Department of Energy

Oak Ridge Operations Office
P.O. Box 2001
Oak Ridge, Tennessee 37831—

May 20, 2002

Mr. Roger Banks
Field Supervisor
U.S. Department of the Interior
Fish and Wildlife Service
176 Croghan Spur Road
Suite 200
Charleston, South Carolina 29407

Dear Mr. Banks;

INFORMAL CONSULTATION UNDER SECTION 7 OF THE ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT FOR THE PROGRAMMATIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF POTENTIALLY REUSABLE URANIUM MATERIALS

The Department of Energy Oak Ridge Operations (DOE ORO) proposes to implement a management program for potentially reusable uranium materials. DOE ORO has proposed receiving and storing these materials at one or more sites. DOE is preparing an Environmental Assessment (EA) to cover the packaging, transportation, receipt, storage, and disposition of the material at one or more sites. The preliminary alternatives include: No Action (not moving material), storage at commercial sites, and storage at one or more DOE sites.

The potential storage sites would include the two DOE sites in Oak Ridge, Tennessee (Y-12 Nuclear Security Complex and East Tennessee Technology Park), the Paducah Site in Kentucky, the Portsmouth Site in Ohio, the Savannah River Site in South Carolina, the Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory in Idaho and appropriately licensed commercial sites.

The preferred alternative is centralized storage at the Portsmouth Site for surplus material that is economically feasible for relocation. The Portsmouth Site is preferred because of its combination of unique characteristics, including the existence of a uranium management infrastructure and successful on-going receipt and storage of surplus uranium materials from DOE's Fernald and Hanford Sites and from universities.

This letter is intended to serve as Informal Consultation Under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act. In this regard, DOE requests an updated list of protected species and habitat on or near the project site and solicits your recommendations and comments about the potential effects of this proposed action. Your input will be used in the preparation of the environmental assessment for this action pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act.

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If you need further information on this request, please do not hesitate to call me at (865) 576-0938.

Sincerely,

James L. Elmore

James L. Elmore, Ph.D.
Alternate NEPA Compliance Officer