

# Oak Ridge Site Specific Advisory Board

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**For Immediate Release**

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## **Oak Ridge SSAB to Discuss DOE Cleanup Plans for Bethel, Melton Valley Sites**

**Oak Ridge, Tenn. - February 4, 2000** - The Oak Ridge Site Specific Advisory Board (SSAB) has recently embarked on a study of DOE's plans for remediation of Bethel and Melton valleys—a challenge that DOE admits will be one of its toughest yet. The Board's Environmental Restoration (ER) Team is encouraging interested members of the public to participate in reviewing DOE remediation plans.

These remediation projects will be performed under the regulatory infrastructure established by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liabilities Act (i.e., CERCLA or "Superfund").

According to the SSAB's ER Team Leader, Jake Alexander, input into DOE's decision-making processes is crucial and particularly important during the early planning phases taking place now. Citizens need to carefully evaluate these kinds of DOE proposals, he says, in order to protect their larger interests and to encourage the government agency officials to explain exactly what substantive benefits the public will actually realize from such large expenditures of public funds.

The cleanup task, roughly estimated to cost around \$400 million, will take years to complete and will have a long-lasting impact on the future of the region.

DOE Environmental Management (EM) Program representatives recently briefed the ER Team on DOE's plans to perform environmental restoration actions in Bethel and Melton valleys. These areas include various Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL) facilities, including the burial grounds historically used by DOE to dispose of ORNL's radioactive and hazardous chemical wastes, as well as wastes from several other government-owned sites.

DOE's wide spectrum of subproject proposals involve isolation of much of the wastes at current locations. A smaller fraction of the wastes will be excavated and moved to the new waste management facility at Y-12. An even smaller portion may be transferred to the Nevada Test Site. DOE also plans to pump contaminated groundwater to various new and existing water treatment facilities, plug and abandon numerous monitoring wells, and stabilize a number of contaminated tanks and pipelines.

Interested members of the public are invited to actively participate in team meetings, which are held on the second Thursday of each month at the Information Resource Center, 105 Broadway. The next meeting will be Thursday, February 10, at 5:00 p.m. For additional information, call the SSAB office at 241-3665.

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