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Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515-4202

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Mr. Luther V. Gibson, Jr.
Chair - Oak Ridge Site Specific Advisory Board
P.O. Box 2001
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Oak Ridge, Tennessee 37831

Dear Mr. Gibson:

Thank you for your recent letter regarding the proposed funding levels for the Department of Energy's (DOE) Oak Ridge Operation (ORO) Environmental Management (EM) program. It is always a pleasure to hear from you and other members of your Oak Ridge Site Specific Advisory Board.

Although I am very pleased with many aspects of DOE's proposed budget including full funding for the Spallation Neutron Source, I am extremely concerned with the level of funding currently proposed for EM projects. Like you, I view these projects to be a critical aspect of DOE's work undertaken in Oak Ridge.

I believe that DOE Oak Ridge Operations, including the Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL), Y-12 and ETP, are world-class facilities that offer tremendous opportunities in the areas of basic scientific research, advancing environmental technologies and ensuring the future of our National security. We must work to maintain adequate federal funding for these programs.

As you know, the Cold War efforts undertaken at ORNL, Y-12 and K-25 nuclear facilities played an instrumental role in our Nation's security, and I firmly believe helped to bring an end to this era of tension. These efforts, however, did not come without a price.

Today, many of these facilities are faced with a legacy of nuclear waste and other environmental hazards that must be dealt with. We cannot truly put the Cold War behind us until we have settled this final chapter. It is the responsibility of the DOE

to ensure that clean-up activities proceed as expeditiously and as efficiently as possible. I will continue to work with members of the Tennessee delegation in both the House and Senate to see that the DOE has adequate funds to accomplish this.

Secretary of Energy Spence Abraham recently testified before the House Committee on Appropriations' Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development. During his testimony he said that, "I have... initiated a sweeping Environmental Management Mission Assessment to identify efficiencies and ensure that our principal focus is on accelerating the cleanup of those sites with significant environmental, health, and safety risks."

Department of Energy staff members have indicated to my office that the final review should be complete in early Fall so that additional funds may be requested and included in the final appropriations language.

I look forward to reading this assessment, and hope that it will lead the Secretary to request additional funding either through the regular FY2002 appropriations process or through a FY2001 supplemental appropriation bill.

Thank you again for contacting me regarding these matters. If there is any other way I can be of assistance to you, your family or friends, please do not hesitate to contact me.

With kindest regards, I am

Yours truly,


JOHN J. DUNCAN, JR.
Member of Congress

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