May 6, 1968

The Honorable Albert Gore
Senate Office Building
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Gore:

I have recently learned that the Corps of Engineers is making a serious attempt to try once again to get funds approved for construction of a dam on the south fork of the Cumberland in the Devil's Jump area. Speaking for myself as well as for Tennessee members of the Ecological Society of America and for the Society as a whole, I have outlined our opposition to this poorly conceived project in a statement to the district engineer to be included in the record of the public hearings on this dam. Not only do we object to the dam as scientists and conservationists, but we also object to it as taxpayers. It offers very little in the way of economic return either in power or anything else compared to the high cost to be put into it.

We feel that Tennessee has enough large and small dams and that interest should be given to other resource attributes of which Tennessee has plenty and which have been sorely neglected in the past.

We object to the mode of procedure the Corps of Engineers has used in holding hearings on this dam. These hearings were scheduled in an out-of-the-way place at an inconvenient time. To me it is indicative that the Corps of Engineers still has not altered entirely its anticonservation orientation, especially in its field units.

Enclosed for your information is a copy of the statement we have sent to the Corps of Engineers. I hope that you and your office will do all you can to stop this unnecessary despoliation of one of the most beautiful river areas in the world.

Sincerely yours,

S. I. Auerbach
Secretary

SIA:bc

Enclosure
The Ecological Society of America

STANLEY I. AUERBACH, Secretary
Radiation Ecology Section
Oak Ridge National Laboratory
Oak Ridge, Tennessee 37830

May 6, 1968

Colonel J. L. Fishback, District Engineer
U. S. Army Corps of Engineers
P. O. Box 1070
Nashville, Tennessee 37202

Dear Colonel Fishback:

The Ecological Society of America wishes to state its unequivocal and emphatic opposition to the construction of a high dam at the Devil's Jump Gorge on the Big South Fork of the Cumberland. The Society opposes the dam for three general reasons. These are as taxpayers, as conservationists, and as scientists. I will briefly enumerate our opposition to the dam under the categories.

1. As taxpayers: A study of the engineering project information on this dam shows no economic justification to the taxpayers for its construction. It will cost approximately $200,000,000. For this $200,000,000 we will have a lake in a relatively uninhabited area, near small communities, primarily concerned with recreational and small industrial needs. There is no need for the hydroelectric power that would be supplied by the dam, certainly not at the cost it would take to build the dam. The TVA will shortly complete a nuclear power plant at Brown's Ferry, Alabama; it will also complete a steam plant at Cumberland, Tennessee. When these two are completed, its power capacity will be 17,000,000 KW. TVA has recently announced that it plans to build two more nuclear-generating plants in East Tennessee. Undoubtedly these will add a minimum of 2,000,000 KW more to the TVA system. It seems to us as taxpayers that the 480,000 KW that is supposed to be produced by the Devil's Jump dam would add only a tiny increment to the power already available in the TVA valley. Furthermore, it would add this small increment at an enormous cost (approximately $200,000,000). For this amount of money, one can get now a large multiple-unit nuclear-generating station. In short, we think the taxpayer would be better served by reserving the money proposed to be spent on the Devil's Jump dam for areas where these funds are needed more.

2. As conservationists: As conservationists we adamantly oppose the destruction of one of the most beautiful river gorge areas in the world. The south fork of the Cumberland is becoming more and more widely known among people in the eastern United States who are seeking new and unusual
outdoor recreational areas. It is of course as you know the site of an annual canoe race. And I suspect that as it becomes more widely known we will find an increasing recreational utilization of this area based on this magnificent stream. There are now already many lakes in the TVA area which offer tremendous potential for recreation. The big between-the-lakes development of TVA has hardly tapped the surface of the population potential to use that recreational reservoir system. Many other lakes in the TVA network are in much the same situation. There is plenty of room for additional campsites, fishing camps, and general recreation. I assume the same is true for the lakes managed by the Corps of Engineers.

3. As scientists: As scientists we are deeply concerned about the rapid destruction of the few remaining undisturbed wilderness and undisturbed stream areas in this country. Ecologists have been struggling for 30 years or more to reserve pieces of the basic landscape, that is, the landscape that evolved through eons of time and which represents normal nature in balance with its evolutionary and climatic parameters. We are now about to enter an era of ecology. During this era there will be a considerable attempt made to evaluate the landscape in an organized and systematic way in order to enable policymakers and decisionmakers to evaluate the consequences of man's activities on the landscape. More and more this country is becoming concerned about environmental quality and environmental degradation. I suspect that within five to ten years there will be major programs to systematically evaluate environmental degradation. To accomplish this successfully, we will need undisturbed areas such as would be represented by the south fork of the Cumberland.

For these reasons, the Ecological Society of America is in opposition to a Devil's Jump dam.

Sincerely yours,

[Signature]

S. I. Auerbach
Secretary

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