

## RESOLUTION

Audubon Council of Washington

September 10, 2009

**Title: Support for National Environmental Research Parks, HR 2729**

**Contract information: Lower Columbia Basin Audubon Society, Attn: Rick Leumont, Conservation Committee, [Leumont@owt.com](mailto:Leumont@owt.com), 509-554-3838**

Since 1972, the Atomic Energy Commission which evolved into the Department of Energy (DOE) administratively established seven National Environmental Research Parks at Hanford, Savannah River, Idaho National Lab, Los Alamos, Fermi Lab, Oak Ridge and the Nevada test facility. The parks were established for:

(1) environmental research and monitoring activities to characterize and monitor present and future site conditions, and serve as control areas for comparison with environmental impacts of Department of Energy land management, energy technology development, remediation, and other site activities outside the National Environmental Research Park areas. Areas of research and monitoring on the sites may include—

(A) ecology of the site and the region;

(B) population biology and ecology;

(C) radioecology;

(D) effects of climate variability and change on ecosystems;

(E) ecosystem science;

(F) pollution fate and transport research;

(G) surface and groundwater modeling; and

(H) environmental impacts of development and use of energy generation technologies, including renewable energy technologies; and

(2) public education and outreach activities.

HR 2729 would give Congressional authorization for these long standing parks and provide \$5,000,000 in annual funding for operation of each park. The only thing the bill would do that is not currently being done is change an administrative designation to Congressional authorization for the parks and provides a steady source of annual funding.

Congressman Doc Hastings does not oppose the bill but has succeeded in amending the bill to delete the Hanford National Energy Park. Deleting Hanford from the bill will not reverse the administrative designation for the park but will deprive Hanford of the \$5,000,000 in annual funding. Hastings opposition to the bill is simply based on a desire to have a free hand in developing Hanford lands for

industry and agriculture. The local community, by and large, supports including Hanford in the bill and the opposition seems to be centered with Hastings and a few supporters.

We are requesting passage of this resolution and letters from Washington State Audubon and the separate Chapters to Senators Murray and Cantwell in support of the Senate version of HR 2729 with the inclusion of Hanford in the final bill.

Passage of the resolution at this time is important as this legislation has been reported to the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

We request passage of the following resolution:

The Audubon Council of Washington resolves:

A. We support Congressional authorization for a system of National Energy Research Parks as envisioned by HR 2729.

B. The parks to be designated by HR 2729 are:

(1) the Savannah River National Environmental Research Park;

(2) the Idaho National Environmental Research Park;

(3) the Los Alamos National Environmental Research Park;

(4) the Fermi Lab National Environmental Research Park;

(5) the Oak Ridge National Environmental Research Park; and

(6) the Nevada National Environmental Research Park.

C. The purpose of these parks would be:

(1). environmental research and monitoring activities to characterize and monitor present and future site conditions, and serve as control areas for comparison with environmental impacts of Department of Energy land management, energy technology development, remediation, and other site activities outside the National Environmental Research Park areas. Areas of research and monitoring on the sites may include—

(A) ecology of the site and the region;

(B) population biology and ecology;

(C) radioecology;

(D) effects of climate variability and change on ecosystems;

(E) ecosystem science;

(F) pollution fate and transport research;

(G) surface and groundwater modeling; and

**(H) environmental impacts of development and use of energy generation technologies, including renewable energy technologies; and**

**(2) public education and outreach activities.**

- D. We call upon Senators Patty Murray and Marie Cantwell to support Senate legislation to give formal Congressional authorization for the above mentioned National Energy Research Parks. The Hanford National Energy Park was stripped from the original House bill in a misguided effort to weaken protection for Hanford's incredible wildlife habitat and native plant communities. We therefore request Senators Murray and Cantwell's assistance and vigorous leadership to ensure the inclusion of the Hanford National Energy Research Park in Senate legislation.**

**Passage of this legislation will help to provide protection for the shrub steppe dependent birds, wildlife and native plants of the Hanford Reservation.**