

Hope, Dr. Samuel R.
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February 21, 2001

Gary Hartman
U S Department of Energy
Oak Ridge Operations, DP-80
Fax 865-576-1237
P O Box 2001
Oak Ridge, TN 37831

Dear Mr. Hartman:

I am a member of the National Committee of the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship which toured the Y-12 Plant and related nuclear facilities at Oak Ridge, TN, last September. We spoke with nuclear physicists and others who are currently work at Y-12 retrofitting missile warheads. It was a shocking, sobering experience.

This letter is to express my strong opposition to the proposed "special materials complex" and the whole arsenal of new nuclear weapons it will spawn. This project violates US nonproliferation goals. There is no need for a new \$4 billion bomb manufacturing plant. The Y-12 EIS is premised on obsolete program objectives.

As a resident of western North Carolina, I am concerned about the probability that our air and water are contaminated from releases of mercury and other deadly toxins borne on the winds that blow from Y-12 at Oak Ridge to Asheville and Mt. Mitchell. Concerned citizens in the Asheville area are now organizing to work with EPA officials in North Carolina to determine the hazardous effects the Y-12 Plant may be having on our health and the lives of our children and grandchildren.

Mr. Hartman, a nuclear weapon does not have to explode to kill people. The very process of its production does that too. Stop the production of all nuclear weapons now.

Sincerely,

Dr. Samuel R. Hope

cc: Senator John Edwards
Congressman Charles Taylor
Asheville Citizen-Times

Comment No. 1

Issue Code: 16

There is no plan or proposal in the Y-12 SWEIS to build new nuclear weapons or a new bomb plant.

Parties to the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty agree not to directly or indirectly transfer nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices or control over them to any recipient; and not to in any way assist, encourage, or induce nonnuclear weapon states to manufacture or alter use, or acquire nuclear weapons, or alter nuclear explosive devices or control over them. Continuation of the Y-12 mission, and construction and operation of a HEU Materials Facility or Special Materials Complex by the United States does not conflict with such an agreement. The proposed action, which includes continuing weapons dismantlement activities at Y-12, fully supports the goals of Article VI of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, in which signatory nations agree to work toward total disarmament. Since the end of the Cold War, the United States has significantly reduced the size of the nuclear weapons stockpile, and DOE has dismantled more than 15,000 nuclear weapons. The Special Materials Complex would not result in new nuclear weapons production or an increase in the number of existing weapons types.

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In accordance with Section 91 of the *Atomic Energy Act*, DOE carries out its mission (i.e., atomic weapons activities) consistent with the consent of and direction from the President and Congress. This consent and direction are contained in the Nuclear Weapons Stockpile Memorandum, which is updated annually. The issue of whether DOE should produce nuclear weapons and alternative uses of the Nation's funds are beyond the scope of the Y-12 SWEIS.

Comment No. 2

Issue Code: 14

DOE believes that it has adequately addressed impacts to the environment that could result from implementing the various alternatives. Volume I, Chapter 4 of the Y-12 SWEIS describes the current affected environment which includes the effects of past

Comment No. 2 (cont.)

Issue Code: 14

operations and environmental contamination. The EM Program staff at Y-12 is currently conducting the Reduction of Mercury in Plant Effluents Project at Y-12. Two specific actions, Mercury in Soils and Bank Stabilization are components of the project. Section 3.2.2.3 of the Y-12 SWEIS identifies the ongoing EM restoration activities under the No Action - Planning Basis Operations Alternative and the other alternatives. The Reduction of Mercury in Plant Effluents Project achieved a record low concentrations in August 1999 for average mercury concentrations at Station 17. Volume II, Appendices D and E provide further detailed analyses related to human health effects from normal operations/facility accidents, and air quality, respectively. Y-12 criteria pollutant emissions are in compliance with National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). In addition, air quality in all counties of Eastern Tennessee is classified by EPA as being in attainment (meets NAAQS) for all six criteria air pollutants.