



Many Voices Working for the Community

Oak Ridge Site Specific Advisory Board

April 20, 2001

Patricia A. Bonner
United States Environmental Protection Agency
Office of Policy, Economics, and Innovation (MC 1802)
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Ms. Bonner:

Comments on Environmental Protection Agency “Draft Public Involvement Policy”

The Oak Ridge Site Specific Advisory Board (ORSSAB) reviewed the Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA’s) “Draft Public Involvement Policy,” as referenced in the *Federal Register* on December 28, 2000, and offers the following comments.

The policy is extremely well written and sufficiently detailed to be useful; however, in the Board’s opinion, EPA has made only limited implementation of its public participation policy in the Oak Ridge area.

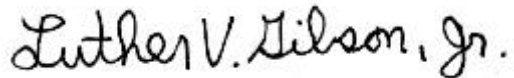
Of particular concern is EPA’s lack of a resident field representative in Oak Ridge, which seems at odds with the significance of the Oak Ridge Reservation’s environmental remediation projects. A number of stakeholder groups and ORSSAB committees meet regularly throughout the month to discuss ongoing remediation projects, plans, and decisions. Although the ORSSAB monthly meeting is attended by a representative from EPA Region 4, long-distance communication with these other groups and committees is not a satisfactory substitute for face-to-face meetings with stakeholders.

Additionally, although EPA is routinely copied when comments are solicited by the U.S. Department of Energy (pursuant to the *Federal Facility Agreement for the Oak Ridge Reservation*), EPA does not respond directly to the comments, which is clearly an expected action implied in the draft policy.

Patricia A. Bonner
Page 2
April 20, 2001

ORSSAB is a federally appointed citizens' panel that provides advice and recommendations to DOE on its Oak Ridge Environmental Management Program. The group was formed in 1995 and is chartered under the Federal Advisory Committee Act.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Luther V. Gibson, Jr." in a cursive script.

Luther V. Gibson, Jr.
Chair

LVG/plo

cc: Pat Halsey, DOE-ORO
Connie Jones, EPA
Rod Nelson, DOE-ORO
John Owsley, TDEC