



Department of Energy
Washington, DC 20585

AUG 03 2009

Mr. Steven Dixon, Chair
Oak Ridge Site Specific
Advisory Board
P.O. Box 2001, EM-91
Oak Ridge, Tennessee 37831

Dear Mr. Dixon:

Thank you for your April 9, 2009, letter with recommendations on the fiscal year (FY) 2011 Environmental Management (EM) Budget Request for the Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL).

The Department of Energy (DOE) will continue to focus on safe, cost-effective risk reduction and cleanup at ORNL. A key component of DOE's effort under the EM program is disposition of fissile materials no longer serving a Departmental mission. Consistent with this objective, DOE has been directed by Congress to disposition the Uranium-233 inventory stored at ORNL. Completion of this work will proceed as a high priority under the Oak Ridge EM program. We recognize that this project competes with other important Federal Facility Agreement (FFA) projects for funding. Fortunately, our current FY budget request appears adequate to meet all FFA commitments.

Your letter also recommends that DOE seek funding for disposition of transuranic wastes located in Trench 13 within the Melton Valley burial grounds. As you are aware, past efforts to excavate this material have been challenged by the materials' unique characteristics, including pyrophoricity and the current absence of a facility suitable for treatment or disposal of the material. We are working with the State of Tennessee to select an implementable path forward for these materials. In the meantime, they will be safely maintained in place. Once a path forward is agreed upon, we will seek funding for implementation.

Finally your letter recommends that the Department seek funding for further evaluation of ground water contamination located within Melton Valley. While a significant monitoring effort is underway within the Melton Valley burial ground, our priority for new monitoring measures will be focused on ground water investigations designed to determine if any contamination is exiting these burial grounds and being transferred to offsite locations. A project to investigate this potential migration pathway is currently planned to be underway in the 2010 through 2011 timeframe.



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The FY 2011 budget request will support EM's cleanup objectives within the overall framework of achieving the greatest environmental benefit, the largest risk reduction, and overlaying regulatory compliance commitments. EM will continue to maintain best business practices to maximize footprint reduction and near-term completion cleanup activities with the current milestone initiatives and Recovery Act funding.

If you have any additional comments or concerns please contact Ms. Melissa Nielson, Director for the Office of Public and Intergovernmental Accountability at (202) 586-0356.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. L. Sykes', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Merle L. Sykes
Deputy Assistant Secretary for
Program Planning and Budget
Office of Environmental Management