

East Tennessee Economic Council
Oak Ridge, TN
Page 1 of 1



Jan. 25, 2001

Mr. Gary S. Hartman
U.S. Department of Energy-Oak Ridge Operations
P.O. Box 2001
Oak Ridge, TN 37831

Comments on the Need to Modernize the Y-12 Complex

Dear Mr. Hartman:

The Y-12 National Security Complex in Oak Ridge plays a major role in supporting our nation's security in facilities that are woefully out of date. We have followed the process of the Department's site-wide environmental impact statement, which is reviewing the status of the facility and suggesting alternatives for improving its operation. The East Tennessee Economic Council offers the following comments to be included in the record.

Our organization supports the modernization of the complex with the construction of new storage, special materials and enriched uranium facilities. Infrastructure on site--water, sewer and electricity--also needs work. These new facilities are included in Alternative IV of your SWEIS document, and are the preferred alternative of the Department of Energy.

It is clear that to successfully complete the Y-12 Complex's critical missions, we must invest in modern, safe, secure, environmentally sound manufacturing facilities that are sized correctly and that are equipped with the latest technology for precision manufacturing. Pieces of every weapon in the U.S. nuclear stockpile are manufactured at Y-12. It is important that we maintain the stockpile in a safe and reliable manner, and retire those components that are being removed from the stockpile just as safely.

More than 70 percent of Y-12's facilities are greater than 40 years old; no new major production facility has been constructed since 1969. Subsurface utilities (storm sewers, water lines, gas and electrical distribution systems, etc.) are subject to greater failure rates than are desirable. While the current operations are being performed and maintained in a safe and compliant manner, the cost of operations, maintenance, and upgrades is greater than it would be if a new factory were constructed to modern industrial standards.

Y-12 is a cornerstone of the East Tennessee economy. It employs about 4,000 people, and operates on a \$400+ million annual budget. Technologies coming out of the Complex have created new companies in East Tennessee and across the nation. Partnerships between the Y-12 Complex and the state of Tennessee have supported existing industries and helped teach young people the importance of manufacturing skills.

It is time to invest in security. We strongly support the modernization of the Y-12 Complex.

Sincerely,

Jim Campbell

EAST TENNESSEE ECONOMIC COUNCIL
P.O. Box 5957 - Oak Ridge - Tennessee - 37831
Phone: 423-483-3047 - Fax: 423-482-0191 - email: campbell@elec1.com - website: www.etc1.com

1/22

Comment No. 1
Comment noted.

Issue Code: 22