



*Many Voices Working for the Community*

## **Oak Ridge Site Specific Advisory Board**

---

### **NEWS RELEASE**

**For Immediate Release**

**Contact: Spencer Gross, 241-4584**

March 18, 2013

### **Questions remain on funding for cleanup of Oak Ridge Reservation**

by David Martin, Chair, Oak Ridge Site Specific Advisory Board

There is great uncertainty on what the looming federal budget cuts will be and what effect they will have on funding for the Department of Energy's (DOE) Environmental Management (EM) program at the Oak Ridge Reservation (ORR). We can be confident that budget cuts are coming. It is going to take a coordinated effort on the part of the DOE-Oak Ridge EM, regulators and stakeholders to minimize the impact on current and future remediation projects and on the men and women who carry out this work.



Right now DOE-EM is operating on a temporary six month budget. This budget covers just the first half of FY 2013 and is based on half of the FY 2012 budget. We should know soon how changes in the federal budget affect Oak Ridge EM for the second half of 2013. This still leaves the 2014 budget in question.

At this point it is pure speculation as to what the DOE-EM budget will be for 2014. Probably when it is set, it will be near the FY 2012 level. For years the Oak Ridge EM, local governments, and citizen's groups have fought for funding adequate to eliminate health and environmental threats in and around Oak Ridge and to ensure that the missions of the Oak Ridge National Laboratory and the Y-12 National Security Complex are not impeded. Recently, the ORSSAB issued several recommendations related to the EM budget.

When further budget cuts come, missed milestones can have grave consequences. As long as contaminated areas of the ORR are susceptible to accidental releases, the program's credibility with the community and regulators is at risk. Putting off demolishing contaminated facilities means EM monies that could be used for cleanup must instead be spent on surveillance and maintenance. Over time these expenses, along with inflation, can substantially increase total cleanup costs.

To lessen the detrimental effects from possible budget cuts, DOE-Oak Ridge EM has been working with DOE Headquarters, the state and the EPA to make sure what money is available will be used to best take care of EM's immediate needs. Looking to technology for help, the DOE is using a sophisticated computer program to assist with planning. The Dynamic Planning Model uses a comprehensive database of project work schedules and cost estimates to predict total cost schedules for alternate sequencing and funding scenarios.

As the DOE looks at its options to respond to budget constraints, it will be asking for input from the community. One way you can help is to join with ORSSAB as we move forward. As DOE-EM's main conduit for public outreach, ORSSAB is given updates and detailed reports at our monthly meetings. You can apply for appointment to the Board, but you do not have to be a member to have your views heard. All meetings are open to the public.

Our meetings are also delayed broadcast on YouTube, [www.youtube.com/user/ORSSAB](http://www.youtube.com/user/ORSSAB) and on area cable access channels. You can also become a member of one of the ORSSAB standing committees: Environmental Management, Public Outreach, and Stewardship. For more information, contact us at (865) 241-4583 or 241-4584, or see our website at [www.oakridge.doe.gov/em/ssab](http://www.oakridge.doe.gov/em/ssab).

###