



Department of Energy

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

June 29, 2026

Mr. Kris Bartholomew
Chair
Oak Ridge Site Specific Advisory Board
Post Office Box 4067
Oak Ridge, Tennessee 37830

Dear Mr. Kris Bartholomew:

**RESPONSE TO THE OAK RIDGE SITE SPECIFIC ADVISORY BOARD LETTER
*RECOMMENDATION 260: ON THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL
MANAGEMENT DISPOSAL FACILITY AT THE U.S. DOE OAK RIDGE RESERVATION***

Thank you for your May 18, 2026, letter with a recommendation regarding the construction of the Environmental Management Disposal Facility (EMDF). The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Oak Ridge Office of Environmental Management (OREM) response to the eight items in the recommendation are given below:

1. **Funding:** *Ensure that funding is secured and prioritized to provide no less than two years overlapping operation of the proposed EMDF and the existing EMWMF given the fact that EMWMF is currently at 86 percent capacity. Whenever possible, DOE should seek efficiencies to accelerate design and construction of EMDF to enable it to open as early as possible.*

Response: Within its planning budgets and scheduling of future cleanup scope, DOE has accounted for the need to begin operation of the EMDF two years prior to attaining capacity in the existing Environmental Management Waste Management Facility (EMWMF). DOE submits a yearly budget estimate to the Office of Management and Budget that reflects full compliance with all OREM environmental commitments. This budget submittal considers the prioritization needs of OREM, and securing the funding is part of the submittal process. DOE will continue to seek efficiencies in project execution to accelerate the design and construction of the EMDF where feasible.

2. **Community Engagement:** *Although communication with stakeholders is part of the CERCLA process, emphasis should be placed on direct and iterative contact with the residential communities that are near the proposed EMDF site. We recommend these meetings include the status of the design, construction efforts, and final timelines for completion of each critical phase. Also, consideration should be given to publicizing dates, times and locations of the meetings to ensure the public is aware they are taking place.*

Response: OREM is committed to conducting all the robust communication efforts listed in its EMDF Community Outreach Plan, which was approved by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation. At each stage of this project, OREM has fulfilled, and even exceeded, those outreach commitments to ensure full public awareness about this important project.

The public comment period for the EMDF Proposed Plan was originally scheduled to run from September 10, 2018, to October 26, 2018, but OREM extended the deadline to December 10, 2018, to ensure all interested parties have adequate time to review and provide comments on the document.

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Consistent with previous recommendation requests, OREM scheduled information sessions immediately after the EMDF Proposed Plan was released to begin dialogue and interactions with residents and stakeholders. OREM hosted the first information session on September 13, 2018, at the DOE Information Center and the second information session on October 2, 2018, at the East Tennessee Economic Council Building. OREM also supported a third information session that was hosted by the Sierra Club at the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation office on October 11, 2018. Additionally, OREM hosted a formal public meeting about the project on November 7, 2018, at the Y-12 National Security Complex New Hope Center.

OREM has taken numerous steps to ensure the community is aware of every opportunity to learn more about the project and have their voice heard. Specifics about the information sessions and public meetings have been posted in the Knoxville News Sentinel, Oak Ridger, and Roane County News. Details have also been available on the OREM homepage and social media accounts. OREM also sent out more than 15,000 mailers to every household in Oak Ridge inviting them to the public meeting on November 7, 2018.

The information sessions were very beneficial. Participants were able to obtain valuable information from posters, fact sheets, and speaking with all the project managers associated with the EMDF. Federal and contractor personnel were able to answer all questions from the attendees directly, share project timelines, and inform them of the opportunities and methods to share their input. Those sessions resulted in multiple news stories about the project, which enabled OREM to connect with local organizations interested in learning more about the EMDF.

OREM offered another public comment period from May 9, 2022 to June 7, 2022, hosted a public meeting, and provided additional materials about the project before the Record of Decision was signed.

The Environmental Quality Advisory Board and Tennessee Citizens for Wilderness Planning each requested and received tours of the proposed EMDF site.

OREM has conducted outreach for this project in many other ways and has provided briefings to local officials and community organizations and presentations at local, regional, and national meetings on the topic.

OREM has continued steady outreach as the project progresses. In July 2023, OREM and United Cleanup Oak Ridge LLC hosted more than 50 guests and community members on a guided tour to observe progress on the construction of the EMDF. The tour offered guests a view of the project's scale, completed work, and current activities. Participants disembarked from the bus on the EMDF footprint for an informational session hosted by Subject Matter Experts. Those experts provided in-depth project information and progress details, with the facility as the backdrop. OREM also discusses the project at its annual community poster sessions and provides regular updates through its national newsletter and monthly newscast.

OREM also discussed this topic at the March Oak Ridge Site Specific Advisory Board meeting, which included a tour of the site. This public meeting provides another opportunity for the community to learn about the project, ask questions, and share opinions.

3. ***Waste Disposal Capacity:*** *As the EMDF design is finalized and construction begins, DOE should continue to evaluate and ensure that the facility will have the capacity to complete cleanup of the ORR. Wherever possible, DOE should seek programmatic efficiencies to reduce the volume of materials for onsite disposal.*

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Response: DOE has included in all its calculations throughout the Remedial Investigation/ Feasibility Study and Proposed Plan a 25 percent uncertainty factor (increase) in waste volumes projected for disposal in an onsite facility. DOE will continue to carry this 25 percent increase/ uncertainty factor throughout the Record of Decision and design phases for the future EMDF to ensure adequate capacity. DOE is also actively seeking and implementing programmatic efficiencies to reduce the overall volume of waste requiring disposal.

4. **Contingency Planning:** *Current plans presume EMDF will be open in time to provide overlap with closure of EMWMF. However, DOE should continue evolving its contingency plan/scheduling to ensure there will not be a work stoppage in cleanup if EMDF construction is delayed.*

Response: DOE and OREM recognize the critical importance of a seamless transition from the EMWMF to the EMDF to prevent any delay in cleanup operations. OREM project scheduling and risk management plans include contingency planning to mitigate potential delays. These plans are continuously reviewed and evolved as the project progresses to ensure the cleanup on the Oak Ridge Reservation is not impacted by construction timelines.

5. **Budget for Operation of the Completed Facility:** *Funding should be allocated and prioritized for the post-construction phase that includes future monitoring and functioning of the facility for requirements stipulated in the ROD and other relevant documents.*

a. *Ensure monitoring continues during construction and ongoing operations.*

Response: DOE has conducted extensive characterization efforts to understand site-specific conditions, including the installation of numerous piezometers to monitor hydrologic and seismic data. This monitoring is ongoing and will continue throughout the construction and operational phases of the facility to ensure all design and safety requirements are met and maintained. The budget for long-term monitoring and maintenance is included in DOE long-term stewardships estimates.

6. **Water Treatment:** *Since EMDF will have its own water treatment facilities, DOE should strongly consider designing those facilities to include capacity to also treat water from EMWMF. Specifically, piping water directly from EMWMF to EMDF would be ideal. This will be a safer and more cost-effective alternative to the current practice of trucking water to ORNL.*

Response: DOE appreciates the Board's suggestion regarding the co-treatment of leachate from the EMWMF at the new EMDF water treatment facility. The project team will evaluate the feasibility, safety benefits, and cost-effectiveness of this concept as part of the ongoing design process.

7. **Post-Closure Stewardship:** *Develop a plan for the ongoing stewardship and funding mechanism for monitoring and maintenance of the facility once it is closed.*

Response: DOE will be responsible for the EMDF periodic maintenance and monitoring, as well as any unscheduled maintenance that may be necessary once the facility has been closed. The funding necessary to carry out these responsibilities has been included in the DOE long-term stewardship estimates. The mechanism by which this funding would be made available will be managed through the DOE Office of Legacy Management. Furthermore, DOE Order 435.1, *Radioactive Waste Management*, and Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act requirements stipulate the need for a comprehensive monitoring and maintenance closure plan to be developed for the facility to ensure its protectiveness to the public and environment in perpetuity.

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Thank you for your continued focus and attention to support the important Environmental Cleanup Mission.

If you have any questions or if we can be of further assistance, please contact Morgan Carden at 340-5164 or me at 576-0742.

Sincerely,

**THEODORE
OLDS**

Digitally signed by
THEODORE OLDS
Date: 2026.06.29
12:46:13 -04'00'

Theodore E. Olds
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cc:

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