



*Many Voices Working for the Community*

# Oak Ridge Site Specific Advisory Board

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October 24, 2000

The Honorable Bill Richardson  
Secretary of Energy  
U.S. Department of Energy  
1000 Independence Ave., SW  
S-1, 7B-252-FORS  
Washington D.C. 20585

## **Support of Compensation for Sick Nuclear Workers as Defined in the FY 2001 Defense Authorization Bill sponsored by Senator Fred Thompson of Tennessee**

Dear Secretary Richardson:

The Oak Ridge Site Specific Advisory Board (ORSSAB), at its regularly scheduled October 11, 2000, meeting, endorsed the compensation for sick nuclear workers as defined in the FY 2001 Defense Authorization Bill sponsored by Senator Fred Thompson of Tennessee.

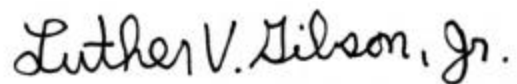
The ORSSAB commends you, your staff, Senator Fred Thompson, and the area Tennessee Congressional Delegation in the bipartisan effort to compensate sick nuclear workers whose exposure to radiation and other pernicious chemicals has left them with debilitating conditions. These serious debilitating conditions are costly, life threatening, and disruptive to the workers' quality of life.

We are extremely pleased that Senator Thompson, along with many others, was able to work out a compromise with the House of Representatives to assist these workers. The Administration's support, as well as that of others within the Tennessee Congressional delegation, made this not only a bipartisan effort but also one that has broad support.

Even though, the legislation employs scientific standards established by the National Institutes of Health's National Cancer Institute, we are concerned that no lead agency has been identified to administer these funds or benefits. We therefore strongly urge that an agency be chosen immediately, such as the Labor Department, or an agency with broad experience in administering both compensation and health care benefits to "at risk" workers. While we recognize that the selection of an "appropriate agency" has many complicated factors to be considered, we urge that the chosen agency be one with a short learning curve to expedite dispersing benefits. Many workers are critically ill and have little time for bureaucratic processes. We believe, for many workers, time is of the essence.

We extend our gratitude to you, your staff, and the Tennessee Delegation for bringing defining clarity to chaos for one of the most disquieting issues ever faced by Oak Ridge and other DOE nuclear site communities.

Sincerely,



Luther V. Gibson, Jr.  
Chair

Cc: Rod Nelson, DOE/ORO  
Pat Halsey, DOE/ORO  
Martha Crosland, DOE/HQ  
Senator Fred Thompson  
Representative Gene Caldwell  
Senator Randy McNally