



Many Voices Working for the Community

Oak Ridge Site Specific Advisory Board

June 20, 2024

Jay Mullis
Manager for Environmental Management
DOE-Oak Ridge Office
P.O. Box 2001, EM 90
Oak Ridge, TN 37831

Dear Mr. Mullis:

Recommendation 256: On the FY 2026 OREM Program Budget Priorities

At our June 12, 2024, meeting the Oak Ridge Site Specific Advisory Board approved the enclosed recommendation on the FY2026 Oak Ridge Environmental Management (OREM) Budget Priorities.

The recommendation is based on the March 2024 presentation to the board on the Oak Ridge Environmental Management Program as well as the 10-year Program Plan, EM Strategic Vision document, and the current EM Budget Request.

We ask that DOE consider these recommendations as it formulates its own plan for future budget needs. There are six specific points in the recommendation the board would like you to address in your response. We appreciate your consideration of our input and look forward to receiving your response by August 5, 2024.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Amy Jones".

Amy Jones, Chair

Enclosures

cc/enc:

Kelly Snyder, EM-2.33
Kristof Czartoryski, TDEC, Oak Ridge
Samantha Urquhart-Foster, EPA Region 4
Melyssa Noe, EM-942

Wade Creswell, Roane County Executive
Terry Frank, Anderson County Mayor
Randy Hemann, Oak Ridge City Manager



Oak Ridge Site Specific Advisory Board Recommendation 256: On the FY 2026 Oak Ridge Environmental Management Program Budget Priorities

Background

Each year the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Environmental Management (EM) Program develops its budget request for the fiscal year (FY) two years beyond the current year, including requests from DOE field offices to develop the EM Program budget request to the president.

DOE-EM Headquarters typically issues guidelines to the field offices advising them how much funding they should reasonably expect when developing their FY+2 budget requests. The field offices then brief the public, the regulatory agencies, and the respective site-specific advisory boards and seek input from each regarding budget requests.

On March 13, 2024, representatives from the Oak Ridge Environmental Management (OREM) program presented information about its FY 2026 budget formulation process to the Oak Ridge Site Specific Advisory Board (ORSSAB). This presentation provided content and discussions that ORSSAB used to draft its recommendations.

Discussion

In creating its recommendations for the FY 2026 OREM budget, ORSSAB focused on general near-term and long-term cleanup priorities identified by OREM. Project-specific objectives provided additional details for discussions that took place at the March 13, 2024, EM & Stewardship Committee meeting.

The board referred to the [OREM 10-year Program Plan](#), the [EM Strategic Vision](#), the current [EM Budget Request](#), and the board's [previous Recommendations](#) for additional guidance on budget recommendations.¹

Recommendations

ORSSAB supports OREM's Program Plan and recommends fully funding the activities that are currently supported by that Plan for FY 2026, broadly understood as follows:

- Complete remediation and transfer all potential property at East Tennessee Technology Park (ETTP) for closure, including cleanup of physical debris/structures in Poplar Creek and along its shoreline.
- Continue demolition of excess contaminated facilities at Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL) and Y-12 National Security Complex (Y-12).
- Continue to develop infrastructure to enable future cleanup at ORNL and Y-12.
 - Mercury Treatment Facility, including mercury remediation technology development.
 - CERCLA waste disposal facility, Environmental Management Disposal Facility (EMDF).
- Continue disposition of U-233 material.

¹ All documents are available on www.energy.gov/orem or www.energy.gov/orssab.

- Continue disposition and processing of legacy transuranic debris and sludges, including contact-handled (CH) and remote-handled (RH).
- Maintain and operate facilities at ORNL and Y-12.

With this support, ORSSAB recommends funding the FY 2026 budget to include all activities necessary to complete these cleanup priorities in an effective, timely and safe manner.

ORSSAB is also concerned about spending federal dollars in an effective, timely, and responsible manner. It believes OREM, with its contractors, have recently demonstrated an effective cleanup rate that leads the nation among federally funded facilities over a significant period of time; therefore, ORSSAB recommends OREM use this record of performance as a shining example of effective project management and as leverage to request additional funding beyond what is necessary to support the FY 2026 Program Plan above.

Further, ORSSAB recommends this additional federal funding be used to develop new knowledge and new technologies to effectively clean up transuranic waste, debris, and sludges – legacy, current, and future – starting in FY 2026 rather than waiting for an undetermined date in the future. ORSSAB believes that if Oak Ridge is to play a leading role in the nation’s future nuclear renaissance, this is a reasonable recommendation and one where federal dollars will be wisely spent in the interests of our nation.