



Oak Ridge Site Specific Advisory Board Recommendation 248: On the FY 2023 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 10, 2021, the Oak Ridge Environmental Management (OREM) program presented on its FY 2021 budget formulation process to the Oak Ridge Site Specific Advisory Board (ORSSAB). The meeting was attended by several EM portfolio project directors who gave specifics on their projects. This presentation provided content and discussions that ORSSAB used to draft its recommendations.

Discussion

In creating its recommendations for the FY 2021 OREM budget, ORSSAB focused on general near-term and long-term cleanup priorities identified by OREM:

- Complete ETTP cleanup
 - Complete all remedial action consistent with CERCLA agreements
 - Fully Implement reindustrialization and historic preservation activities at ETTP
- Disposition ORNL uranium-233 inventory
 - Complete uranium-233 direct disposition campaign
 - Conduct down-blending operations and dispose of remaining uranium-233 inventory
- Disposition ORNL transuranic waste inventory
 - Complete disposition of transuranic debris waste
 - Complete construction of the Sludge Processing Facility
- Address Y-12 mercury contamination
 - Ensure proper planning for future mercury cleanup
 - Reduce mercury in surface water exiting Y-12

Project-specific objectives provided additional details for discussions that took place at the March 24, 2021, EM & Stewardship Committee meeting. The board referred to the [OREM 10-year Program Plan](#), the [EM Strategic Vision: 2021–2031](#), the current [EM Budget Request](#), and the board's [previous Recommendations](#) for additional guidance on budget recommendations.¹

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

Recommendations

ORSSAB supports OREM's Program Plan and recommends fully funding the activities that are currently supported by that Plan for FY 2023. In addition, ORSSAB has identified the following priorities for Oak Ridge Reservation cleanup.

The board recommends that the FY 2023 OREM budget request reflect adequate funding to maintain or accelerate these projects. In addition, when extra funds from suitable plus-ups and savings become available, we recommend that these funds be targeted for the following projects.

1. Complete transfer of all applicable land parcels at ETPP for productive purposes. Continue working with community partners to fully realize the economic development potential of reindustrialization after transfer.
2. Provide adequate funding to construct and operate the urgently needed new onsite disposition facility to allow uninterrupted cleanup progress at Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL) and Y-12 National Security Complex (Y-12).
3. Increase funding where possible to ensure the Mercury Treatment Facility meets the operational date of 2025 as presented to the community and ORSSAB. In addition, consider using plus-ups or surplus funds to upgrade equipment and technology that may have improved since the original schedule was developed.
4. The expansion of ORNL's Aquatic Ecology Laboratory provides a vital resource to the EM complex. Future requests should continue funding support for research into mercury and methyl-mercury pollution and prioritize designing and testing new and improved remediation technologies.
5. Provide adequate funds to maintain or upgrade infrastructure to ensure safe transportation of waste from cleanup projects to disposal.