



Department of Energy

Washington, DC 20585

January 23, 1998

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Received 2/2/98

Mr. William M. Pardue
Chair
Oak Ridge Reservation
Environmental Management
Site Specific Advisory Board
Post Office Box 2001, MS: EW-91
Oak Ridge, Tennessee 37831

Dear Mr. Pardue:

I am writing in reply to your December 3, 1997, letter to Department of Energy (DOE) Secretary Federico Peña on behalf of the Oak Ridge Reservation Environmental Management Site Specific Advisory Board (SSAB). In that letter, you requested that DOE fund a medical research study of workers and residents of Oak Ridge.

I am personally familiar with the health concerns that have been expressed by a number of workers and community residents at and surrounding DOE's Oak Ridge Reservation. During the recent workshop held jointly by DOE, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR), and the Tennessee Department of Health and Environment (TDH) in Oak Ridge, I was able to appreciate more fully the extent of these concerns and the impact they are having on the community.

Since that workshop, a number of public health-related initiatives by these agencies have been undertaken or are nearing completion. CDC is now in the planning stages for a health study of children in the Scarboro community where concerns have been raised about the extent of respiratory illness in children. DOE's Oak Ridge Operations Office is considering the performance of several additional environmental surveys for radioactive or chemical contamination in Scarboro. These efforts will be planned and implemented with input from community leaders. Community members from Oak Ridge are also represented on the working group, which provides public input into the CDC Advisory Committee on Energy-Related Epidemiologic Research. This committee is responsible for approving all health effects studies that CDC conducts in the Oak Ridge area and throughout the DOE complex. At its December meeting, representatives from the Oak Ridge community presented their concerns to the working group.

In addition, the Oak Ridge dose reconstruction study, conducted by TDH, is nearing completion. This study will provide valuable information on the amount of various contaminants that were released during past operations of Oak Ridge's DOE facilities and pose potential health risks to community residents. Finally, the clinical evaluation of over 50 current and former workers by three independent expert physicians is expected to be completed in early 1998.



The information provided by these projects in conjunction with continuing input from Oak Ridge workers and community members will provide valuable information to DOE, CDC, ATSDR, TDH, and their stakeholders on future directions for public health activities in Oak Ridge. I have forwarded the SSAB proposal to the CDC per our agreement with that agency and requested that they evaluate the proposal in light of knowledge gained from the current studies and evaluations soon to be completed and made available for public review.

Thank you for your interest and your input on this important matter. I look forward to working with you in the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "PJ Seligman", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Paul J. Seligman, M.D., M.P.H.
Deputy Assistant Secretary
for Health Studies