

February 12, 1999

Dear Senator Thompson,

Advocates for the Oak Ridge Reservation (AFORR) represents a broad array of individuals and organizations that support the preservation of natural resources on the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) Oak Ridge Reservation (ORR). We noted with great interest your questions related to DOE's industrialization effort and the ORR at the recent confirmation hearings for the DOE assistant secretary for environmental management.

Our major concern is that the City of Oak Ridge has not fully considered the potential land available at the East Tennessee Technology Park (ETTP) and other previously developed but underutilized sites nearby that are suitable for industrial development. As a result the City is pushing for the transfer of more undeveloped DOE land from the ORR rather than pursuing more appropriate opportunities on previously developed land at ETTP and similar areas. The ETTP with its scores of suitable buildings, parcel ED-1, hundreds of potential brownfield industrial sites, and its own railroad yard, plus its close proximity to Interstate 40 make it an ideal location for the industrial expansion in Oak Ridge. Furthermore, the 1,200 acres of Oak Ridge Reservation land that was transferred to the City of Oak Ridge for Boeing was never developed and is now up for sale.

The Oak Ridge Reservation (ORR) is intensively and extensively used for scientific research and technology development, and education. In this capacity the ORR helps support the local and regional economies. Surrounding the major research and technology facilities are approximately 20,000 acres of undeveloped land: the DOE Oak Ridge National Environmental Research Park. The DOE Research Park was originally established by DOE's predecessor, the Atomic Energy Commission to support scientific research and studies of the environmental impacts of new energy technologies as well as the consequences of past land use practices on the environment. The Research Park and other undeveloped land provide security and buffer zones for research and technology development in existing and future research facilities. These lands also provide a haven for many plant and animal species, many of which are threatened, endangered, or species of special concern.

The ORR serves as a training ground for future researchers, including students from kindergarten to graduate school as well as university

faculty and members of the Oak Ridge community. During the past five years facilities at the ORR have been used by 85,000 students from East Tennessee, pre-college teachers, and university faculty for research and education.

Therefore, we are concerned with the long-term maintenance of the DOE Research Park so that scientific experiments, long-term environmental monitoring, educational services, and conservation values can be maintained during the next millennium. These values are put in jeopardy as the City of Oak Ridge keeps asking for more ORR land for industrial and residential development. Yet, the City has not fully explored or utilized the opportunities available at existing property within its city limits. Several industrial sites have been developed for other purpose or are underutilized. In addition there are hundreds of acres of Tennessee Valley Authority that are suitable for industrial development property (e.g., the old Clinch River breeder reactor site). There is substantial undeveloped residential land in the southwest quadrant, 175 acres of residential property are currently advertised in the west end of Oak Ridge, and the county has land for sale.

We appreciate your consideration of these matters, and we would be most pleased to provide your office with additional information or assistance with this matter.

Sincerely,

J. D. Joslin, Chair
Advocates for the Oak Ridge Reservation

James Groton, President
Tennessee Citizens for Wilderness Planning