



Many Voices Working for the Community

Oak Ridge Site Specific Advisory Board

June 11, 2009

Mr. Steve McCracken
Assistant Manager for Environmental Management
DOE-Oak Ridge Operations
P.O. Box 2001, EM-90
Oak Ridge, TN 37831

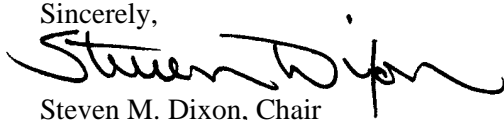
Dear Mr. McCracken:

Recommendation on Providing Information in the DOE Quarterly Project Reviews

At our June 10, 2009, meeting, the Oak Ridge Site Specific Advisory Board (ORSSAB) approved the enclosed recommendation regarding the types of information that should be made available to the Board during the year to support the Board in its role of staying abreast with the cleanup progress being made and in its deliberations regarding the Environmental Management Program budget prioritization process.

We appreciate your consideration of this recommendation and look forward to receiving your response by September 9, 2009.

Sincerely,



Steven M. Dixon, Chair

Enclosure

cc/enc: Dave Adler, DOE-ORO
Cate Brennan, DOE-HQ
Fred Butterfield, DOE-HQ
Mike Farmer, Roane County Mayor
Pat Halsey, DOE-ORO
Connie Jones, EPA Region 4
Rex Lynch, Anderson County Mayor
Steve McCracken, DOE-ORO
James O'Connor, Oak Ridge City Manager
Melissa Nielson, DOE-HQ
John Owsley, TDEC



Oak Ridge Site Specific Advisory Board Recommendation 179: Recommendation on Providing Information in the DOE Quarterly Project Reviews

Background

U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Quarterly Project Reviews (QPRs) first came to the attention of the Oak Ridge Site Specific Advisory Board (ORSSAB) in March 2007 at the Environmental Management (EM) SSAB chairs meeting in Las Vegas, when then DOE Assistant Secretary for EM James Rispoli touted QPRs as one of the project management strategies employed by EM to improve program performance.

QPRs were discussed again at the September 2007 chairs meeting in Paducah, Kentucky, where the chair of the Northern New Mexico Citizen's Advisory Board urged the other SSABs to request briefings on their site QPRs, as his board had found them to be an invaluable aide in understanding the EM program. Assistant Secretary for EM James Rispoli responded that if the SSAB chairs are interested in the QPRs, they should discuss it with the DOE Deputy Designated Federal Officer.

In August 2008, the chairs of the eight boards of the EM SSAB drafted a joint recommendation to Assistant Secretary Rispoli requesting that QPRs be shared with the EM SSAB¹. The recommendation states:

More than a year ago, at one of our EM SSAB Chairs' national meetings, we discussed at length the issues surrounding the difficulty of tracking the budget and progress of clean-up projects at each of our respective sites. Some local boards are benefiting from access to QPRs as a tool for evaluating clean-up progress at their sites, while others of us are having difficulty getting access to the information.

In that discussion, you suggested that all of the members of the local boards might find the status information contained within the QPR to be useful in discussions of EM issues germane to their sites. In the interest of furthering our understanding of site clean-up, and the ability to make more informed advice, the EM SSAB recommend these reports be provided to the local boards at each of the respective EM sites for use in our deliberations.

DOE's response to the recommendation² was signed by DOE Deputy Assistant Secretary for Regulatory Compliance Frank Marcinowski in March 2009 (Assistant Secretary Rispoli resigned in November 2008):

I have received your request for access to your site's Quarterly Project Reviews (QPRs). It is important for the local boards of the Environmental Management Site-Specific Advisory Board (EM SSAB) to have access to information that will help them understand progress at their respective sites. However, the QPRs are internal documents developed for DOE

¹ S. Leckband, et. al., EM SSAB, letter to J. A. Rispoli, U.S. DOE, Washington, D.C., April 13, 2008, <http://www.oakridge.doe.gov/em/ssab/Recommendations/FY2008/Recommendation174.pdf>

² F. Marcinowski, U.S. DOE, Washington, D.C., letter to S. Leckband, et. al., EM SSAB, March 6, 2009, <http://www.oakridge.doe.gov/em/ssab/Recommendations/FY2008/Responses/Responseto174.pdf>

managers and the Environmental Management Assistant Secretary. They may contain preliminary data or business sensitive information making them inappropriate for release.

In place of the QPRs, I strongly encourage local boards to identify for their respective site managers what information is needed. Site managers will work with the individual boards to provide, where possible, the information that is sought. Our goal is to provide information you need in a form that is appropriate for all parties concerned.

Discussion

The ORSSAB Board Finance & Process Committee was tasked with reviewing DOE's response to the chairs recommendation. At its March 2009 meeting, committee members elected to pursue asking DOE-Oak Ridge to supply QPR-type information, as suggested in Marcinowski's response.

At the April 2009 board meeting DOE was asked if there was an easy way for business-sensitive information to be deleted and the balance of the information provided to the board. DOE's response was that the board should identify the information it is interested in receiving, and DOE would have the option of agreeing to provide it or not

Following are the Board's recommendations regarding the types of information that should be made available to the Board during the year to support the Board in its role of staying abreast with the cleanup progress being made and in its deliberations regarding the EM budget prioritization process.

Recommendation

The Board recommends that DOE provide us with information associated with the major EM projects arenas: East Tennessee Technology Park, the Transuranic Waste Processing Center, Building 3019/U-233 Project, EM Waste Management Facility, Oak Ridge National Laboratory, Upper East Fork Poplar Creek, Bear Creek Valley, Bethel Valley, and Melton Valley.

For these areas, please supply quarterly the following information in a table format:

- Identify, at the Project Baseline Summary level, the calendar year funding associated with the major EM project(s) listed above.
- Identify the major project subprojects (if any), state the type of funding (calendar year or American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, whichever applies), and what year the funding is available to start subproject work.
- At the subproject level, identify if during the past quarter there were:
 - funding changes/challenges that may affect the completion,
 - identified technical issues/challenges that may affect the completion,
 - unresolved regulatory issues,
 - milestone challenges identified, and
 - significant accomplishments for the reporting period.