

May 8, 2007

Ms. Stephanie Weakley  
Department of Energy  
1000 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20585

Dear Ms. Weakley:

**Subject: Please Help Oak Ridge Retirees Obtain Better Pension Benefits!**

I respectfully request your assistance and support to help bring the Oak Ridge retirees' pension benefits to make them comparable to retirees of other DOE facilities across the nation. I respectfully urge you to continue to endorse the proposal of The Coalition of Oak Ridge Retired Employees (CORRE) to restore 75% of the lost value of our individual pensions to equal the retirees of other DOE contractors.

I went to work at the Y-12 Weapons Plant in 1953, as a stenographer making \$249 per month, loved my job and am so proud to have been a part of "winning the cold war." I handled all levels of classified documents pertaining to the many weapons programs during that time. I do remember when the money was appropriated there was an allocated budget for the specific weapons programs and a "separate pot" of money set aside for compensation and employee benefits, including our pension fund. Because the Oak Ridge retirees were unfairly assigned a "life amount" pension by the company, there is now a huge surplus in the pension fund. It is that pot of money that I feel we are being denied while trying to exist on a dwindling pension. It has been determined that some early retirees could actually qualify for welfare. Is this any way to treat a group of people who gave so much to their country? All over the United States, there has been outrage over employees being robbed by other companies of their pensions, but nothing has been done about the Oak Ridge Retirees.

After working 43 years at Y-12, K-25 and ORNL, I retired in 1997. The following table shows the increases in medical insurance since my retirement and after reaching age 65.

United HealthCare Insurance (Single)

Enrolled April 1999 @ \$82/month

July 2006 the cost is \$187/month plus \$30.12/month for Dental and Vision

Medicare Part B Primary Insurance (Single)

Enrolled May 1999 @ \$45.50/month

January 2007 the cost is \$93.50/month

MetLife Long Term Care Insurance (Single)

Enrolled February 2003 and currently paying \$2,481.85/year

Since I am a single person, the increasing premiums paid to UnitedHealth Care have reduced my pension significantly plus there is a lifetime cap of \$75,000. In addition I have an approximate monthly cost of \$30 for over-the-counter drugs. Without improved pension benefits, it is likely that many of the retirees of the DOE Oak Ridge facilities will have to seek government assistance with health insurance and living expenses, which could be much more costly than increasing our pensions with money already earmarked for the retiree's pension.

I would greatly appreciate your bringing these concerns to the personal attention of the Secretary of Energy for fair treatment of the Oak Ridge retirees in the management of the Oak Ridge pension fund and requesting adequate adjustments be made to compensate for inflation. I would also appreciate your discussing these issues with DOE and encouraging timely action on this issue. Thank you for taking time to read this letter—our future depends on you.

Respectfully,

*Barbara Guetner Odey*