

PIKE COUNTY
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
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June 11, 2002

Mr. David Allen
US Department of Energy
SE-30-1
P.O. Box 2001
Oak Ridge, TN 37831

Dear Mr. Allen,

I am submitting **written comments** to the **Department** of Energy on the proposed use of the Portsmouth Gaseous **Diffusion** Plant at **Piketon** as a storage facility for **uranium** that may or may not have a marketable value.

There are two issues here. First, any movement of uranium **from** other sites to **Piketon** holds the obvious **potential** that the material will remain at **Piketon**. We in Pike County **have** become increasingly concerned, as production **has ceased** at **Piketon**, that the government will not expend the necessary funds to clean the site. An even more **fundamental** concern is, **if money** were available whether or not the Department of Energy has the technological expertise to dispose of the nuclear waste produced in **the last half century**. Moving more material into Pike County **would** increase the **possibility** that the **Piketon** plant's ultimate fate would be a dump site.

That leads into the second issue. The people of Pike County will not **willingly** agree to receive any material at **Piketon** without an iron-clad agreement with DOE that the uranium **will** either be marketed or removed in a timely manner.

That brings an even more **fundamental** question? What is an iron-clad guarantee? Over the past five years, Pike **Countians** have experienced the following:

1. Privatization. The Gaseous **Diffusion** plant at **Piketon** could handle **all** phases of enrichment; a sister plant in Kentucky could not. **Piketon** ceases operation.
2. After discarding **laser** isotope technology, the Department of Energy seems committed **to a centrifuge** process. **The Piketon** facility **may** get the new **centrifuge process**. **In 1985**, **Piketon** was ready to go online with centrifuge when the government pulled the plug.
3. Congressman **Strickland**, Congressman **Portman** and Governor **Taft** **have** expended endless time and **influence** on the **Piketon plant**. Congress passed a law providing for the construction of **two** DUF6 conversion facilities, and appropriated **monies** for a conversion plant at **Piketon** and **Paducah**. **There have** been **rumors** of one plant, no plant, not much talk of two **plants**. One thing **is certain**; No construction contracts have been **let** for **Piketon**.

4. The Department of Energy assigns a site management team to **Piketon**. The team has **repeatedly** shown its **dedication** to the **site** and the community. It is the **local** site team the catches most of the flak **from frustrated Pike Countians**. The actual decision makers are burrowed deep in murky bureaucracies in Oak Ridge and Washington **that makes it impossible** for the average citizen in Pike County to reach them.

5. **For** the past four years, the Southern Ohio Diversification Initiative has been **negotiating** with DOE to obtain **land** not king **utilized** by DOE or USEC. In particular, **a 340 - acre** parcel was proposed as the site of a **\$1 billion** coal-fired electric generating plant. The land **was** not transferred to **SODI** in a timely manner, and the project, with a loss **of jobs** and tax money to Pike **County**, is now dead. In fact the **only** land returned to SOD1 **from** the **3900- acre** government reservation is a two-acre site for a **cemetery** in Scioto Township.

It is very **difficult** for the people of Pike County to **accept mere reassurances** from the Department of Energy about the ultimate fate of the material **currently** being proposed to be brought to **Piketon**. The simplest way to **handle** the situation to the satisfaction of every Pike **Countian is** to choose one of the other sites in consideration. Perhaps DOE's credibility is better in those locations:.

Sincerely,



Blaine Beekman
Executive Director

cc: P.O. Box 700
Piketon, OH