



Reply to:

DATE: March 22, 1985

SUBJECT: Averting the Death of a Discipline

FROM: Don R. Justesen, President

TO: Members of BEMS and Allied Organizations

As President of the Bioelectromagnetics Society, I feel keenly the responsibility of looking after the interests of a relative new discipline, which was scattered and segmented before its organizational birth in BEMS. Several agencies of the U.S. Government and other sponsors have recently proposed reduction of support for or the outright shut-down of research programs that fall within the perimeter of BEMS. If enacted, these proposals probably would sound the deathknell of an organized discipline. I ask you to give your voice and time to an effort by which to reverse the intended sacrifice. Please write as many letters as you are able to the congressmen and women whose names and addresses are given on the attached list.

To brief you on the events that have prompted this letter, I have summarized below the announced plans for shut-downs and cut-backs. In your queries and complaints to the congress, be sure to note that the collective nature of these proposals would essentially eliminate a highly important segment of scientific research that has direct implications for medical advance, environmental control, and national security.

1. In 1982, the EPA's research program on radio-frequency electromagnetic (RF) radiation, which spans the spectrum from DC to microwaves, was scheduled for a close-out. Because of the strong support by the Bioelectromagnetics community and by individuals and groups concerned with potential health risks from excessive exposure to microwaves and other RF radiation, the planned shut-down of this program was reversed by the Congress. This reversal occurred because numerous letters to our legislators convinced them such a close-out was ill-conceived and short sighted. Incredibly, once again, EPA's research program on RF fields has been scheduled for complete inactivation.
2. Funding of research by the Electrical Energy Systems of DOE will be reduced by \$1,700,000--from \$4,700,000 to \$3,000,000--for research on biological effects of 60-Hz electric and magnetic fields.
3. The New York State research program on 60-Hz electric and magnetic fields will have expended their \$5,000,000 budget by the end of 1985.
4. The U.S. Department of the Navy has inactivated its in-house, nonionizing-radiation-research program at the Naval Medical Research Institute in Bethesda, Maryland.

5. Extramural funding for biological effects of nonionizing radiation by the Naval Medical Research and Development Command has been reduced to zero.
6. The Navy's support of biological research at the Naval Aerospace Medical Research Laboratory at Pensacola has been markedly reduced.
7. The Office of Health and Environmental Research of the Department of Energy has phased out funding of research on nonionizing radiation except for two relatively small projects involving static magnetic fields.
8. Extramural funding of research on RF radiation has been reduced to almost nonexistent levels by the NSF, the NIH, and the FDA.
9. Support of studies of biological effects of 60-Hz electric and magnetic fields by the Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI) has been markedly reduced over the years, from \$3,000,000 to about \$1,500,000, most of which is related to exposure- and risk-assessment; relatively few monies are targeted to biological studies.

The reduction of funding for biological research on RF radiation will leave unresolved many questions that have been raised in recent years by data that may pose problems for public safety. Of particular concern are the increased incidence of neoplasms and the alteration of the endocrine system of rats exposed to microwaves over the life span (study by Guy, et al.). Similarly, a number of studies has been reported in which correlations are cited between the incidence of leukemia or other neoplasms with exposures of workers to power-line or higher-frequency RF fields in industrial settings.

Some of these findings have not been replicated. Others are suspect on methodological grounds. But their increasing number in the scientific and medical literatures, and the play they are receiving in the popular media, have deservedly spawned public concern.

The scientific community needs the means to respond to these concerns. The public has a right to knowledge that bears on their well being both in the sense of environmental protection and of medical advance. And the congress needs to be informed of actions that, if taken, serve only the causes of uncertainty and dampened progress.

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