

SCIENCE

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Internet addresses: science_editors@aaas.org (for general editorial queries); science_letters@aaas.org (for letters to the editor); science_reviews@aaas.org (for returning manuscript reviews)

LETTERS

Misrepresentation and Fantasy

The mix of misrepresentation and fantasy in David F. Voss and Daniel E. Koshland Jr.'s response (Letters, 18 Feb., p. 903) to our letter (p. 902) clinches our case. The editors of *Science* are consistently unreliable in the matter of the Superconducting Super Collider (SSC).

Voss and Koshland misquote a *Physics Today* account (1) that reports "The cost is estimated at \$2.70 to \$3.05 billion in 1984 dollars (not including the cost of research equipment, preconstruction R&D, and possible site acquisition) [emphasis added]." This confirms [as do other contemporaneous accounts (2, 3)] our statement that "the cost of the SSC, including detectors, was never \$3 billion."

Voss and Koshland's preposterous claim that Fermilab's experience is irrelevant to SSC operating costs is made up out of whole cloth. We challenge them to produce any shred of documentation for their \$1 billion per year figure.

What is at issue here is not the fate of the SSC, but the very integrity of scientific discourse. False claims have no place in science, or in *Science*.

Robert N. Cahn

*Director, Physics Division,
Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory,
Berkeley, CA 94720, USA*

J. David Jackson

*Department of Physics,
University of California,
Berkeley, CA 94720, USA*

Chris Quigg

*Theoretical Physics Department,
Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory,
Batavia, IL 60510, USA*

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1. B. Schechter, *Phys. Today* 39, 29 (April 1986).
2. M. Tigner, in *U.S. House Committee on Science and Technology, Fiscal Year 1986 Department of Energy Authorization [No. 28]* (Government Printing Office, Washington, DC, 1985), vol. II-A, pp. 373–400.
3. L. M. Lederman and S. L. Glashow, *Phys. Today* 38, 36 (March 1985).

A National Institute for the Environment

Daniel E. Koshland Jr.'s 25 February editorial, "Strategic goals on an NIH model" (p. 1071) makes an excellent point about the

creative benefits of investigator-initiated research. The United States has reaped great, although often serendipitous, rewards from a long-term public investment in curiosity-driven research. However, the nation now needs a much greater integration of science into its decision-making processes, in environmental areas in particular.

Koshland refers to the proposed National Institute for the Environment (NIE) as "an expansion of an existing National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences," within the National Institutes of Health (NIH). However, the NIE is not proposed as an extension of any part of NIH, but as an independent, nonregulatory federal institute with a mission to "improve the scientific basis for decision-making on environmental issues."

The NIE would fund credible, problem-focused, peer-reviewed, multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary, extramural research; provide comprehensive assessments of the state of current environmental knowledge and identify information gaps and research needs; facilitate and expand access to environmental information; and sponsor higher education, training, and public education.

Like NIH, the proposed NIE would benefit from peer-reviewed, investigator-initiated research. However, it would not operate intramural laboratories. It would award research grants to existing federal labs, academic institutions, nonprofit organizations and private companies. It would sponsor public education through nonprofit entities, as NIH does through, for example, the American Lung Association. Similar to NIH's National Library of Medicine, the NIE would make environmental information widely available by establishing electronic access through a National Library of the Environment. Legislation to establish the NIE currently has 68 bipartisan cosponsors. Congressional hearings are expected in 1994.

Peter D. Saundry

*Executive Director, Committee for the
National Institute for the Environment,
730 11th Street, NW,
Washington, DC 20001-4521, USA*

Adaptive Optics in Astronomy

Eliot Marshall (Special News Report, 4 Feb., p. 621) states that the Phillips Laboratory in Albuquerque, New Mexico, is the only site thus far to do astronomy with