



Department of Energy

Oak Ridge Office of Environmental Management
P.O. Box 2001
Oak Ridge, Tennessee 37831

July 22, 2024

Ms. Amy Jones
Chair
Oak Ridge Site Specific Advisory Board
Post Office Box 2001
Oak Ridge, Tennessee 37831

Dear Ms. Jones:

OAK RIDGE OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT RESPONSE TO THE OAK RIDGE SITE SPECIFIC ADVISORY BOARD RECOMMENDATION 256 ON THE FISCAL YEAR 2026 BUDGET PRIORITIES

Reference: Letter from Amy Jones to Jay Mullis, *Recommendation 256: On the FY 2026 OREM Program Budget Priorities*, dated June 20, 2024

I would like to express my appreciation for the interest that the Oak Ridge Site Specific Advisory Board has taken in the Fiscal Year 2026 budget formulation effort. Thank you for your recommendation. We will submit your recommendation to the U.S. Department of Energy Environmental Management Federal Advisory Committee Act Designated Federal Officer.

In addition, I am providing a response to each of the Board recommendations below. Please note the language in italics is taken from the referenced letter.

1. *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.*

Response: The Oak Ridge Office of Environmental Management (OREM) will continue to transfer available land parcels at the East Tennessee Technology Park to other U.S. Department of Energy programs/community organizations.

2. *Continue demolition of excess contaminated facilities at Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL) and Y-12 National Security Complex (Y-12).*

Response: OREM will continue demolition of excess contaminated facilities at the Oak Ridge National Laboratory and the Y-12 National Security Complex.

3. *Continue to develop infrastructure to enable future cleanup at ORNL and Y-12.*

Response: OREM is funding upgrades to improve infrastructure that will allow safe and efficient transportation of cleanup debris to disposal sites.

- *Mercury Treatment Facility, including mercury remediation technology development.*

Response: Although Congress fully funded the planned cost for this project in Fiscal Year 2021, several delays and technical and performance issues have resulted in the need to replan the project. Once replanning is complete, OREM plans to request appropriate funding levels to support completion of the project.

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- *CERCLA waste disposal facility, Environmental Management Disposal Facility (EMDF).*

Response: OREM can only use line-item funding appropriated by Congress for this project to construct this facility. OREM will continue to request funding in our budget submissions to construct and operate the new onsite facility.

4. *Continue disposition of U-233 material.*

Response: OREM will continue the disposition of Uranium-233 material.

5. *Continue disposition and processing of legacy transuranic debris and sludges, including contact-handled (CH) and remote-handled (RH).*

Response: OREM will continue the disposition and processing of legacy transuranic debris and sludges, including contact-handled and remote-handled.

6. *Maintain and operate facilities at ORNL and Y-12.*

Response: OREM will continue to maintain and operate facilities at the Oak Ridge National Laboratory and the Y-12 National Security Complex.

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.

Response: OREM currently funds technology development for a variety of projects and is continually evaluating lessons learned to further improve our cleanup efforts. OREM is working in concert with the Savannah River National Laboratory on developing a strategic plan to establish a path forward that addresses applicable new knowledge and technologies. As with funding for other cleanup efforts, this funding is prioritized to address the highest risks.

If you have any questions or if we can be of further assistance, please contact Melyssa Noe at 241-3315 or me at 576-0742.

Sincerely,

**JOHN
MULLIS**

John A. Mullis II
Manager

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cc:

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