

Gary R. Petersen

Vice President

Tri-City Development Council (TRIDEC)

Testimony on HR 5987

Before the Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands

A Bill to establish the Manhattan Project National Historical Park

In Oak Ridge, Tennessee; Los Alamos, New Mexico; and Hanford, Washington

On behalf of:

Tri-City Development Council (TRIDEC)

Tri-Cities Visitor and Convention Bureau

Hanford Communities

B Reactor Museum Association

June 28, 2012

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee:

I thank you for inviting me to testify on HR 5987, a bill to establish the Manhattan Project National Historical Park in Oak Ridge, Tennessee, Los Alamos, New Mexico, and Hanford Washington. I also would like to thank the full-Committee Chairman, Representative Doc Hastings, the sponsor of the legislation, along with Representatives Ben Ray Lujan and Chuck Fleischmann for co-sponsoring this bill.

I am Gary Petersen, Vice President of the Tri-City Development. TRIDEC is the lead economic development organization serving a two-county region in southeastern Washington State. The Tri-Cities has a population of 258,400 and includes the communities of Kennewick, Pasco, Richland and West Richland and the counties of Benton and Franklin.

I am here today to speak in favor of HR 5987 on behalf of the Tri-Cities Community in Washington State, and in support of community organizations in Oak Ridge, Tennessee and Los Alamos, New Mexico. All three of our communities have passed resolutions supporting the Manhattan Project National Historical Park, and we have been united in our support of this bill.

Support for HR 5987

It is easy for those of us who live in the communities of Oak Ridge, Los Alamos and the Tri-Cities to say that the Manhattan Project changed the world.

On August 13, 1942 the Manhattan Project was established. Three years and one day later, August 14, 1945, the War was done!

In between those dates, more than 100,000 men and women were brought to these three sites from all over the world. The majority of these young men and women had no idea what they were building.

At Hanford, more than 2,000 residents – mostly farmers – were given just days to weeks to move off their land. This included moving, getting rid of thousands of animals, all the farm equipment and most importantly closing schools and moving families – lock-stock-and barrel!

Once the land was acquired by the government, the workers had to be found – engineers, physicists, chemists, carpenters, electricians, iron workers, cement masons and a multitude of office workers, cooks, guards, and truck drivers. These same individuals first had to build their own town with dormitories, mess halls, water, sewer, roads and railroads. This had to be done BEFORE they could start construction on reactors, nuclear fuel manufacturing and chemical separation facilities. At Hanford, the construction camp quickly became the third largest town in the State of Washington, with 50,000 construction workers.

Hanford construction stretched the imagination. Housing for 50,000 men and women; 386 miles of highway (including Washington State's first four-lane highway); 780,000 yards of concrete, and 158 miles of railroad track.

All of this was done without the aid of computers! These were the days of slide-rules and handcrafted blueprints!

Equipment, electronics and piping could not be bought off-the shelf. For the most part everything had to be fabricated on the Hanford site.

B Reactor itself, the world's first full-scale nuclear reactor, was built in just 11 months start-to finish. The design was based on the success of Enrico Fermi's "Chicago Pile 1;" and a pilot plant, the X-10 graphite reactor located in Oak Ridge, Tennessee. B Reactor was designed to produce 250 million watts, a million times more powerful than Chicago Pile 1, which produced the first ever sustained nuclear fission chain reaction under the bleachers at the University of Chicago's Staff Field in December of 1942.

Most of the workers brought in to these three sites were among the most talented in their respective fields, whether it was physics or pipefitting. While we recognize the names of Enrico Fermi, J. Robert Oppenheimer and Hans Bethe, we also need to give recognition to individual workers, many of whom stayed on the job and in these communities after 1945.

These are engineering feats and accomplishments that must be told to future generations! And, it needs to be told before all of the "old-timers" are gone.

As these three sites in Oak Ridge, Los Alamos and Hanford are being cleaned up, and many buildings are demolished and removed, the history of scientific and engineering achievement at the birth of the Atomic Age must be preserved.

The National Park Service, as it does with all of its sites, interprets the sites, and attempts to address ALL viewpoints to give a full and fair picture. We support such actions. This will not be a park that gives just a nuclear weapons viewpoint. We believe it is more about the thousands of men and women who built buildings, equipment and processes that became a turning point in the history of the United States and the world. The science of the Manhattan Project has transformed contemporary society with significant contributions in fields such as nuclear medicine, industrial isotopes, and nanotechnology. This historic park will tell all sides of the story of what occurred at Oak Ridge, Los Alamos and the Hanford/Tri-Cities area, as was identified in the National Park Service Special Resource Study released last year.

Our three communities have collectively worked toward this legislation for more than three years. In this process, we not only partnered with each other, but we also worked closely with the Department of Energy, the Department of the Interior, the Atomic Heritage Foundation, the National Parks Conservation Association, State Historical Preservation Officers, the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the Energy Communities Alliance.

There is no question of the importance of creating this new national park, nor of the public interest to view these former "secret" sites and preserve them for future generations.

At Hanford, DOE hosted 8,000 visitors to B Reactor last year. These visitors came from all 50 states, and from 48 foreign countries. These numbers were the result of only ONE announcement by DOE that 8,000 seats to B Reactor would be open to the public last summer. The tours filled in less than 5 hours. This year DOE has increased the number of seats to 10,000. Unlike the National Park Service, DOE (except for the single announcement) does not advertise its tours.

These visitor numbers also clearly demonstrate that designating these three sites as the Manhattan Project National Historical Park will create jobs and provide an economic development benefit for all three communities. Such designation will come at a time when all three communities are seeing downturns in federal employment as these sites are being cleaned up. Cleaning up these sites, and opening them to public viewing is of major importance to three communities that have been supporting national security missions since 1943.

The Manhattan Project National Historical Park at Oak Ridge, Los Alamos and Hanford is critical to the preservation of perhaps the most historic event of the 20th Century.

Our community encourages you to move forward with this legislation this year. We have unanimity of our communities that the Park should be established in the near term in order to honor our Manhattan Project and Cold War veterans.

We urge Congress to pass this National Park legislation. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify, and I look forward to responding to your questions.

Attachments:

Community Support Letter, May 8, 2012

Committee on Natural Resources Disclosure Form

Tri-City Development Council (TRIDEC) 990 forms, 2008, 2009, 2010

Tri-Cities Visitor & Convention Bureau 990 forms, 2009, 2010, 2011

B-Reactor Museum Association 990 forms,

May 8,2012

The Honorable Patty Murray
United States Senate
448 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
United States Senate
511 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Norm Dicks
United States House of Representatives
2467 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Doc Hastings
United States House of Representatives
1203 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Senators and Representatives:

SUBJECT: Support of Manhattan Project National Historical Park Legislation

This letter is to commend you, and to provide you with our community's support for your efforts to establish the Manhattan Project National Historical Park in the States of New Mexico, Tennessee and Washington.

It is easy for those of us who live in the communities of Oak Ridge, Los Alamos and the Tri-Cities, to say that the Manhattan Project changed the world. The Manhattan Project began in great secrecy in 1942, and the original mission was essentially successfully completed by August of 1945 when the Japanese surrendered. The engineering and construction feats of the 100,000 or so men and women who were brought to all three sites from all over the world, including some highly qualified technical individuals (refugees) from other countries, to build and operate first-of-a-kind nuclear plants is an incredible story that needs to be told. On August 13, 1942 the Manhattan Engineer District was established under the command of Colonel Leslie R. Groves. By September of 1942 Groves had selected Oak Ridge, Tennessee as the site for uranium isotope separation. In November 1942 Los Alamos was chosen as the laboratory to build the integral parts to make a bomb under the direction of J. Robert Oppenheimer. And in January of 1943 Hanford was selected for plutonium production. On August 14, 1945 the war with Japan was over – 3 years and 1 day from the start of the Manhattan Project. An incredible achievement!

In today's world, it is mind-boggling to think of what happened in these short three years. First the actual land had to be acquired and existing homes and land-owners had to be moved off of these sites. Then workers had to be located - engineers, physicists, chemists, mathematicians as well as carpenters, electricians, iron workers, cement masons, and a multitude of office workers, cooks, guards, and truck drivers. Then, these same individuals had to first build their own town with dormitories and barracks, mess halls, utilities, roads and railroads, and even shower houses. At Hanford this construction camp quickly became the third largest town in the State of Washington.

Hanford efforts stretched the imagination. Housing for 50,000 individuals; 386 miles of highway (including Washington State's first four-lane highway); 780,000 yards of concrete, and 158 miles of railroad track. All of this was done without the aid of computers, or equipment that

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could be bought “off-the-shelf.” The closest large city was Spokane some 150 miles away. And, these men and women were building something that had never been built before, with the majority having no idea of what they were building.

B Reactor itself, the world’s first full-scale nuclear reactor, was built in just 11 months start-to-finish. The design was based on the success of Enrico Fermi’s “Chicago Pile 1;” and a pilot plant, the X-10 graphite reactor, located in Oak Ridge. B-Reactor was designed to produce 250 million watts, which was a million times more powerful than Chicago Pile 1, which produced the first ever sustained nuclear fission chain reaction under the bleachers at the University of Chicago’s Stagg Field in December of 1942.

These are accomplishments that must be told to future generation s.

As these three sites in Oak Ridge, Los Alamos and Hanford are being cleaned up, and many ancillary buildings are demolished and removed; the history of scientific and engineering achievement at the birth of the Atomic Age must be preserved.

Therefore, we the undersigned give our full support to Congressional efforts to establish the Manhattan Project National Historical Park at Oak Ridge, Los Alamos and Hanford. This National Park legislation should be passed by this Congress.

The signature page is attached and is signed by the following:

Carl F. Adrian, President/CEO Tri-City Development Council (TRIDEC)

Kris Watkins, President/CEO, Tri-Cities Visitor & Convention Bureau

Robert Thompson, Chair, Hanford Communities

John Fox, Mayor, City of Richland

Steve Young, Mayor, City of Kennewick

Matt Watkins, Mayor, City of Pasco

Donna Noski, Mayor, City of West Richland

Jim Beaver, Chair, Benton County Board of Commissioners

Brad Peck, Chair, Franklin County Board of Commissioners

Scott D. Keller, Executive Director, Port of Benton

Tim Arntzen, Executive Director, Port of Kennewick

James E. Toomey, Executive Director, Port of Pasco

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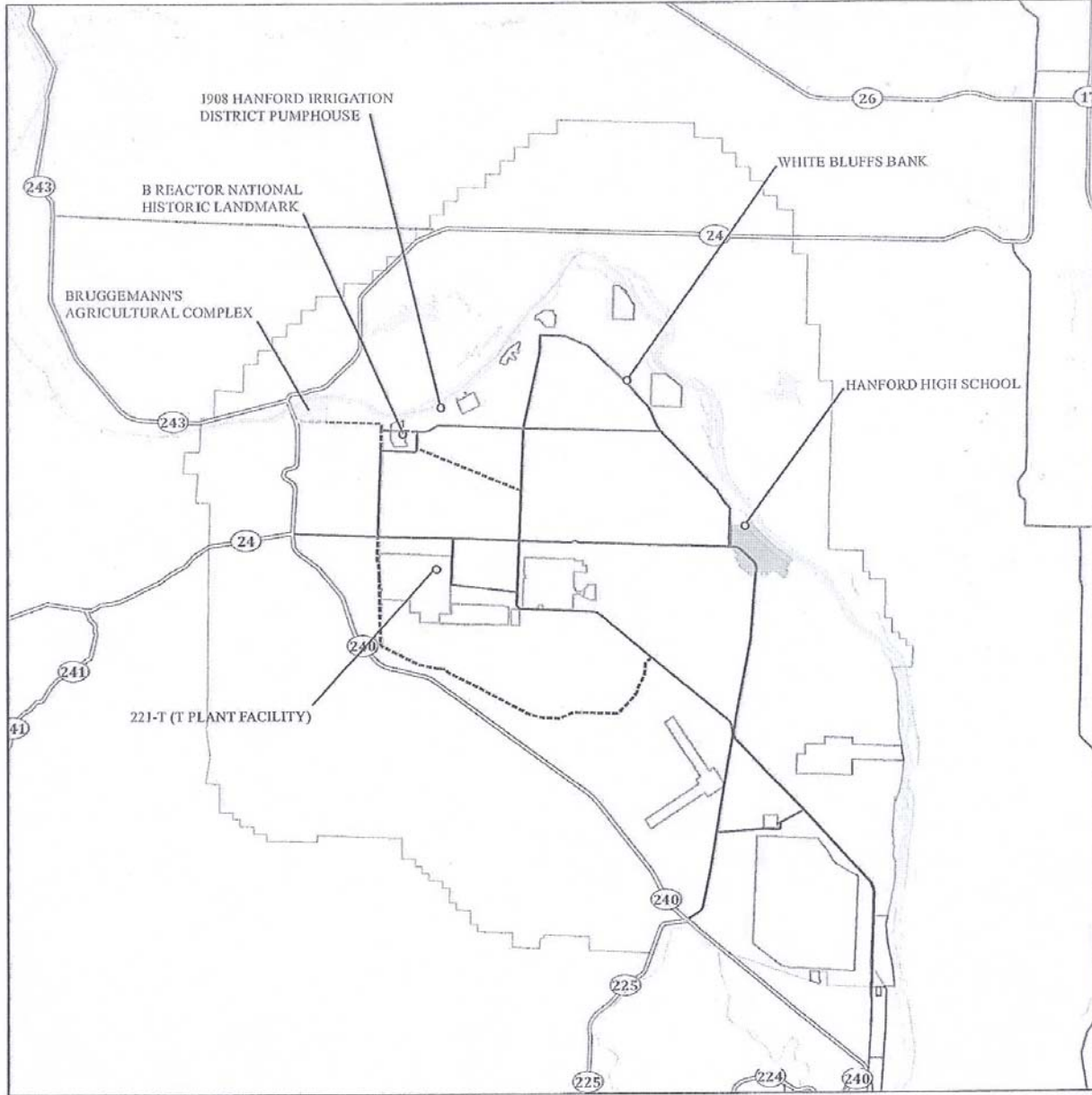
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Port of Benton

Tim Arntzen, Executive Director
Port of Kennewick

James E. Toomey, Executive Director
Port of Pasco

Cc: Governor Christine Gregoire
Congressman Rick Larsen
Congresswoman Jaime Herrera Beutler
Congresswoman Cathy McMorris Rodgers
Congressman Jim McDermott
Congressman Dave Reichert
Congressman Adam Smith

Shawn Bills, Senator Murray's Office
Amit Ronen, Senator Cantwell's Office
George Behan, Congressman Dicks Office
Jessica Gleason, Congressman Hastings Office
Todd Young, House Interior Committee Office



Legend

- White Bluffs Historic District
- Hanford Townsite/Hanford Construction Camp

