

Environmental Management Site Specific Advisory Board

Fernald
Hanford
Idaho

Nevada
Northern New Mexico
Oak Ridge
Paducah

Pantex
Rocky Flats
Savannah River

July 23, 2001

The Honorable Spencer Abraham
Secretary, Department of Energy
1000 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20585

Dear Secretary Abraham:

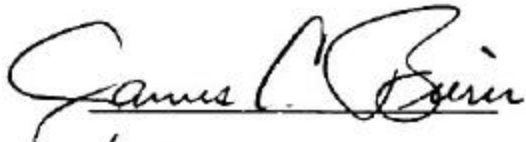
We congratulate you on your appointment as Secretary of Energy. We represent the Department of Energy (DOE)'s Environmental Management (EM) Site Specific Advisory Boards. Our boards represent the citizenry around DOE's sites across the complex in providing independent advice on environmental cleanup, stabilization and disposition of radioactive and hazardous materials and waste, and long-term stewardship at the Department's nuclear facilities. We recognize that DOE faces a complicated and demanding task of cleanup of legacy nuclear waste and contamination. The magnitude of this cleanup effort transcends individual Administrations and is guided by DOE's pledge to the States, Tribes, and citizens to take appropriate actions. We are concerned that the EM budget will be inadequate to fulfill environmental obligations across the complex.


We acknowledge that you are under tremendous pressure to reduce DOE spending. We submit, however, that federal spending for nuclear waste cleanup should not be considered discretionary. In most cases, legally binding cleanup commitments are in place with state and federal environmental regulators. Even where they are not, DOE should fund those actions necessary to reduce current and future risks in accord with the values and needs of local communities. Individual businesses would not be permitted to avoid their environmental responsibilities simply because they had other funding priorities. The federal government should do no less than it demands of all citizens, on behalf of us all.

The SSABs stand united in making this request for adequate funding across the entire complex. Each of us is understandably concerned about the adequacy of funding for our respective sites; however, we note that parochial attitudes are no longer appropriate. Now that DOE has achieved intersite integration in many programs, delays caused by funding shortfalls at any particular site will have consequences throughout the system. The EM program has reached a point where all facilities rely on others elsewhere in the complex to reach the milestones involving waste storage, treatment, and disposal. We are linked through a series of interdependent activities. Adequate budgets at all sites will allow DOE to achieve cleanup and disposal of hazardous and nuclear wastes and materials complex-wide in a manner that is protective of workers, the public, and the environment.

We urge you to continue to be an advocate for adequate funding to meet the Department's responsibilities as good stewards for the land, air, and water. We look forward to having an opportunity to meet with you at any time you have the occasion to visit our respective sites.

Respectfully,


EM SSAB - Fernald Chair



EM SSAB - Paducah Chair



EM SSAB - Hanford Chair


EM SSAB - Pantex Co-Chair

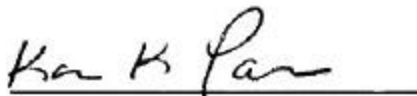

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