



AK RIDGE RESERVATION

Environmental Management

December 3, 1997

Mr. Federico Peña
Secretary of Energy
U. S. Department of Energy
1000 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, DC 20585

RE: Recommendation for the Conduct of an Oak Ridge
Reservation Health Effects Study

Dear Secretary Peña:

For the past two years, the Oak Ridge Reservation Environmental Management Site Specific Advisory Board (ORREMSSAB) has been defining, evaluating, and addressing community concerns. A common thread is the health and safety of Oak Ridge Reservation (ORR) workers and nearby residents. During this period, the Board chose to devote significant attention to health issues. Members of ORREMSSAB also attended the Department of Energy (DOE)-sponsored Oak Ridge Health Research Workshop. As a result of input from the community and information received during the workshop, the Board developed the enclosed recommendations for a health study on the ORR.

The proposed research may be difficult. Our nation must not shy away from difficulty. Reasonable efforts now might uncover new and important information concerning the effects of chronic low level exposures to radioactive and toxic materials alone and in combination. The study should utilize results from applicable, published research performed nationally and internationally. The recommended study should be funded by DOE Headquarters from sources other than the Environmental Management budget. We ask that these recommendations be implemented without delay.

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT
DIVISION, FILE CONTROL NUMBER

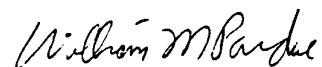
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Mr. Frederico Peña

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We look forward to your written response to our request.

Sincerely,



William M. Pardue
Chair

WMP/sb

Enclosure

cc: Governor Don Sundquist, State of Tennessee
Paul Seligman, DOE/HQ
Jim Hall, DOE/ORO
Rod Nelson, DOE/ORO
Sandy Ulrikson, DOE/ORO
John Hankinson, USEPA Region IV
Earl Leming, TDEC
Susan Gawarecki, LOC
ORREMSSAB Members



Recommendation for the Conduct of an Oak Ridge Reservation Health Effects Study

**Submitted by the
Oak Ridge Reservation Environmental Management
Site Specific Advisory Board**

Recommendation

The Oak Ridge Reservation Environmental Management Site Specific Advisory Board (ORREMSSAB) recommends that Department of Energy (DOE) Headquarters arrange, as soon as possible, for a major interdisciplinary medical research project in Oak Ridge that includes participation by university, federal, and other non-profit and private sector organizations. This project should include a clinical study leading to medical diagnosis and referral to appropriate medical treatment of workers and nearby residents who have been exposed to radioactive materials and/or toxins found to exist on the Oak Ridge Reservation (ORR). This study should consider, among other things, the potential clinical effects of chronic low level exposure to radioactive and toxic materials alone and in combination. During the study, emphasis should be placed on case management and potential treatment for those suffering effects from exposure. Information regarding known radioactive materials and toxins at the ORR (including classified information) should be made available to the researchers. The findings of this study should be submitted for publication in a peer reviewed journal (e.g., *The New England Journal of Medicine*) to ensure that any findings are widely distributed for general application.

Rationale

- The ORR is the site of a nuclear weapons plant, a former uranium-235 enrichment plant, and many major commercial, medical, and peacetime projects. Parts of the ORR are contaminated with radioactive and toxic materials, some of which have been released into the environment. As a result, the ORR is a National Priority List site under the Comprehensive Environmental Response and Compensation Liability Act of 1980.
- Some workers and residents near the ORR suffer observable and medically verifiable ill health. Such persons may have been exposed to radioactive and toxic materials on or originating from the ORR.
- Some persons who work on or live near the ORR are concerned that there may be a causal relationship between exposure to the radioactive and toxic materials found on the ORR and the reported symptoms.
- Some of the radioactive and toxic materials found on the ORR are typical of those found at other types of industrial facilities, such as chemical plants and coal fired steam plants. Therefore, the findings of this study may be applicable to other types of industrial settings.

Findings of the Research Project might:

- provide comprehensive data that allow a balanced approach to understanding the causes of ill health among affected workers and nearby residents,
- encourage DOE to enhance the safety of its operations and thus reduce the potential for adverse health effects among workers and nearby residents,
- help workers and residents who suffer ill health attributable to DOE operations receive appropriate medical treatment,
- offer current and prospective residents and businesses assurance that Oak Ridge is a safe, healthy place to live and work, and
- provide a significant contribution to medical knowledge regarding the health effects of chronic low level exposure to radioactive and toxic materials alone and in combination at industrial facilities.