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WITHDRAWAL SHEET

Ronald Reagan Library

Collection Name RUSTHOVEN, PETER: FILES

Withdrawer

SJW 6/18/2007

File Folder PJR/CLINCH RIVER BREEDER REACTOR

FOIA

F01-0128/01

Box Number 11408

LOEWEN

3

DOC NO	Doc Type	Document Description	No of Pages	Doc Date	Restrictions
1	MEMO	RUSTHOVEN TO FIELDING RE LETTER FROM DANIEL POPEO RE CLINCH REVER BREEDER REACTOR.	1	1/24/1983	open 10/19/09 KMU

THE ABOVE DOCUMENT IS PENDING REVIEW IN ACCORDANCE WITH E.O. 13233

Freedom of Information Act - [5 U.S.C. 552(b)]

- B-1 National security classified information [(b)(1) of the FOIA]
- B-2 Release would disclose internal personnel rules and practices of an agency [(b)(2) of the FOIA]
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MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

January 24, 1983

FOR: FRED F. FIELDING
FROM: PETER J. RUSTHOVEN *PR*
SUBJECT: Letter from Daniel Popeo re:
Clinch River Breeder Reactor

In late November, 1982, Daniel J. Popeo, founder and General Counsel of the Washington Legal Foundation, sent you a four-page letter setting forth arguments in favor of continued development of the Clinch River Breeder Reactor in Tennessee, and contending that conservatives should not join with liberal critics of the Clinch River project. Though I cannot be certain, I would guess that you were but one of a number of recipients of this letter.

As you know, Clinch River has been controversial even among conservatives -- the Heritage Foundation being a notable example of a conservative organization opposed to its development. Senate Majority Leader Baker has been a strong proponent of continued funding for this project, and the President and the Administration have also officially supported continued funding.

While I think any response to this letter should not go much beyond a "thank you" and an acknowledgment, I thought it best to see whether Clinch River funding would survive the appropriations process at the end of the 97th Congress before replying. Dave Swanson in Legislative Affairs confirmed for me that funding for the project was included in the latest appropriations measure (though at a lower rate than had been requested by the Administration), and that the Administration continues officially to support Clinch River.

Accordingly, attached for your review and signature is a brief note to Popeo stating the foregoing and thanking him for sharing his thoughts on this matter.

Attachment

Hold - much too late, I fear.

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

January 24, 1983

Dear Mr. Popeo:

Thank you for your letter setting forth arguments in favor of continued development of the Clinch River Breeder Reactor.

As you know, the President and the Administration have supported continued funding for this program, which was included (though at a lower level than had been requested by the Administration) in the latest appropriations measure.

Again, I appreciated the opportunity to review the arguments you marshalled in support of the Clinch River project.

Sincerely,

Fred F. Fielding
Counsel to the President

Daniel J. Popeo, Esquire
Suite 502
1612 K Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20006

**WHITE HOUSE
CORRESPONDENCE TRACKING WORKSHEET**

AT

- O - OUTGOING
 - H - INTERNAL
 - I - INCOMING
- Date Correspondence Received (YY/MM/DD) 1/1

Name of Correspondent: Daniel J. Popes

MI Mail Report User Codes: (A) _____ (B) _____ (C) _____

Subject: Support by conservatives of Clinch River Breeder Reactor

ROUTE TO:

ACTION

DISPOSITION

Office/Agency (Staff Name)	Action Code	Tracking Date YY/MM/DD	Type of Response	Code	Completion Date YY/MM/DD
<u>R. Holland</u>	^{DD} ORIGINATOR	<u>82112129</u>			<u>1/1</u>
<u>WAT09</u>	Referral Note:	<u>82111129</u>		<u>S</u>	<u>82112109</u>
	Referral Note:	<u>1/1</u>			<u>1/1</u>
	Referral Note:	<u>1/1</u>			<u>1/1</u>
	Referral Note:	<u>1/1</u>			<u>1/1</u>
	Referral Note:	<u>1/1</u>			<u>1/1</u>

ACTION CODES:

- A - Appropriate Action
- C - Comment/Recommendation
- D - Draft Response
- F - Furnish Fact Sheet to be used as Enclosure
- I - Info Copy Only/No Action Necessary
- R - Direct Reply w/Copy
- S - For Signature
- X - Interim Reply

DISPOSITION CODES:

- A - Answered
- B - Non-Special Referral
- C - Completed
- S - Suspended

FOR OUTGOING CORRESPONDENCE:

Type of Response = Initials of Signer
Code = "A"
Completion Date = Date of Outgoing

Comments: _____

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PR

NOV 26 1982

1612 K Street, N.W.
Suite 502
Washington, D.C. 20006
November 22, 1982

112469 CW

Mr. Fred Fielding
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20550

Dear Mr. Fielding:

I have never publicly disagreed with my colleagues in the Conservative Movement. I do think though that it is time a conservative stood up publicly to support the Clinch River Breeder Reactor before we make a serious and fatal mistake in judgment.

In recent months an unusual coalition has come into being which seeks to halt the development of the United States' breeder reactor program. Publicly, this coalition states that its only target is the Clinch River Breeder Reactor, a Federal research and development project now beginning construction; however, many of the liberal members of this coalition desire to halt Clinch River as part of a broader effort to curb not only U.S. breeder technology but nuclear power, energy growth, and national defense programs in general.

Perhaps unwittingly, respected conservative leaders and their organizations have allied themselves with such groups as Ralph Nader's Congress Watch, William Winpisinger's radical International Association of Machinists (IAM) and no-growth advocates like the Friends of the Earth and the Natural Resources Defense Council. Conservatives in Congress from Barry Goldwater to Gordon Humphrey have found themselves helping the likes of Ted Kennedy and Howard Metzenbaum attack a project which is essential to a secure supply of energy for America's future.

Why have we suddenly attracted such strange bedfellows and joined with the liberal critics of Clinch River? Is it because we have turned against nuclear power? Is it for reasons of fiscal responsibility? Or, is it simply a childish and misguided way of getting back at Senate Republican leader Howard Baker no matter what the consequences?

Mr. Fred Fielding
November 22, 1982
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Logic and the preponderance of the evidence dictate that the sound conservative position is to support the completion of the Clinch River Breeder Reactor. Here, are some of the reasons why:

-- If the United States is to maintain even a modest annual growth rate of 3 percent, we will have to double our electrical power capacity in 25 years. Breeder reactor technology, an essentially inexhaustible source of energy, is needed to help supply this increased capacity if we are to have economic growth without relying upon foreign energy sources.

-- As the International Energy Agency recently warned, a new oil crisis may hit by the mid-1980's that would deal a "devastating blow" to the U.S. and other industrial nations. Such a prospect makes any effort to kill the Clinch River Breeder and thus cripple a readily available U.S. energy option the equivalent of committing national suicide.

-- President Reagan is firmly committed to breeder reactor technology and the completion of the Clinch River Breeder Reactor. He states that Clinch River is "essential to ensure our preparedness for longer-term nuclear power needs."

-- President Jimmy Carter, beginning weeks after his inauguration in 1977, attempted to kill the project and succeeded in stalling construction work on Clinch River for more than four years. This short-sighted move is largely responsible for driving the cost of CRBR from some \$1.7 billion (when the contracts were let in 1974) to the current estimated figure of \$3.6 billion.

-- The Soviet Union, France, Japan, and other nations are moving ahead of the United States in breeder technology. How can conservatives, or even liberals for that matter, force the nation to withdraw from this competition at the expense of America's continued growth?

-- The total cost of the Clinch River research and development project (now said to be \$3.6 billion by the Energy Department) is dwarfed by the drain on taxpayers caused by the annual cost of such social welfare programs as food stamps. For example, food stamp handouts cost somewhere in the neighborhood of \$11 billion in 1982 which is more than fifty times the amount spent on Clinch River in the same year. Furthermore, Clinch River dollars provide jobs, not handouts.

Mr. Fred Fielding
November 22, 1982
Page Three

-- Contrary to environmentalist misstatements, the Clinch River Breeder Design is technologically up to date and contains features, such as its heterogeneous core, which have attracted the attention of German, British and other foreign breeder experts. Repeated assessments by the General Accounting Office, most recently supported by their July, 1982 report, have concluded that among "a wide range of knowledgeable industry, government and private individuals, no one we talked with was able to provide us with any specific facts indicating that components or design features were obsolete."

-- After years of bureaucratic and regulatory delays, work has begun at the Clinch River site. Some 3,500 workers are already employed in 29 states and the District of Columbia, the plant design is 96% complete and about \$900 million worth of components have been delivered or are on order. If cancelled now, the cost to the taxpayer would be \$1.4 billion with nothing to show for it.

-- According to Senator Jim McClure, "the opponents of the Clinch River Breeder Reactor have come up with false and phony rigged figures and then repeat them." Among other things, the revenues from CRBR are liberally estimated at more than \$20 billion payable to the government over the 30 year life of the plant. This figure, developed by the Appropriations Committee, estimates 2% real growth in electricity prices.

-- Many question why private utilities have not contributed more money to this plant. I would simply point out that the electric utilities, companies that are closely regulated by government, are limited in their financial ability to invest in a long-term research and development project.

-- Professor Hans Bethe, a Nobel Prize Laureate, says that "once the breeder or a similar type of reactor is in place, the uranium in the U.S. will last for tens of thousands of years, at an affordable price. An inexhaustible energy source is as good as a renewable one."

Finally, halting the Clinch River project now, just as construction is finally beginning, would be tragic and would place our country's economic future in the hands of the radical environmentalists and others who oppose economic growth. The G.A.O. put it best in its most recent report.

Mr. Fred Fielding
November 22, 1982
Page Four

Failure to construct Clinch River, it said, would "fore-
close on the long-term future of a major energy option --
nuclear fission"

More is at stake than simply the Clinch River Project.
We must not allow ourselves to be duped into joining forces
with Ralph Nader, the Nuclear Freeze Movement and IAM.

We have all worked too hard and fought too many battles
to allow the left-wing to use the Clinch River issue to
break our ranks as well as encourage us to abandon our
principles.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Daniel J. Popeo". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Daniel J. Popeo