



Department of Energy

Portsmouth/Paducah Project Office
1017 Majestic Drive, Suite 200
Lexington, Kentucky 40513
(859) 219-4000

Mr. Don Barger, Chair
Paducah Citizens Advisory Board
Emerging Technology Center, Room 221
4810 Alben Barkley Drive
Paducah, Kentucky 42001

PPPO-02-10026322-24

Dear Mr. Barger:

RESPONSE TO CITIZENS ADVISORY BOARD RECOMMENDATION 24-01: SUGGESTIONS TO ENHANCE THE U. S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT INTERNSHIP PROGRAM AT PADUCAH SITE

Reference: Letter from D. Barger to A. Ladd, "Paducah Gaseous Diffusion Plant (PGDP) Citizens Advisory Board (CAB) Consensus Recommendation 24-01," dated November 29, 2023

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) received the Citizens Advisory Board (CAB) Recommendation 24-01 and accepts the CAB's recommendation. The CAB recommended the following in italics and DOE's response is below each bullet:

- *Offering multi-year internships for those interns who show excellent skills and would fit well within the Paducah complex. Offering the ability to become versed in various positions will assist the intern in choosing their career path and DOE with a knowledgeable potential employee.*
 - DOE and its contractors are returning qualified interns from last year's class to the 2024 program. To cultivate talent, DOE and its contractors will continue to consider past performance and offer preference to those interested in returning.
- *Increasing the number of internships offered for 2024. The increase in 2023 was so successful an increase for 2024 should be equally successful.*
 - The number of internships offered will be evaluated each year based on funding, participating mentors, and opportunities for interns to support projects at the time of the internship. DOE and its contractors' goals are to ensure interns have meaningful involvement to provide the experience needed to gain full-time employment in the future.

- *Increasing outreach with local colleges to help identify potential career paths/DOE needs that have historically been difficult to recruit (i.e., estimators or baselining specialists) and offer internships in these areas.*
 - DOE and its contractors have/will increase presence and attendance in local college career fairs, provided speakers to specific areas of study, and expanded the organizations available to participate in these functions to attract a wider pool of applicants to the internship program.
- *Increasing advertising of internships to high school students pursuing trade fields.*
 - DOE and its contractors will identify opportunities to increase outreach to these organizations in the future, including identifying publications and resources for advertisement and recruitment.
- *Increasing advertising of internship opportunities for underrepresented student groups.*
 - DOE and its contractors will continue to identify marketing opportunities to increase outreach to underrepresented groups.
- *Participating in trade school fairs and competitions to educate local students about DOE internships available. Focus on the benefits and advantages for the students staying in their home area for summer internships.*
 - DOE and its contractors continue to identify opportunities to increase outreach to these organizations in the future.
- *Beginning the application process earlier in the academic year. Starting the application process in the fall semester can benefit the students by knowing where they would be interning earlier in the year and DOE by increasing the time needed to plan future interns' projects and prepare the space and equipment needed to support them.*
 - DOE and its contractors will open application processes as soon as practically possible. Currently, Four Rivers Nuclear Partnership, LLC and Enterprise Technical Assistance Services, Inc. are opening applications for the 2024 internship program ahead of the normal schedule. They will evaluate the process after hiring is complete and will collect feedback from mentors and interns to determine if additional changes to the schedule are required.

DOE appreciates the CAB's encouragement and is committed to outreach activities that offer potential career opportunities for young people as well as educate the public on the site's history and mission.

If you have any questions or require additional information, please contact Buz Smith at (270) 441-6821.

Sincerely,

April Ladd
Paducah Deputy Designated Federal Official
Portsmouth/Paducah Project Office

cc:

abigail.parish@pppo.gov, PPPO
april.ladd@pppo.gov, PPPO
dpbarger@aol.com, CAB
eric@pgdpcab.org, EHI
hayly@pgdpcab.org, EHI
joel.bradburne@pppo.gov, PPPO
kelly.snyder@em.doe.gov, EM-4.32
pad.rmc@pad.pppo.gov
reinhard.knerr@pppo.gov, PPPO
robert.smith@pppo.gov, PPPO
yvette.cantrell@pppo.gov, ETAS



Paducah Citizens Advisory Board

"working for the future"

Emerging Technology Center, Room 221
5100 Alben Barkley Dr.
Paducah, Kentucky 42001
(270) 554-3004

Recommendation No 24-01: Suggestions to Enhance Department of Energy (DOE) Environmental Management (EM) Internship Program at Paducah Site.

Background

In August 2022, DOE-EM Senior Advisor Ike White addressed a roomful of industry leaders, contractors, and elected officials. During his keynote address, Mr. White identified several challenges looming in his organization's near-term and distant future. First and foremost, in a list of challenges directed to those in the room committed to advancing the EM cleanup mission, White identified the challenge of maintaining a high-quality and diverse workforce.

White shared figures showing approximately 25% of EM employees are eligible to retire presently, and almost half are eligible to retire in about five years. White added that only 15% of federal employees are under 30 across the entire DOE complex.

A "homegrown" workforce provides stability and economic growth, with families staying "home" for their careers, which has long been a goal of the Paducah Area Chamber of Commerce, local economic developers, and elected officials.

DOE PPPO and the Paducah Site have internship opportunities that have the potential to create a future workforce for DOE and its contractors. These internships provide students with opportunities to apply classroom learning to practical tasks and project activities. Potential internships available in 2024 include Business Services, Engineering (Mechanical, Chemical, Electrical, Industrial, Environmental, Structural, Civil), Environmental Science & Environmental Compliance, Finance & Accounting, Human Resources, Hydrology and Geology, Industrial Safety, Information Technology, Occupational Safety and Health and Industrial Safety, Procurement & Subcontracts, Project Management (Construction, Project Controls), Public Affairs, Regulatory Affairs, Supply Chain, Property and Fleet Management, and Waste Management.

RECOMMENDATION

To enhance the current DOE Internship program, the CAB recommends:

- a) Offering multi-year internships for those interns who show excellent skills and would fit well within the Paducah complex. Offering the ability to become versed in various positions will assist the intern in choosing their career path and DOE with a knowledgeable potential employee.**

Paducah Citizens Advisory Board

"working for the future"

- b) Increasing the number of internships offered for 2024. The increase in 2023 was so successful an increase for 2024 should be equally successful.**
- c) Increasing outreach with local colleges to help identify potential career paths/DOE needs that have historically been difficult to recruit (i.e., estimators or baselining specialists) and offer internships in these areas.**
- d) Increasing advertising of internships to high school students pursuing trade fields.**
- e) Increasing advertising of internship opportunities for underrepresented student groups.**
- f) Participating in trade school fairs and competitions to educate local students about DOE internships available. Focus on the benefits and advantages for the students staying in their home area for summer internships.**
- g) Beginning the application process earlier in the academic year. Starting the application process in the fall semester can benefit the students by knowing where they would be interning earlier in the year and DOE by increasing the time needed to plan future interns' projects and prepare the space and equipment needed to support them.**

Who We Are

The EM SSAB is the DOE EM's most effective vehicle for fostering two-way communication between DOE-EM and the communities it serves. The EM program is the world's largest environmental cleanup program and the EM SSAB its only citizen advisory board. For more than 20 years, the volunteer citizens of the EM SSAB have partnered with EM officials at both the local and national levels to ensure the public has a meaningful voice in cleanup decisions.

Public participation is required/recommended as part of a number of environmental regulations. It is also good business practice, resulting in better decisions often resulting in improved cleanup. Over the past two decades, EM SSAB members have volunteered over 48,000 hours of their time and submitted to EM officials over 1500 recommendations, 88% of which have been fully or partially implemented, resulting in improved cleanup decisions.

The EM SSAB comprises approximately 200 people from communities in Georgia, Idaho, Kentucky, Illinois, Nevada, New Mexico, Ohio, Oregon, South Carolina, Tennessee and Washington. The Board is cumulatively representative of a stakeholder population totaling millions of people affected by generator sites, transportation routes and disposal sites. As we move forward, the EM SSAB welcomes the opportunity to highlight the value of this unique volunteer board and discuss its priorities during the months and years ahead.