AK RIDGE RESERVATION

Environmental Management

January 7, 1998

Mr. Rod Nelson
Assistant Manager for Environmental Management
DOE/ORO
P.O. Box 2001
Oak Ridge, TN 37831

Dear Mr. Nelson:

At our January 7, 1998 meeting, the Oak Ridge Reservation Environmental Management Site Specific Advisory Board (ORREMSSAB) reviewed and approved the enclosed "End Use Recommendation for the Disposal Areas in Melton Valley."

We look forward to receiving your written response to our recommendation. Thank you for your continued support of the ORREMSSAB.

Sincerely,

William M Pardue

William M. Pardue, Chair
ORREMSSAB

WMP/sb

Enclosure

cc: Ms. Margaret Wilson, DOE
Mr. John Hankinson, USEPA Region IV
Mr. Earl Leming, TDEC
Ms. Susan Gawarecki, LOC
ORREMSSAB Members
EUWG Members

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End Use Recommendation for the Disposal Areas in Melton Valley

Some of the most highly radioactive waste materials on the Oak Ridge Reservation are buried in Melton Valley disposal areas. Consideration of any near-term land use other than "restricted access waste disposal" for contaminated Melton Valley lands would require removal of more than three million cubic yards of material. The resulting disposal requirements and ecological devastation make such an option unacceptable. Thus, the Oak Ridge Reservation Environmental Management Site Specific Advisory Board recommends restricted end use for the disposal areas in Melton Valley. Such use would limit access and surface use to monitoring and maintenance activities; no soil excavation or surface water or ground water use would be permitted; ownership would remain with the federal government. Because disposal areas in Melton Valley are not contiguous, some areas of Melton Valley are usable for Department of Energy (DOE)-controlled activities. In addition, some of the restricted areas may be candidates for remediation.

For this end use, the DOE must, at a minimum, ensure worker safety and control further migration of contamination in Melton Valley. Levels of contaminants released to the Clinch River via White Oak Dam must not exceed standards protective of human health and the environment.

The DOE should continue to monitor the major sources of radiological risk in Melton Valley. Such monitoring will indicate when the contaminants have decayed to levels at which additional remediation is feasible. Radionuclides with half lives of several years to decades, such as tritium, strontium, and cesium, are the major sources of risk in parts of the disposal areas. Within 100 to 300 years, such areas may be candidates for land uses other than restricted.

Implementation of this recommendation by the DOE must be consistent with the Community Guidelines and needs for long-term stewardship. If the DOE cannot meet this recommendation for Melton Valley, exceptions must be discussed in a public forum as part of the decision-making process.

This recommendation is consistent with the End Use Working Group's conclusions for the disposal areas in the Melton Valley.