



Under Secretary for Science

Washington, DC 20585

June 11, 2007

Dr. Michelle S. Broido
Associate Vice Chancellor for Basic Biomedical Research
and Director, Office of Research, Health Sciences
University of Pittsburgh
Scaife Hall, Suite 401
3550 Terrace Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15261

Dear Dr. Broido:

With this letter, I am charging the Biological and Environmental Research Advisory Committee (BERAC) to undertake a review of the BER Low Dose Radiation Research Program. In April 1998, BERAC approved a Research Program Plan prepared by its Low Dose Radiation Research Program Plan Subcommittee, with recommendations extending out ten years on research needs, funding requirements, and program management. Since its subsequent inception in 1999, DOE's Low Dose Program has followed a research strategy aimed at rapidly advancing the understanding of biological responses to low dose and/or low dose rate ionizing radiation exposures, in order to determine whether such exposures present a health risk to people. It has consistently supported the highest quality, competitively peer-reviewed research, pushing the scientific community to study ever lower doses, in ever more relevant biological systems. In the intervening years, exciting new biological paradigms have emerged as a direct result of the low dose field of radiation research.

At this time it is appropriate to evaluate the Low Dose Program with respect to its original research plan, the current state of the field of radiation biology, and its relationship to contemporary cancer biology. The BERAC review should address the following issues:

1. Assess the scientific accomplishments, the quality, and the technical innovation of the Program's research portfolios.
2. Assess whether the current portfolio is taking best advantage of advances in biological research and integrative models.
3. Evaluate whether this growing body of scientific knowledge and new biological paradigms provide sufficient scientific justification for reconsideration of the risk estimate models that currently set regulatory dose limits for DOE workers and the public.

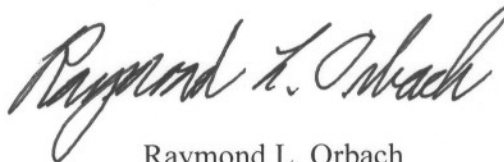


4. Identify any additional critical biological issues or technical hurdles that the Program needs to address in order to wholly inform regulatory policy.

I suggest you meet with Drs. Michael Viola and Noelle Metting to develop a format for the review. They can provide names of experts in the low dose radiation biology and risk regulatory fields whom you may want to consider asking to assist in the BERAC review.

I would like to have your review report from BERAC at its fall 2007 meeting and very much appreciate your help in this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Raymond L. Orbach". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Raymond L. Orbach

cc: Viola, Michael
Thomassen, David
Metting, Noelle