



Many Voices Working for the Community

Oak Ridge Site Specific Advisory Board

April 12, 2012

Susan Cange
Acting Manager for Environmental Management
DOE-Oak Ridge Office
P.O. Box 2001, EM-90
Oak Ridge, TN 37831

Dear Ms. Cange:

Recommendation # 209: Recommendation on Fiscal Year 2014 DOE Oak Ridge Environmental Management Budget Request

At our April 11, 2012, meeting the Oak Ridge Site Specific Advisory Board approved the enclosed recommendation regarding the FY 2014 DOE-Oak Ridge Environmental Management Budget Request.

The board's Environmental Management Budget & Prioritization Committee reviewed budget scenarios generated by DOE-Oak Ridge's Dynamic Planning Model for \$420 million and \$500 million.

While the board understands that a budget allocation of approximately \$420 million is the most likely funding scenario, the board encourages DOE to consider additional funding in the \$470-\$500 million range which would speed ultimate cleanup of the Oak Ridge Reservation and allow actions to be taken to mitigate mercury contamination in East Fork Poplar Creek and accelerate disposal of uranium-233 from Oak Ridge National Laboratory. Even an \$8 million increase over the \$420 million scenario would be beneficial in mitigating mercury and disposing of the uranium-233, both of which are threats to the Oak Ridge environment and populace.

Please see the enclosed recommendation for a complete explanation of our recommendations.

We look forward to receiving a response to this recommendation by July 11, 2012.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Maggie Owen".

Maggie Owen, Chair
MO/rsg

Enclosure

Recommendation 209: Recommendation the FY 2013 DOE-Oak Ridge Environmental Management Budget Request

cc/enc:

Dave Adler, DOE-ORO

Cate Brennan, DOE-HQ

Fred Butterfield, DOE-HQ

Pat Halsey, DOE-ORO

Connie Jones, EPA Region 4

Local Oversight Committee

Myron Iwanski, Anderson County Mayor

Melissa Nielson, DOE-HQ

John Owsley, TDEC

Mark Watson, Oak Ridge City Manager

Ron Woody, Roane County Executive

File Code 140.1



Oak Ridge Site Specific Advisory Board Recommendation 209: Recommendations on Fiscal Year 2014 DOE Oak Ridge Environmental Management Budget Request

Background

Each year the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Environmental Management (EM) Program develops its budget request for the fiscal year two years beyond the current fiscal year. It uses budget requests from the various DOE field offices in developing the EM Program budget request to the President.

DOE EM Headquarters typically issues guidelines to the field offices advising them how much budget they should reasonably expect when developing their fiscal year +2 budget requests to headquarters. The field offices then brief the public, the regulatory agencies, and the Oak Ridge Site Specific Advisory Board (ORSSAB) and seek input from them regarding budget requests.

Discussion

The ORSSAB appreciates the opportunity to take part in this work, and expects that the result will be useful in budget negotiations.

On February 23, 2012, the ORSSAB's EM Budget & Prioritization Committee met with DOE Oak Ridge's Dave Adler and Alan Stokes. Mr. Stokes reviewed the status of the major cleanup projects underway on the Oak Ridge Reservation. The review was to provide background to explain the priorities that the DOE Oak Ridge EM Program had developed for the near future.

After reviewing the major projects, Mr. Stokes provided DOE's guiding principles for setting project priorities. They are:

- Protect human health and the environment by:
 - Eliminating significant health and environmental threats
 - Ensuring worker safety
 - Minimizing offsite contamination
 - Balancing lifecycle cost, nuclear materials, and environmental risks
- Comply with regulatory requirements, including:
 - Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act and the Federal Facility Agreement
 - Resource Conservation Recovery Act and the Site Treatment Plan
 - Clean Water Act
- Support ongoing DOE missions on the Oak Ridge Reservation, including:
 - National Security
 - Science
 - Energy
- Support local and state economies by:
 - Sequencing work to minimize impacts to the workforce
 - Maximizing asset reutilization opportunities

At the time of this meeting DOE Oak Ridge had not received guidance from DOE Headquarters to use in developing its FY 2014 budget request, but Mr. Stokes said for planning purposes DOE Oak Ridge is assuming about \$420 million. He then provided the committee DOE Oak Ridge EM's near term cleanup goals:

- Continue demolition of Buildings K-25 and K-27 at East Tennessee Technology Park
- Remove half of the uranium-233 inventory at Oak Ridge National Laboratory and make final decisions on remaining nuclear material
- Continue processing transuranic debris and prepare for sludge processing
- Continue to identify ways to address mercury releases at Y-12 National Security Complex including characterizing potential sources and preparing facilities for decontamination and decommissioning
- Reduce risk posed by nuclear materials by removing excess materials, addressing sources of groundwater contamination, and demolishing facilities in and around the Oak Ridge National Lab Central Campus.

On March 5, 2012, the committee met again with Mr. Adler and Mr. Stokes, as well as Jeff Crane of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Roger Petrie of the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC). The purpose of that meeting was to allow Mr. Crane and Mr. Petrie the opportunity to provide the committee their agencies' priorities for cleanup.

Mr. Crane said the three agencies met earlier in the day and had arrived at a general consensus for cleanup under a projected budget of \$420 million for FY 2014.

He said EPA and TDEC basically agreed with DOE's primary cleanup goals under its current funding profile of continued demolition of the K-25 Building at East Tennessee Technology Park, doing some mercury abatement at Y-12, continue processing transuranic debris at the Transuranic Waste Processing Center, and work outside the Federal Facility Agreement to continue to disposition half of the uranium-233 stored in Building 3019 at Oak Ridge National Lab.

Mr. Crane said the agencies were working to reach an agreement for priorities at a funding level of \$490 million. He said there is more work to do but the basic approach is to focus on mercury source reduction and abatement at Y-12 National Security Complex and other projects to prevent offsite releases of contamination in groundwater.

Mr. Petrie said that the state's priorities are for protection of offsite groundwater, mercury abatement, and completion of K-25 in that order, but he said the state agrees with DOE's current approach.

Recommendations

After hearing DOE Oak Ridge's explanation and logic for establishing its near-term cleanup priorities as noted above, and after hearing EPA's and TDEC's concurrence on those priorities, ORSSAB also agrees with DOE Oak Ridge's near-term strategy for cleanup of the Oak Ridge Reservation.

However, ORSSAB believes these strategies can only be achieved with an FY 2014 funding of at least \$420 million. Anything less would achieve little in the way of cleanup and could result in penalties from EPA and TDEC for missed milestones. In fact, if funding remains level at that amount, outyear regulatory milestones for disposition of transuranic waste could not be achieved.

ORSSAB understands the climate of tight budget allocations, but it encourages DOE to consider the effects of reducing risk to the Oak Ridge environment and the long-term cost savings by providing additional funding for the FY 2014 budget and subsequent budget allocations.

Additional funding of \$470 to \$500 million would speed cleanup and reduce ongoing surveillance, maintenance, and utility costs for facilities targeted for demolition.

Additional funding would allow DOE Oak Ridge to address more quickly mercury contamination in East Fork Poplar Creek, which flows through publically accessible areas of the city and poses a threat to the local populace.

Additional funding would allow for quicker disposal of uranium-233 from Oak Ridge National Laboratory, which is a hindrance to modernization of the lab and presents a significant risk to lab operations if there was an accidental release. Disposition of uranium-233 from the lab is Congressionally mandated and should receive increased funding priority.

Even a nominal funding increase of \$8 million above a baseline allocation of \$420 million would allow timelier disposition of uranium-233 and the ability to implement earlier actions to mitigate mercury contamination in East Fork Poplar Creek.

Increased funding would also ensure regulatory milestones are met and momentum of cleanup currently underway will be maintained.

In conclusion, while ORSSAB supports DOE Oak Ridge's near-term cleanup strategy, the board also encourages the DOE Environmental Management Program to strongly consider additional funding in FY 2014 and subsequent years to more quickly address environmental risks and fiscal liabilities that face the ultimate cleanup of the Oak Ridge Reservation.