



Department of Energy
Washington, DC 20585

May 23, 2007

The Honorable Brad Miller
Chairman, Subcommittee on Investigations and Oversight
Committee on Science and Technology
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Your letter of May 16, 2007 requested advice from the Department of Energy (Department or DOE) by May 23, 2007, of the Department's funding plans for the Savannah River Ecology Laboratory (SREL or Laboratory), a facility at the Savannah River Site that has been made available for many years by the Department to the University of Georgia to conduct various forms of ecological research. Contrary to the suggestion in your letter, the Department has not determined that SREL will receive no funding from DOE.

What DOE did decide, in consequence of a review done in the course of the fiscal year 2006 budget process that concluded that basic science missions did not warrant continued funding of the University of Georgia for the Laboratory, was to create a relationship whereby the Laboratory could continue to operate despite that budget decision. To that end, DOE agreed to fund scientific work at SREL to support the Savannah River Site mission for \$5 million in fiscal year 2006 and \$1 million in fiscal year 2007, with the option to fund additional meritorious work on a task-by-task basis. As part of that agreement, the Laboratory leadership assured DOE that SREL would become self-sustaining by seeking specific research assignments from the entire DOE complex, not just the Office of Science or the Office of Environmental Management (EM), and by actively responding to solicitations from other Federal entities. In addition, the Laboratory could conduct research for others, such as state and private entities, funded through other mechanisms.

This approach was publicly announced and agreed to by the University of Georgia nearly two years ago, and a new cooperative agreement that further stipulated that SREL would be funded at \$1 million in fiscal year 2007 and on a task-by-task basis in the future was signed by the University of Georgia and the Department in November 2006. To date, SREL has been funded with \$1.805 million from EM and approximately \$0.551 million from non-EM sources, including the National Nuclear Security Administration.

I expect that additional information on this subject will be provided to the Subcommittees in the course of the briefing requested by your letter of May 16, 2007. Should you have any



questions about this matter, please contact me or Dirk Bartlett, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Congressional and Intergovernmental Affairs, at (202) 586-5450.

Sincerely,



James A. Rispoli
Assistant Secretary for
Environmental Management

cc: The Honorable F. James Sensenbrenner
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Investigations and Oversight

The Honorable Bob Inglis
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Energy and Environment

The Honorable Bart Gordon
Chairman
Committee on Science and Technology

The Honorable Ralph Hall
Ranking Member
Committee on Science and Technology

The Honorable John Barrow
U.S. House of Representatives