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Waynesville, NC 28785
26 January 2001

U.S. Department of Energy
Oak Ridge Operations Office
Att. Gary Hartman
PO Box 2001
Oak Ridge, TN 37831

Dear Mr. Hartman and Officials of the Department of Energy (DOE):

I write regarding the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on the proposed "National Security Complex" at the Y-12 bomb plant in Oak Ridge. I am strongly opposed to any expansion of the Y-12 plant, and believe instead that it should be completely closed down. Here is my reasoning on the matter:

1. There is no need--politically, strategically, or militarily--for new bomb manufacturing operations. The Y-12 EIS is premised on outdated program objectives. Time has overtaken the DOE policy decisions on this matter and rendered them obsolete. Russia has ratified the START 2 Treaty; Russian President Putin has proposed even deeper cuts in the nuclear arsenal than the negotiated START 3 target levels; and President Bush has indicated his willingness to make deep cuts in the US arsenal as well.

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2. The Y-12 EIS violates US non-proliferation goals. The proposed new facilities would be used to build new-design nuclear weapons, which would undermine US non-proliferation policy, and would motivate continued nuclear weapons development in other countries, thus expanding the arms race.

3. The baseline for assessing the environmental impact of Y-12 must incorporate the historic contamination which makes Y-12 an EPA Superfund Site. In periods of heavy rainfall, mercury releases from Y-12 exceed legal limits whether the plant is operating or not. Thus, the EIS establishes a false baseline for determining environmental impacts. DOE ignores historic contamination and relies on numbers generated in recent times of operation, thus calculating only a fraction of the releases in the "new" bomb plant.

2/05

4. The claims made in the Y-12 EIS about safety in the workplace ignore historic and current management practice and hence are not credible. Risk scenarios based on safety claims cannot be believed. Y-12's current operations compromise worker health and safety in several important ways. Despite the fact that oversight agencies have regularly criticized DOE for significant health and safety shortcomings, Y-12 refuses to address many critical issues. Fire

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Comment No. 1

Issue Code: 16

Comment noted. 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. At the present time, the United States is further downsizing the nuclear weapons stockpile consistent with the terms of the START I and the recently ratified START II. Although Russia suspended its nuclear weapons dismantlement activities on January 20, 2001, DOE has continued its weapons dismantlement activities.

Comment No. 2

Issue Code: 05

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 operations and environmental contamination (see Sections 4.5.1, 4.5.2, and 4.5.3). The effects due to past releases including mercury are reflected in the No Action - Status Quo Alternative and are detailed in ORR Annual Site Environmental Report. Over the past several years, DOE has had a very aggressive clean-up program and has worked with EPA, the state, stakeholders, and the general public to clean up the ORR to acceptable levels. To date, DOE has completed numerous clean-up activities and is aggressively working toward the cleanup of its remaining environmental problems. Actions taken to continue Y-12

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alarm and suppression systems do not work, important maintenance has been deferred for years, and worker safety is not a priority commitment.

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5. The Y-12 EIS should address the larger economic questions surrounding the trade-offs required for an investment of \$4 billion in a new bomb plant. An EIS is required by law to address economic as well as ecological issues. The Y-12 EIS takes a narrow and parochial view in its economic analysis, despite the fact that an investment of \$4 billion has a national economic impact. To spend this much money on the production of nuclear weapons takes it away from pressing domestic needs and social programs, like health care, education, and social welfare.

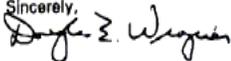
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6. The predominantly African-American community of Scarboro, located less than a mile from the Y-12 plant, would be the first and most heavily impacted by all contamination released from Y-12 operations. DOE's own studies document Highly Enriched Uranium and other contamination in the surface soils in Scarboro, and future activities would make similar disproportionate impact on the black community. The law requires an EIS to give special consideration to issues of environmental justice--whether proposed actions would unfairly harm communities of color or low income communities. Yet the Y-12 EIS claims there are no environmental justice concerns related to DOE's plans.

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I live only 100 miles from Oak Ridge and the Y-12 plant, and would be directly and adversely affected by any accident or other form of contamination. For this and the other reasons detailed above, please register my firm opposition to the proposed new National Security Complex and to all production of nuclear weapons in Oak Ridge.

6/15

Sincerely,


Dr. Douglas E. Wingeier, Professor Emeritus
 Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary
 Evanston, Illinois

Comment No. 2 (cont.)

Issue Code: 05

operations would not be inconsistent with nor impact these ongoing clean-up activities.

Comment No. 3

Issue Code: 14

Existing Y-12 facilities are safe and comply with appropriate safety and environmental requirements. The HEU Materials Facility and the Special Materials Complex would provide more protection from natural phenomena events and accidental releases as well as reduce worker and public exposure to potential health impacts during normal operation. Appendix A discusses the actions taken at specific facilities at Y-12 in response to fire and worker safety issues. Worker safety is always the first priority at Y-12. (See also the response to Comment No. 26 on page 217).

Comment No. 4

Issue Code: 16

The purpose of the NEPA process is to ensure that accurate environmental studies are performed; that they are done with public involvement; and that public officials make decisions based on an understanding of the environmental consequences. Macro-economic analysis is outside the scope of the NEPA analysis. NEPA requires an analysis of socioeconomic impacts which is included in Section 5.3 of the Y-12 SWEIS. DOE is responsible for meeting the current requirements set forth by the President and Congress in the Nuclear Weapons Stockpile Memorandum, which is updated annually. The need for nuclear weapons and alternative uses of the Nation's funds are beyond the scope of the Y-12 SWEIS.

Comment No. 5

Issue Code: 13

DOE is committed to compliance with provisions of Executive Order 12898, *Federal Action to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations*. The environmental justice analysis was prepared in compliance with the CEQ's guidelines on environmental justice under NEPA. The Y-12 SWEIS addresses the issue of whether implementation of the proposed action and

Comment No. 5 (cont.)

Issue Code: 13

alternatives would result in disproportionately high and adverse environmental effects on minority or low-income populations. As discussed in Volume I, Chapter 5, Section 5.12 of the Y-12 SWEIS, implementation of the alternatives for the continuation of the Y-12's weapons support mission, and the construction and operation of new facilities for the HEU Storage and Special Materials missions at Y-12 would pose no significant health risks to the public. (See also the response to Comment No. 20 regarding the Scarboro Community on page 212).

Comment No. 6

Issue Code: 15

A detailed discussion of the accident analysis for the Y-12 SWEIS can be found in Appendix D. For accident analysis, a region of influence (ROI) of 80 km (50 mi) is used for modeling impacts because it is considered to be a valid basis for assessing impacts from air and water. The CAP-88 model employed to analyze air impacts uses a maximum radius of 80 km (50 mi) around the exposure point. At a radius of 100 miles, the ability of models to calculate concentrations becomes questionable because of the large area and the very small concentrations expected. The health impacts of an accident at Y-12 would be even smaller at 100 miles than at 50 miles. The risks of accidents would be very small for the proposed action and alternatives in the Y-12 SWEIS and would actually be improved by increasing the safety in handling and storage of radioactive and toxic materials.