



## Department of Energy

Washington, DC 20585

August 31, 2021

Ms. Virginia H. Dale  
President  
Advocates for the Oak Ridge Reservation  
209 Whippoorwill Drive  
Oak Ridge, Tennessee 37830

Dear Ms. Dale:

Thank you for your April 8, 2021, letter concerning the Department of Energy's (DOE) proposed Environmental Management Disposal Facility (EMDF) in Oak Ridge, Tennessee. Since the DOE Office of Environmental Management (EM) has responsibility for the matter you raised, I am responding on the Secretary's behalf.

DOE is committed to performing cleanup and waste management operations at the Oak Ridge Reservation (ORR) in a safe, environmentally protective, and efficient manner. Consistent with that commitment, EM is proposing a second onsite Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) disposal facility, EMDF, to support continued cleanup efforts at the Y-12 National Security Complex and Oak Ridge National Laboratory. DOE needs additional disposal capacity to facilitate cleanup because ORR's current onsite disposal facility is approaching full capacity. As is the practice with the existing disposal facility, EM proposes to dispose of low-risk material onsite at EMDF and ship higher-contaminated waste offsite for disposal.

DOE is coordinating with the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC) and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) during the CERCLA decision-making process on EMDF, in accordance with the ORR Federal Facility Agreement.

Your letter requested certain information on the proposed EMDF. Information on the waste acceptance criteria, comparative analysis of costs and local jobs for the onsite and offsite alternatives, necessary regulatory waivers, and treatment technologies were described, along with other information, in the 2018 Proposed Plan encompassing EMDF.<sup>1</sup> Public input on the plan was solicited through written comments and a public hearing. DOE has considered the comments received on the plan while developing the Record of Decision (ROD).

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<sup>1</sup> *Proposed Plan for the Disposal of Oak Ridge Reservation Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) Waste*, DOE/OR/01-2695&D2/R1 (Sept. 2018). See <https://doeic.science.energy.gov/uploads/A.0100.030.2596.pdf>. A comparative analysis of costs and local jobs also can be found in the Feasibility Study developed for the EMDF project. *Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study for the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act Oak Ridge Reservation Waste Disposal, Oak Ridge, Tennessee*, DOE/OR-01-2535&D5 (Feb. 2017). See <https://doeic.science.energy.gov/uploads/F.0615.029.0055.pdf>.

DOE will provide additional opportunities for public engagement and input as planning for EMDF proceeds. For example, a public workshop on the Waste Acceptance Criteria will be scheduled once ongoing coordination with TDEC and EPA has been completed. DOE also will assess and deploy technologies and best practices to reduce waste volume and immobilize mercury residuals as necessary to maximize the life of the landfill and to meet regulatory requirements.

The DOE Responsiveness Summary within the upcoming ROD for the proposed EMDF will address in further detail what public input was received and how it was considered in key aspects of the decision. DOE appreciates your interest in the proposed EMDF and values your input and involvement.

If you have any questions, please contact me or Mr. Mark Gilbertson, Associate Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Regulatory and Policy Affairs, at (202) 586-5042 or [mark.gilbertson@hq.doe.gov](mailto:mark.gilbertson@hq.doe.gov).

Sincerely,



William I. White  
Acting Assistant Secretary  
for Environmental Management

cc: Mark Gilbertson, EM-4  
Nicole Nelson-Jean, EM-3