

November 6, 2006

Mr. Eric Abelquist,  
Director, Independent  
Environmental Assessment & Verification  
Oak Ridge Institute for Science and Education  
Post Office Box 117  
Oak Ridge, TN 37831

Dear Mr. Eric Abelquist:

This letter is confirm NRC observations reported to your staff at the exit meeting of the Radiological and Environmental Sciences Laboratory (RESL) audit of Oak Ridge Institute for Science and Education Environmental Laboratory performed on: September 19-20, 2006. The NRC staff had the following observations:

Observation 1. Self- Assessment/Effectiveness Review

Issue: As noted in RESL 2006 Audit Report, Finding 2, RESL has issued repeat findings from audits in 2004 and 2005. In addition, one finding was closed although the corrective actions were not completed in accordance with the ORISE Quality Assurance Manual (QAM). ORISE QAM Section 9 subsection 6.0 "Tracking & Followup," does not include a self assessment requirement for the Line Manager or Quality Manager to perform and document a lab/field observation to ensure that the finding is closed and the desired corrective actions are effective.

Observation 2. Management Assessments

Issue: The ORISE QAM Section 9.0, "Performance Assessment and Corrective Action," requires that a Management Assessment be performed annually. The frequency of the Management Assessment is appropriate, but the report appears to limit the review to the preceding year. This may not provide adequate breadth and depth of issues to allow management to identify programmatic issues and improve product and service quality as stated in subsection 4.3. In addition, issues do not appear to have root causes identified and are not categorized to assist management to identify programmatic issues for improving performance.

E. Abelquist

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The NRC will be conducting the annual audit of ORISE in September 2007. At that time, we will review the status of your evaluation of these issues and corrective action(s) that have been taken.

Sincerely,

**/RA/**

Bruce A. Watson, CHP  
ORISE Technical Project Manager  
Decommissioning and Uranium  
Recovery Licensing Directorate  
Division of Waste Management  
and Environmental Protection  
Office of Federal and State Materials  
and Environmental Management Programs

cc:

NRC

K. McConnell

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J. Kottan, RG I

ORISE

S. Kirk

D. Condra

A. Payne

RESL

D. Sill

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