



*Many Voices Working for the Community*

# Oak Ridge Site Specific Advisory Board

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May 9, 2013

Mark Whitney  
Oak Ridge Office of Environmental Management  
U.S. Department of Energy  
P.O. Box 2001, EM-90  
Oak Ridge, TN 37831

Dear Mr. Whitney:

**Recommendation 216: Recommendations on Fiscal Year 2015 DOE Oak Ridge  
Environmental Management Budget Request**

At our May 8, 2013, meeting, the Oak Ridge Site Specific Advisory Board approved the enclosed recommendations regarding the FY 2015 DOE Oak Ridge Environmental Management Program budget request.

We appreciate your consideration of our recommendations and look forward to receiving your response by July 8, 2013.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "David Martin".

David Martin, Chair  
DM/plo

Enclosure

cc/enc:

Dave Adler, DOE-ORO  
Cate Alexander, DOE-HQ  
Fred Butterfield, DOE-HQ  
Connie Jones, EPA Region 4  
Terry Frank, Anderson County Mayor  
Melissa Nielson, DOE-HQ  
Melyssa Noe, DOE-ORO  
John Owsley, TDEC  
Mark Watson, Oak Ridge City Manager  
Ron Woody, Roane County Executive  
File Code 140



## **Oak Ridge Site Specific Advisory Board Recommendation 216: Recommendations on the FY 2015 DOE Oak Ridge Environmental Management Budget Request**

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### **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**

In February 2013, DOE briefed ORSSAB on the current budget picture and described near-term, mid-term, and long-term priorities. Near-term priorities (2013–2015) are:

- Complete demolition of the K-25 Building
- Continue direct disposition of uranium-233 from Oak Ridge
- Process and dispose of transuranic (TRU) waste
- Continue planning for a Y-12 National Security Complex mercury treatment system
- Prepare the K-27 Building for demolition

Mid-term (2016–2026) priorities include:

- Complete the processing and disposition of remaining uranium-233
- Complete the processing and disposition of TRU wastes from Oak Ridge
- Complete the closure of East Tennessee Technology Park (ETTP)
- Build and operate the Y-12 mercury treatment system
- Begin demolition of old Y-12 mercury use facilities

Long-term (2027–2043) priorities include completing cleanup of Y-12 and Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL).

In March 2013, the ORSSAB Board Finance & Process Committee met with DOE for more in-depth discussion, which included a review the annual budget coordination process and discussion of Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)/Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC) prioritization comments, DOE's planning case priorities, and the Oak Ridge Reservation EM baseline (Figure 1).

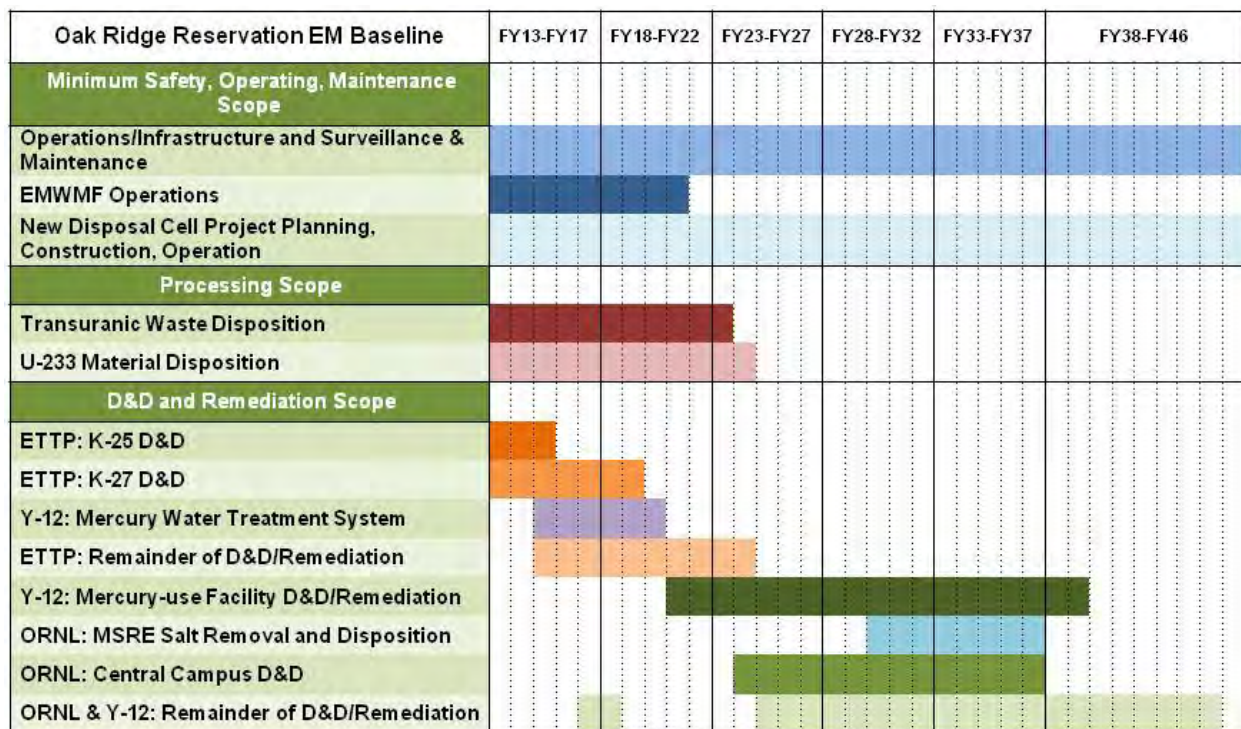


Figure 1. Oak Ridge Reservation baseline.

According to DOE, EPA/TDEC prioritization comments include:

- Completion of the K-25/K-27 decontamination and decommissioning (D&D) project is the highest priority for ETTP
- EPA/TDEC generally agree with placing priority on completing final ETTP record of decision scope for outlying areas (Zone 1)
- EPA/TDEC disagreed on priorities for soil and groundwater work in the industrialized portion of ETTP (Zone 2)
- Completion of the Outfall 200 Project is the highest priority for Y-12 (prior to mercury building D&D)
- EPA/TDEC disagreed on priorities for the Molten Salt Reactor Experiment Salt Removal Project at ORNL
- EPA placed priority on multiple groundwater projects interior to the Oak Ridge Reservation; TDEC's priority was on offsite groundwater release risks

Through evaluation of these priorities and EPA/TDEC comments on them, ORSSAB submits the following recommendations on the FY 2015 budget request.

## Recommendations

ORSSAB has met with DOE representatives to determine from the ORSSAB's perspective whether the priorities reflected in the 2015 EM budget request are consistent with the board's understanding of the EM Program's mission for the Oak Ridge Reservation. After considering all of the inputs, the ORSSAB endorses local DOE management's current strategy for cleanup in the Oak Ridge area and, therefore, its 2015 fiscal year budget request.

The endorsement of this budget and the resulting rate of progress is not, however, without reservation. Any delays in cleanup generally increase the eventual life-cycle costs and human risks involved with the process. Given the population density of the effected Oak Ridge area, the potential impacts of delay are

substantial. The negative effects of previous delays are well chronicled. Structures that are weakened by decay pose greater hazards during demolition. Dispersed contaminants are more difficult to clean up. Time is not our friend. When programs are delayed, financial costs and environmental and safety risks escalate. The board's endorsement of the current budget reflects its recognition of the current financial management challenges of the federal government. We recognize that a certain amount of fiscal restraint is in our country's best interests. If more resources are available, the EM budget for Oak Ridge should be increased accordingly.

The major change in this year's budget request is the elevation of the priority of the Outfall 200 Project at Y-12 for processing mercury. The board believes that this adjustment will enable a more expedient solution to the mercury contamination and is, therefore, prudent. The other specific priorities are consistent with previous submittals and keep Oak Ridge on the path to a better environment. We respectfully request your favorable action on the 2015 budget request.