

LETTERS

Crustal Drilling: Future Plans

Richard A. Kerr, in his informative article "Seawater and the ocean crust: The hot and cold of it" (Research News, 9 June, p. 1138), reviews the exciting things being learned about the basaltic basement of the world's oceans near ridge crests and across the abyssal plains. However, contrary to the statements in his last paragraph, significant crustal drilling with the *Glomar Challenger* will be undertaken in 1978 and 1979. This includes two cruises in the Gulf of California in geothermal and ridge crest areas, a cruise to the Galápagos geothermal vent field, and a cruise to the Costa Rica rift.

During the period 1980-1981, proposed plans include crustal drilling in the Atlantic with the *Glomar Challenger*, but drilling for other than crustal purposes will take precedence.

After about 1981 it is hoped that another drill ship can be used that will accommodate a longer drill string and have a riser capability that will make deeper crustal penetration possible.

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Federal R & D and Local Needs

After 10 years in state and local government service, I can only applaud the editorial "Technology in response to local needs" by Brown and Gleazer (2 June, p. 1001) urging the development of better systems for developing new technology and distributing it to state and local governments and local private enterprise. Despite the fact that most federal programs are administered through state and local government, there is a remarkable lack of knowledge about both hard and soft technology at these levels of government. With limited exceptions, such as the now-defunct New York City-Rand Institute, the Urban Institute, and a few other foundation-financed ventures, the area has been a desert.

One very encouraging exception, however, exists as a part of the National Research Council and its Commission on Sociotechnical Systems. The Transportation Research Board, formerly the Highway Research Board, has had a

continuing successful history of stimulating research and disseminating its findings in a manner responsive to the needs of state and local transportation officials. The success of this enterprise is attributable to at least three factors: (i) a statutory federal formula allocation of funding for research in the highway area and an analogous administrative commitment of funds in the transit area; (ii) an executive board and participants combining federal, state, and local officials and academic and industry representatives in a balance that keeps a focus on "real world" needs; and (iii) a skillful and dedicated staff headed by William N. Carey, Jr., and support by the board's institutional home, the National Academy of Sciences and the National Academy of Engineering.

The success of the Transportation Research Board leads me to believe that similar ventures in the areas of health and social services, economic development, and public management would be equally successful. I hope the Academies will expand on their successful prototype.

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The editorial, "Technology in response to local needs," hits the mark. If anything, it's a masterpiece of understatement. I quote, "Yet the federal R & D community is not responsive to local needs." If anything, the federal R & D community has been working *against* local needs. Classic examples have to do with air and water quality planning. Arbitrary standards arrived at by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) are being assigned throughout the country in areas where they may have absolutely no relevance.

For instance, this area has spent millions of dollars to clean up urban sewage in order to meet EPA requirements for point source pollution. Yet urban point sources contribute a very small portion of the total emission of pollutants to our streams. Most of our pollution is in the form of sediment which emanates from agricultural sources; and precious little is being done to deal with that. Millions of dollars are being spent on barely touching the iceberg tip of a problem which is not being addressed seriously in any other way.

The same is true in the case of air pollution. The federal R & D establishment has come up with some wonderful stan-

dards for air quality which they say our community does not meet. We seem to have a problem with ozone, and we are being asked to do something about it; unfortunately, the sources have not been clearly identified, and it has been suggested that our ozone pollution emanates from the St. Louis metropolitan area, almost 200 miles away. What good would it do us to make the necessary sacrifices to clean up our air quality if the pollution is being produced somewhere else?

These examples typify the problem. If I have any disagreement with the solution proposed in the editorial, it is that another valuable source of local information exists: the regional planning agencies and councils of government which are closely tied to local units of government in 650 regions throughout the nation. These agencies are required to deal with environmental, energy, land use, economic, and transportation problems; the delivery of social services; and a broad range of planning activities. As collectors and users of data, centers of interlocal coordination, and planners of government services, regional councils are well suited to the task of delivering federal R & D in a manner that is responsive to local needs.

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Chimpanzees: Preserving the Species

Congratulations to Nicholas Wade for his sensitive article "New vaccine may bring man and chimpanzee into tragic conflict" (News and Comment, 2 June, p. 1027). I endorse Wade's conclusion that a way must be sought to solve this conflict in a manner that is not detrimental to the chimpanzees. In the past, alternative methods of producing other vaccines (notably that for polio) have been found so that animal lives are spared. Surely it is not beyond our scientific ingenuity to find alternative methods in this case also, so that chimpanzees will not have to be used. In my opinion, the ethical concerns for elimination of inhumane killing (in Wade's words, "to capture a chimpanzee: first shoot the mother") and for preservation of this dwindling species of animal are overriding.

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