



Department of Energy

Oak Ridge Office of Environmental Management
P.O. Box 4067
Oak Ridge, Tennessee 37830

September 15, 2025

Ms. Amy Jones
Chair
Oak Ridge Site Specific Advisory Board
Post Office Box 4067
Oak Ridge, Tennessee 37830

Dear Ms. Jones:

OAK RIDGE OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT RESPONSE TO THE OAK RIDGE SITE SPECIFIC ADVISORY BOARD RECOMMENDATION 258 ON THE FISCAL YEAR 2027 BUDGET PRIORITIES

Reference: Letter from Amy Jones to Erik Olds, *Recommendation 258: On the FY 2027 OREM Program Budget Priorities*, dated August 26, 2025

I would like to express my appreciation for the interest the Oak Ridge Site Specific Advisory Board has taken in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2027 budget formulation effort. Thank you for your recommendation. We have submitted 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. *Continue demolition of excess contaminated facilities at Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL) and Y-12 National Security Complex (Y-12).*

Response: The Oak Ridge Office of Environmental Management (OREM) will continue demolition of excess contaminated facilities at ORNL and Y-12 to support the research and national security missions at each site while protecting human health and the environment.

2. *Accelerate infrastructure development to enable future cleanup at ORNL and Y-12.*
 - *The primary focus being on the Mercury Treatment Facility construction and operation at the Y-12 National Security Complex.*

Response: OREM is continuing to make progress on construction of the onsite disposal facility. As the Board is aware, the Mercury Treatment Facility has encountered issues which has delayed its completion. In FY 2026, a construction pause is planned to allow the Department to determine the best path forward to meet the requirements while being cognizant of the responsibility to the taxpayer to do work efficiently. Both the Mercury Treatment Facility and onsite disposal facility are constructed utilizing line-item funding appropriated by Congress specifically for these projects.

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3. *Continue disposition of U-233 material and other legacy materials.*

- *Nickel, sodium shields, and other materials.*

Response: OREM will continue disposition of U-233 material and other legacy materials. In FY 2025, OREM began disposition of sodium shields to ensure the technology was viable and plans to continue as funds are made available.

4. *Continue processing and disposition of legacy transuranic debris and sludges, including contact-handled and remote-handled wastes.*

Response: OREM will continue planning for and executing disposition and processing legacy transuranic debris and sludges, including contact-handled and remote-handled wastes.

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

Response: OREM will continue to maintain and operate facilities at ORNL and Y-12.

6. *Continue funding support at ORNL's Aquatic Ecology Laboratory for research into mercury and methylmercury pollution and development of new and improved technologies.*

Response: OREM will continue funding support at the ORNL Aquatic Ecology Laboratory for research into mercury and methylmercury pollution and development of new and improved technologies.

7. *Continue funding to enable property transfers, including reindustrialization and site reuse support programs, to further the current nuclear renaissance taking place in the Oak Ridge corridor.*

- *Efforts from TN Governor Bill Lee, Secretary of Energy Chris Wright, and President Donald Trump show the need for funding support for the nuclear industry.*
- *Support research and development activities and fund contracts for academia for the next generation of nuclear workers.*

Response: OREM will continue to support reindustrialization and site reuse support programs to further the current nuclear renaissance taking place in the Oak Ridge corridor. This includes continuing to enable property transfers by continuing good relationships and partnerships with both Federal Facility Agreement counterparts and public non-profit partners who remain focused on community improvement to support the economic development of Oak Ridge through new technologies, jobs, and innovation.

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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,

THEODORE 
OLDS

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Theodore E. Olds
Manager

cc:

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