PBOW/RR AR RAB

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Mark F. Bohne, Co-Chairman
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Sir,

It has been over seven years that the Plum Brook Ordnance Work Restoration Advisory Board has been convened. From the very beginning it was apparent to those involved, that the project at hand was more than just a minor environmental problem. Instead, it has shown itself to be a large, complex, and multi-faceted project.

Beginning at the start of the Industrial Revolution and continuing throughout the 1960's our understanding of the environment was very limited. Most contamination by hazardous chemicals was caused by the misguided beliefs that our environment could absorb almost anything we put in it. Our understanding of environmental science had yet to mature (and to some extent is still in its infancy), so actions that were started to remediate chemical hazards were sometimes careless and caused more harm than good. The results became apparent when the Hudson River in New York State was severely polluted by industry throughout the 50's and the 60's causing the loss of one of the richest fishing industries and the poisoning of the largest natural spawning grounds for the Atlantic Ocean. The problem exacerbated until the Cuyahoga River in Cleveland, Ohio caught fire (once again) in 1969.

The circumstances under which the Clean Water Act and the Clean Air Act were implemented are a textbook example for the need for government regulation over an industrial community that acted in their own self-interests. They simply refused to understand the extent of the damage that was ultimately being done to the health, safety, and well being of all people through reckless chemical discharges to the environment. These two laws became the foundation for our present system of environmental protection.

In 1986, when the Defense Environmental Restoration Program was implemented to, "carry out a program of environmental restoration of facilities under the jurisdiction of the Secretary", it became apparent to the environmental community that the government also recognized the need to remediate their own environmental indiscretions worldwide. It also showed the environmental

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community that the American Government viewed the importance of becoming leaders in the quest to clean up the environment and improve the quality of life on this earth now and for the future for all people.
Those writing the Defense Environmental Restoration Program also realized the importance of public participation. Open and transparent actions taken by the government to improve the environment are enhanced by the input of those most directly affected by environmental hazards. Stakeholders freely give of their time and personal resources to gain knowledge, discuss issues, and provide input to their government "mentors". All points of view are heard, all matters of environmental importance are disclosed and discussed, and all related matters are completed to the benefit of all concerned.

The Plum Brook Ordnance Works Restoration Advisory Board is a model of the vision presented in 1986 by our government. Our RAB members are dedicated to the project and have cherished our "ownership". Countless hours have been spent in meetings, training sessions, and discussions concerning the project. Our RAB has proved time and time again that, as Stakeholders, we consider ourselves to be an extension of our government counterparts sharing the same responsibility to assure the very best response, in the shortest time possible, for the lowest cost, which will render the very best results.

This "culture" was not born out of a self-serving need for recognition and rewards. It is not self-centered and ego-driven. Instead, it is an extension of the leadership shown by Mr. Richard Meadows, Ms. Lisa Humphreys, and Mr. Frank Albert who comprise the core project management team for the RAB. They, with the help from their colleagues of the Nashville District Office, create the "perfect" mix of professionalism mixed with openness and caring for the local community that they serve. This allows the RAB to function in an almost perfect state of trust. Their selfless acts of service to the community and dedication to excellence are what I believe embodies the basic fundamentals of the Defense Environmental Restoration Program. Honor and integrity are fundamental to their relationship to our RAB.

The recent request for TAPP funding should not be interpreted as a shift from our basic relationship with our Corps leadership. As mentioned before, the Plum Brook Ordnance Works poses significant challenges for the Army Corps of Engineers and an even greater challenge to the RAB members who must try to grasp the science and technology to which they are exposed. In generations to come, there will be those who might try to second-guess the decisions that were made by our team. It is the goal of the RAB members to secure the skills of a consultant whose education and experience centers around complex environmental issues and will aid the RAB in their full understanding of the research, risk assessments, and decisions about remediation methodology. Proverbs 15:22 declares, "Without counsel purposes are disappointed: but in the multitude of counselors they are established." Through the use of TAPP funding,

we do not seek an opposing view, but one of confirmation and praise for the work to be completed.

There has also been discussion about reducing costs to the Army Corps of Engineers by possibly consolidating the Plum Brook Ordnance Works cleanup efforts into another district. This is certainly not in the best interest of this project, nor does it serve the greater good of the program. Once again, the experiences of those already leading the project constitute a large part of its success. With more than seven years experience with the site and the local community Stakeholders, such drastic change could be compared to dismantling a well-oiled machine; the consequences being that the parts would not function as well as the whole. Change for the sake of change does not always render the best results.

My goals for this letter can be summarized first, as a need to assure that our Corps leaders are recognized for their sustained and crucial part in the Plum Brook Ordnance Works RAB. Next, to alleviate any misconceptions that our RAB, through the request for TAPP funding, is dissatisfied with the quality or quantity of work being performed by the Corps, and finally, to assure that our entire team remains intact throughout the project term, however long it takes.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or comments. As always, I stand ready and willing to serve the Corps in any capacity for the greater good of my community and country.

Best Regards,

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Mark F. Bohne, Co-Chairman
Plum Brook Ordnance Works Restoration Advisory Board