

From: F. David Doty, PhD [david@dotynmr.com]
Sent: Thursday, September 11, 2003 4:10 PM
To: NSTC_RBM
Subject: comments on management of R&D resources
Dear Dr. Geoff Grant,

I was pleased to learn that the government wants to review its management of R&D resources and is open to comments and data. Like most, I feel the scientific merit review process is central to R&D resource utilization.

My suggestion, is quite simple: try to make the grant review processes at DoD and DOE function more like those at NIH and NSF, where one can at least be assured a worthy proposal will be given a serious review by a qualified scientist or engineer. Allow me to explain.

I am a scientist/entrepreneur with an enviable track record of getting an exceptionally high percentage of my proposals to NIH and NSF funded (some with scientific merit scores below 130). However, almost none of my proposals to DOE and DoD even ever get a scientific merit review, though I know they are at least as meritorious, significant, and mission-relevant as the best of my successful proposals to NIH. (No technical errors are ever identified. They are returned with a few dumb comments like "The PI admits that this will be quite challenging" or "similar approaches were tried 20 years ago" or "very few others think such high system efficiencies are practical".) This suggests to me there are major problems in the review processes at DOE and DoD that seriously limit their ability to identify worthy proposals. It is interesting to note that I am a registered Democrat and have never even been given the courtesy of a real scientific merit review of any of my proposals to DOE and DoD while a Republican was in the White House. It would be interesting to see if my experience is unique, or if there is a pattern here.

Obviously, I am quite happy with the scientific review processes at NIH and NSF.

Thanks,

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