

at the congressional hearing (2) that the MIT "inquiry went forward in conformance with our policy of investigating suspicion of fraud, even though Dr. O'Toole chose not to characterize her concerns as [fraud]." The statements of Eisen and of Deutch cannot both be true.

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#### REFERENCES

1. D. Weaver *et al.*, *Cell* 45, 247 (1986)
2. J. Deutch, statement before the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations Committee on Energy and Commerce, U.S. House of Representatives, 9 May 1989.

### Oil Spill Health Effects

Marcia Barinaga's article "Alaskan oil spill: Health risks uncovered" (News & Comment, 4 Aug., p. 463) captured the flavor of the Conference on the Alaskan Crude Oil Spill and Human Health very well.

A matter that could cause some misunderstanding, however, is the misstatement in the middle of the article labeled "the good

news," that the highly toxic polycyclic aromatic compounds "evaporated from the spilled oil within several days." The lightest fractions of the oil, the single ring compounds that are of most concern for inhalation exposures, did evaporate rapidly. The polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, on the other hand, tend to concentrate in the weathered oil and may be of significant long-term concern for health, since we know that some of these compounds are hazardous and some are associated with cancer.

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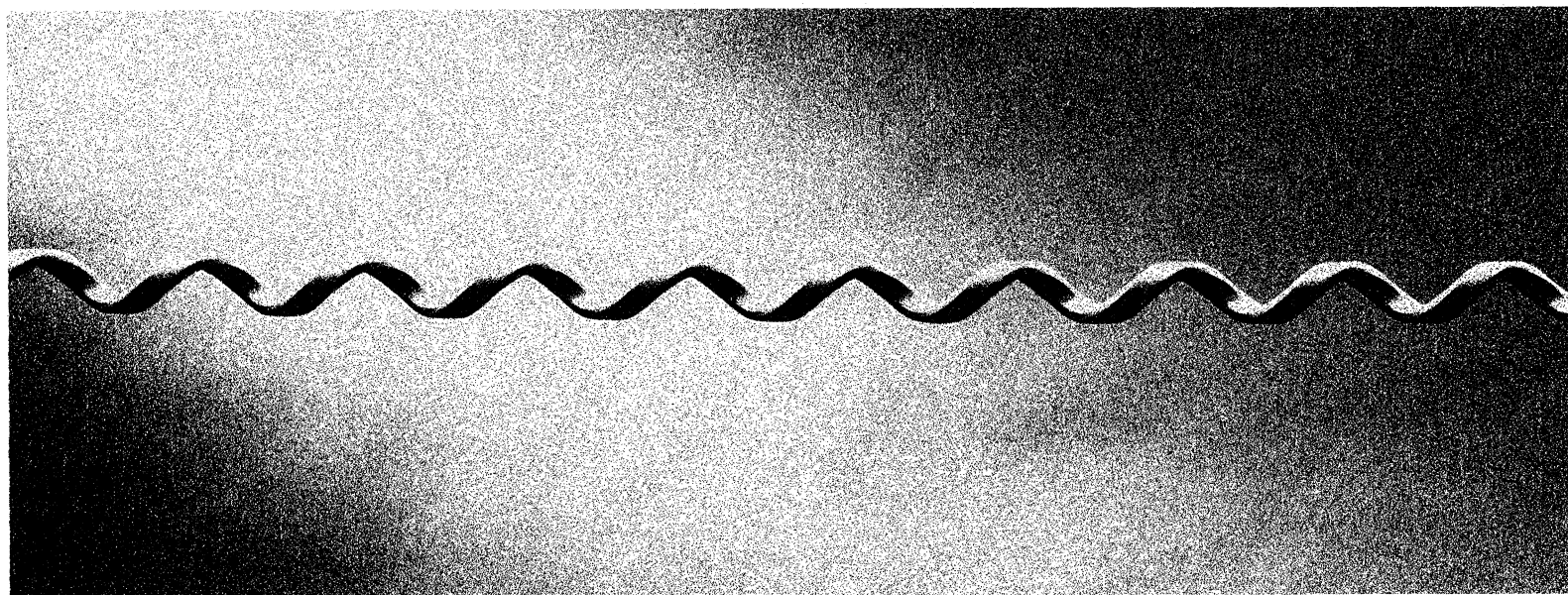
### Management at DOE

Readers of the article by Mark Crawford about Robert O. Hunter (News & Comment, 15 Sept., p. 1182) may obtain the impression that Hunter is a man of vision who is meeting opposition from a stodgy bureaucracy. The article quotes Hunter as saying that his "most ambitious activity" is

"to maintain the flow of new ideas and . . . the quality of research." The impression one gains from the article and from the quote, however, is inconsistent with my experience.

Like Hunter, I came to Washington "just over a year ago." Unlike Hunter, I came, not to "head the Department of Energy's [DOE] \$1.7-billion" Office of Energy Research, but to work in the "tiny geophysical research program" referred to in the article. The Geosciences Program is part of the Office of Basic Energy Sciences (OBES) within the Office of Energy Research. The program has an annual budget of about \$18 million and supports the basic geoscience research of about 90 investigators at eight national labs and 70 investigators at almost 40 universities. Research grants are given on the basis of a peer-review system similar to that used at the National Science Foundation. The Geosciences Program office consists of one DOE employee, a portion of a secretary, a rotator from academia, and a detailee from one of the national labs—the position I have occupied on a half-time basis for the past 15 months. Thanks to Hunter, it has been a most exciting year—exciting, exasperating, but mostly, frustrating.

One particularly frustrating task was to help my colleagues decide how to take back



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