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Gary Hartman
 U.S. Department of Energy
 Oak Ridge Operations, DP-80
 PO Box 2001
 Oak Ridge, TN37831

Dear Mr. Hartman,

Thank you for inviting the citizens of Tennessee and the greater United States to comment on the proposed "modernization" of the Y-12 plant in Oak Ridge, Tennessee.

I am strongly opposed to the plan to "modernize" the nuclear weapons building facility at Y-12. Our nation's leaders have publicly committed this country to move toward nuclear disarmament and even President Bush, a strong proponent of military modernization, realizes that cutting back rather than expanding the nuclear arsenal is the only way to create "national security." We make a mockery of diplomacy and good-faith negotiations when we sign agreements to limit the production and stockpiling of nuclear weapons and then spend billions of dollars to make sure that we could build more if we wanted to. This lack of good-faith on the part of the United States no doubt contributes to the instability of the world situation today as countries too poor to build nuclear weapons develop biological and chemical weapons to counteract the nuclear buildup. Many top military men are now admitting that nuclear weapons serve no real military purpose and are too expensive and hazardous to maintain as we enter the 21st century. I would urge you to consider these voices.

I am also concerned about the environmental impact of the plant. The toxic emissions which have been coming from the Y-12 plant for decades are well-documented and pose an unacceptable risk to the health of the environment and the people who live near the plant. The safety and health of citizens is a responsibility of the government and to knowingly do harm is unethical. When the environmental impact statement is done concerning this new project I would urge you to use data which is accurate and not chosen from a year in which the Y-12 plant was not fully operational. The government has a responsibility to evaluate the proposed "modernization" on the basis of the FULL impact that plant will have on people and the community.

Much has been said about "jobs." It is my understanding that disassembling and storing the nuclear weapons slated for decommissioning under our present disarmament treaties will take many years and require the same number of employees as are currently working at Y-12. As for new jobs, even if there were a few, should they be created by doing something which is essentially unethical? I hope not and I hope that you will not think so either.

Please use your influence to see that the Y-12 plant at Oak Ridge is turned toward a higher mission—that of clearing up the nuclear hazards with which we are already burdened. In this sense, Oak Ridge has a definite place in our nation's and the world's future. There is a job to do and the folks at Oak Ridge are the best-qualified people in the world to do that job. Give them the chance to do it! Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely yours,



Dr. Beth Vanlandingham

1/16

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3/16

Comment No. 1

Issue Code: 16

Since the end of the Cold War, the United States has significantly reduced the size of its nuclear weapons stockpile, and DOE has dismantled more than 15,000 nuclear weapons. At the present time, the United States is further downsizing its deployed nuclear weapons stockpile consistent with the terms of START I and START II. Although Russia suspended its nuclear weapons dismantlement actions on January 20, 2001, DOE has continued weapons dismantlement activities. The proposed action and alternatives analyzed in the Y-12 SWEIS would continue nuclear weapons dismantling activities at Y-12, while at the same time supporting the certification of safety and reliability of our nuclear arsenal. While future arms control reductions may change requirements for maintaining the weapons stockpile, DOE is responsible for meeting the current requirements set forth by the President and Congress. The need for nuclear weapons and the issue of how many nuclear weapons the United States maintains in its nuclear arsenal are beyond the scope of the Y-12 SWEIS.

Comment No. 2

Issue Code: 14

DOE believes that the Y-12 SWEIS has adequately analyzed environmental impacts that could result from implementing the various alternatives. Volume I, Chapter 5 of the Y-12 SWEIS, addresses impacts of the proposed action and alternatives. Volume II, Appendices D and E provide further detailed analysis related to human health effects from normal operations/facility accidents and air quality, respectively. Potential public health impacts from current operations is presented in Section 4.12, Volume I. As explained in Section 3.1.2 in Volume I, the No Action - Planning Basis Operations Alternative level is based on historical production and planned levels. As such, the full impact of continuing operations at Y-12 is presented.

Comment No. 3

Issue Code: 16

Alternative 1B, No Action - Planning Basis Operations which includes the assembly/disassembly of certain weapons components and storage of enriched uranium is an ongoing activity at Y-12. Weapons component disassembly is expected to increase in the next 10 years and to be ongoing through 2010 and beyond. Despite the increase in weapons dismantlement, employment associated with weapons dismantlement is not expected to increase above current levels.