



Department of Energy

Washington, DC 20585

January 16, 2001

The Honorable Fred Thompson
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510-4205

Dear Senator Thompson:

This responds to your November 27, 2000 letter, regarding the concerns of your constituent, John Devereux Joslin, Jr., of the Advocates for the Oak Ridge Reservation (AFORR). Mr. Joslin, as the President of AFORR, expressed concerns regarding the Department of Energy (DOE) plans to lease a parcel of land at the Oak Ridge Reservation (ORR). The 450-acre parcel of land is located on the western side of the ORR near the East Tennessee Technology (ETTP) Park and is referred to as ED-3.

Mr. Joslin identified concerns with the location of the proposed lease, the necessity of an additional industrial park, competition with other local businesses, economic viability of the proposal, and the aesthetic, historical, and ecological impacts of the proposed lease. We are pleased to have this opportunity to respond to Mr. Joslin's concerns.

The DOE currently is working with the local community to evaluate the possibility of leasing ED-3 for use as a commercial/light industrial business park. The proposed lease is consistent with our goal to work with the local community to maintain a balance of environmental preservation and business development at the ORR as DOE scales back activities in this region.

The Secretary of Energy, in partnership with the State of Tennessee, created the *Freels Bend Scenic and Wildlife Management Refuge Area* in 1999 by setting aside 3,000 acres on the Eastern side of the ORR. The local community and DOE agreed at that time that the focus of redevelopment in Oak Ridge would be toward the western side of the reservation. The DOE has continued working with the local community in moving ahead with plans to responsibly redevelop the western side of the reservation.

The ED-3 lease proposal is a component of an integrated plan to provide commercial business opportunities to the Eastern Tennessee region as DOE continues to clean up the ETTP and reduce our Federal presence in this community. The DOE previously has leased a site referred to as ED-1 to the Community Reuse Organization for East Tennessee. That parcel has been



developed as the *Horizon Center*, an industrial park with a modern infrastructure to support sophisticated technology and scientific businesses. The existing ETTP is being cleaned up to a brownfield status and is well suited to support heavy industrial facilities. The ED-3 parcel is envisioned as a commercial and light industrial business park and, therefore, complements the other business parks by filling a niche role in the area.

The DOE currently is preparing an Environmental Assessment to evaluate the environmental and historic impacts of leasing the ED-3 parcel. The DOE specifically is working with the State Historic Preservation Officer and organizations that represent the historic Wheat community to ensure that the lease is consistent with the preservation of significant historical facilities.

We do not believe that the business park will detract from the development of the Horizon Center nor will it directly compete with existing retail space in Oak Ridge and Roane County. Our goal is to work with the local community to transform the shutdown ETTP and the nearby parcels into an integrated economic engine that benefits the entire region. The AFORR organization has provided comments on the Environmental Assessment, and we welcome their input. We also would anticipate a continued dialogue with AFORR representatives as we continue to evaluate the proposal to lease the ED-3 parcel.

If you have further questions, please contact me or have your staff contact Mr. Steve Lerner, Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Affairs, at (202) 586-5450.

Sincerely,



Carolyn L. Huntoon
Assistant Secretary for
Environmental Management

cc: Mr. John Devereux Joslin, Jr.
President, AFORR