There appears to be a rise in a sort of "know nothing" attitude accompanying the debate about tobacco money's use in the study of tobacco-related disease. This attitude was most strikingly illustrated by a 1993 editorial in the *Journal of the National Cancer Institute* (*1*). That editorial addressed itself to a study which found an elevated lung cancer risk associated with high-fat diets among *nonsmoking* women. The editorial first downgraded the importance of adding one more disease (lung cancer) to the health consequences of a high-fat diet because this information "is hardly needed to strengthen the argument for taking aggressive public health measures to lower the average fat level in the American diet; second, it asks

> does the identification of secondary risk factors for lung cancer not play into the hands of the tobacco industry, which grasps at these straws in its relentless effort to diminish the significance of cigarette smoking as the overwhelming cause of breast cancer . . .?

Apparently Stanton Glantz *et al.* [authors of *The Cigarette Papers* (2)] agree. My sin, they contend (according to Cohen) is that some of my tobacco-related studies have focused on "examining factors that could potentially confound the association of tobacco smoke and adverse health effects." Does that mean that if something other than smoking is discovered to cause a smoking-associated disease, they don't want to know about it?

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Uninterrupted Electric Power

Given the importance of reliable and uninterrupted electrical power in the United States (Philip H. Abelson, Editorial, 19 Jan., p. 273) and throughout North America, we believe that more effort needs to be made to provide warnings of geomagnetic disturbances, which have had an increasing impact on technology systems such as electric grids as these systems become more sophisticated. Reliable advance warnings would give those who are affected by these storms the ability to prepare for them. This is the consensus of a joint commerce, research, and military task force under the sponsorship of the National Science Foundation convened to formulate a "National Space Weather Program Strategic Plan." The plan's 1995 executive summary (*1*, p. 5) notes that

> The Nation's reliance on technological systems is growing exponentially, and many of these systems are susceptible to failure or unreliable performance because of extreme space weather conditions. . . . We now have the scientific knowledge and the technical skills to move forward to dramatically improve space weather understanding, forecasts, and services to meet customer needs.

The United States is now undertaking a multi-agency space Weather Initiative to provide early warning of impending space disturbances. This has the goal of devising methods to avoid power system failures and other effects of the space environment on human technological systems. We urge cooperation in the development of such methods to avoid catastrophic failures in power systems. Such warning methods could save billions of dollars each year.

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1. Office of the Federal Coordinator for Meterological Service, *National Space Weather Program Strategic Plan* (FCM-P30-1995, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Silver Spring, MD, 1995).

Letters to the Editor

Letters may be submitted by e-mail (at science_letters@aaas.org), fax (202-789-4669), or regular mail (*Science*, 1200 New York Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20005, USA). Letters are not routinely acknowledged. Full addresses, signatures, and daytime phone numbers should be included. Letters should be brief (300 words or less) and may be edited for reasons of clarity or space. They may appear in print and/or on the World Wide Web. Letter writers are not consulted before publication.