONAWANDA, NY – Standing in sub zero wind chills in the backyard of a home bordering the Tonawanda Landfill, U.S. Sen. Charles E. Schumer (D-NY) urged action by the U.S Army Corp of Engineers on a long promised cleanup plan for the dump containing radioactive waste which abuts a residential neighborhood.

"The cleanup plan was promised by the corps by the end of 2014. It's 2015, and I'm here to light a fire under them to get this plan out the door right away," Schumer said, while surrounded by local elected officials and neighbors in the area of Hackett Drive.

This waste, which according to Schumer is mostly uranium left over from the days of the Manhattan Project, has contaminated parts of the soil. While the waste is not thought to pose any immediate health threat, Schumer claims that experts believe it could potentially cause adverse health effects for local residents, including the students at Riverview Elementary School, which is mere feet from the contaminated site, if nothing is done.

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Schumer also pledged to push for more funding for the federal program that cleans up radioactive sites. Schumer said this program, called the Formerly Utilized Sites Remedial Action Program (FUSRAP), has been woefully underfunded for years, and he said that securing more funding is particularly important to Western New York, which has more radioactive sites in need of remediation than any other region in the country.

An Army Corps of Engineers spokesperson tells WGRZ-TV the report presenting various cleanup options should be ready to be released publicly this spring.

"The Corps of Engineers appreciates Sen. Schumer's interest and focus on the Tonawanda Landfill," said Buffalo District Commander Lt. Col. Karl D. Jansen in a statement to 2 On Your Side. "We are committed, within the limits of our authority and funding, to work towards a solution that is protective of human health and the environment, technically sound, environmentally sustainable and economically justified."

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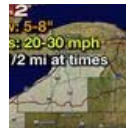


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